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ABSTRACT

Collecting and using incident data are essential steps for creating safe schools. ("Incidents" are anything from criminal acts to minor problem behaviors that disrupt the orderly functioning of schools and classrooms.) With good data, it is possible to develop effective prevention and intervention plans. This handbook presents the recommendations of the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Task Force--part of the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Forum on Education Statistics--on what types of information to collect, why it is important to collect such information, and how it can be used to improve school safety. It is designed to help school, district, and state staff improve their effectiveness in collecting and using disciplinary incident data. Chapter 1 presents the rationale for how collecting and using incident data can help schools achieve their mission. Chapter 2 discusses ensuring the accuracy of data, and ways of enlisting public support and financing data collection. Chapter 3 describes approaches for presenting information to the public on what has been collected. Chapter 4 presents the elements of the incident database. Appended are the current federal reporting requirements. (Contains 7 figures, including 5 sample graphs, and 46 references.) (WFA)

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EA

National Forum on Education Statistics

COLLECTING AND USING CRIME, VIOLENCE AND DISCIPLINE INCIDENT DATA TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SCHOOLS

Safety in Numbers

EA 032 143

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Safety in Numbers

Collecting and Using Crime, Violence, and Discipline Incident Data to Make a Difference in Schools

Crime, Violence, and Discipline Task Force
National Forum on Education Statistics
National Center for Education Statistics

July 2002

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FOREWORD

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Forum on Education Statistics (the Forum) are pleased to release the "*Safety in Numbers*" handbook. This handbook is designed to be used by school, district, and state staff to improve the effectiveness of their efforts to collect and use disciplinary incident data. It provides recommendations on what types of data to collect, why it is critical to collect such data, and how the data can be used effectively to improve school safety and answer policy questions relating to school improvement and the safety of our students.

NCES, as part of the U.S. Department of Education, maintains a Cooperative Education Statistics System with the states and outlying areas to improve the quality, comparability, and uniformity of elementary and secondary school data. The Forum members represent states, school districts, and other institutions that are major providers and users of education data. The Forum provides an arena for the discussion of educational issues and the development of new approaches for data collection and utilization.

In 1996, the Forum published "*Recommendations of the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Reporting Task Force*," a report that outlined a set of definitions and protocols for the collection of crime, violence, and discipline data. As part of an ongoing effort to promote data-driven educational policy decisionmaking, NCES and the Forum reconvened the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Task Force in 2000 to update the initial report. This work was a collaborative effort of the state and school district administrators, education policy researchers, and Federal Department of Education program and research staff who comprise the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Task Force. These individuals have a range of expertise, including data collection and analysis, school administration, classroom instruction, and policy development and implementation.

We hope that this handbook will contribute to the development of valid and comparable data on school crime, violence, and discipline to promote effective policy decisions and safe learning environments.

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Task Force

INTRODUCTION

Two priorities have emerged for public schools in recent years. One is for schools to demonstrate that all children are meeting high academic standards as measured by state assessments. The other is for schools to create an environment that is free of violence and other crimes. These are not separate missions. Children need safe and orderly schools in order to learn. Collecting and using incident data are essential steps for creating safe schools. With good data, it is possible to develop effective prevention and intervention plans. Benefits of data collection include helping schools:

- Improve overall school safety;
- Address specific safety or discipline issues (e.g., bullying);
- Conserve resources including staff time; and
- Obtain additional resources for school safety.

This document presents the recommendations of the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Task Force on what types of information to collect, why it is important to collect such information, and how it can be used to improve school safety.

"Incidents" are anything from criminal acts, such as robbery, that result in the involvement of law enforcement officials to minor problem behaviors that disrupt the orderly functioning of schools and classrooms, such as tardiness. A single event (e.g., a fight) is one incident regardless of how many perpetrators or victims are involved.

Effective data collection and analysis are powerful tools for creating positive learning climates and are critical activities for schools and school districts nationally. Chapter 1 presents the rationale for how collecting and using incident data can help schools achieve their mission; Chapter 2 discusses meeting the challenges of data collection; Chapter 3 describes approaches for presenting information (to the public) on what has been collected; and Chapter 4 presents elements of the incident database. In addition, appendices provide current Federal reporting requirements and a list of other NCES and Forum handbooks.

Effective data collection and analysis are powerful tools for creating positive learning climates.

The recommendations presented in this handbook presume that users will store incident data in a relational database with separate modules for incident, perpetrator, victim, and disciplinary action data that contain links to student and staff databases. A system with separate modules or data tables will be especially helpful for documenting unusual incidents. A relational database will also be valuable when conducting analyses, particularly those that involve disaggregation of incidents by characteristics of interest to the user, such as race/ethnicity, gender, or disability.

A relational database will also prove useful when responding to state and Federal requests for information. For example, three offices of the U.S. Department of Education presently require significant amounts of information on incidents and disciplinary actions from schools, districts, and states. While these data requests are substantial, they are also subject to change. New education legislation often brings new data collection requirements. The flexibility allowed by a relational database can substantially reduce the amount of time needed to comply with current and future reporting requirements.

This handbook presents comprehensive recommendations on what kinds of data to collect. Users are encouraged to select only what will be helpful from this list. Local adaptability is a strength of this data collection model. States and local school districts are encouraged to apply the definitions wherever possible, keeping in mind current state legislation and local school board requirements. While these recommendations are not a Federal mandate, for comparability purposes, the Task Force recommends that consistent definitions be used nationally.

1 Using Data to Make a Difference

Keeping schools safe. For children to learn and teachers to teach, schools must be safe (Linquanti and Berliner, 1994). While no guarantees exist that better awareness of potential problems is enough to prevent tragedies from happening, awareness based on solid information can give administrators the confidence that they are doing everything possible to enhance the safety and security of their students and staff (Riley and McDaniel, 1998).

One of our nation's top priorities is to keep schools safe by providing a place where students can learn and teachers can teach free from threats of harm. Effective data collection and analysis provide educators with a powerful set of tools for achieving this goal (Johnson, 1996). Valid data that allow comparability within and across states and school districts are of great value to governing agencies, policymakers, funding sources, and the general public. Valid data are of even greater value to schools. This chapter discusses the rationale for how effective use of incident data can make a difference in school climate and student learning.

Information can be gathered in a number of ways for a variety of purposes. The most important reason to collect incident data is to use the information to promote school safety and learning. There are many ways to do this. Data enable administrators to assess the impact of programs that have been implemented to promote school safety and to assess whether additional efforts are needed. Data provide the basis for grant applications. Incident data are also useful in assessing the costs associated with discipline problems and allocating resources appropriately. One large school district, after assessing its incident data, recognized the need to address attendance issues which were costing students valuable instructional time. The district hired a dropout specialist, instituted an in-school suspension program for truants, and limited the number of days for which a student could be suspended in any one semester (Brown, 2000).

The most important reason to collect incident data is to use the information to promote school safety and learning.

1.1 Promoting Learning

The primary mission of schools is to promote learning. Safe and orderly learning environments are a correlate of effective schools (Pepperl and Lezotte, 1999; Lezotte, 1991; Edmonds, 1979). Thus, just as a safe and healthy school climate contributes to effective teaching and learning, disruption, violence, and threats of violence greatly impede learning. Many schools have seen academic benefits from the use of strong data collection systems as part of violence prevention and school improvement efforts, as illustrated below.

Promoting learning. Significant improvements in learning were reported by Nelson and colleagues (in press) from a comprehensive school-wide program to prevent problem behaviors. Working with elementary schools in a school district in the Pacific Northwest, the project produced significant positive differences in 4th grade reading, language arts, spelling, science, and social studies achievement on the California Test of Basic Achievement, as well as significant positive differences in the reading and mathematics scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. The systematic collection and assessment of incident data was demonstrated to be an important component of this effort.

Benefiting from incident data. One school with a large number of disciplinary incidents reviewed its incident data and learned that 56 percent of its behavioral incidents were attributed to class cuts and 15 percent to tardies. School staff used this information to adopt efforts to improve class attendance and punctuality. The school's prevention efforts focused on the strong correlations between academic achievement and attendance, punctuality, and appropriate classroom behavior (Nakasato, 2000).

1.2 Improving School Safety

Educators and the public want schools to be safe and orderly. Assessing school safety and using data to conduct safe schools planning are key to reaching this goal.

Assessing school safety. Many experts such as Stephens (2000) and Dwyer, Osher, and Warger (1998) have encouraged school administrators to assess school safety and take proactive steps to build safe schools. Office discipline referrals are key to assessing school discipline needs and to monitoring the effects of reform efforts. In addition, a systems approach to effective behavioral (and instructional) support requires the use of data to support decisionmaking. Discipline data are necessary to ensure that

- Ineffective discipline practices are modified or discontinued,
- Effective programs are enhanced, and
- Specialized behavior supports are arranged for students who display chronic problem behaviors.

It is important to design discipline systems to ensure student and staff success, not just control problem behavior (Sugai et al., 1998).

Data need to be reviewed in context. Schools with high suspension rates could be those with high levels of disorder. High suspension rates could also represent a physical plant problem, such as poorly designed buildings with narrow halls and stairwells conducive to pushing and shoving, a behavior which often leads to fighting. Significant overenrollment can have the same effect on student behavior. Schools that do not tolerate misbehavior can also have high suspension rates as they work to effectively manage student misbehavior, school disorder, and crime. It is important that administrators are attuned to contextual issues when making policy decisions (Clay, 1996).

Data need to be reviewed in context.

Safe schools planning. Many states now require school or district safety plans (e.g., Florida, New York). The goal of safe school planning is to create and maintain a positive and welcoming school climate, free of drugs, violence, intimidation, and fear. A safe environment is necessary for teachers to teach and students to learn. Safe school planning provides an action plan and is an ongoing, systematic, and comprehensive process that addresses both short-term and long-term safety measures in working toward the elimination of violent attitudes and

behaviors in the schools. School crime reporting and tracking and assessment of trends over time are essential components of a safe school plan. They enable schools and districts to monitor their mission, and to measure whether they are meeting their safe schools goals (Holcomb, 1998; Stephens, 2000).

1.3 Managing Resources

Collecting and using incident data can help schools effectively use scarce resources.

Collecting and using incident data can help schools effectively use scarce resources. Schools have a financial responsibility to taxpayers to ensure that resources bring maximum benefit to both safety and the learning enterprise. Preventing problem behavior ensures that the majority of resources go to classrooms and that already limited resources are spent for instructional purposes rather than for graffiti removal and vandalism repairs (California Department of Education, 1995).

Riley and McDaniel (1998) argue that incident data should be used to drive resource decisions. The California Department of Education (1995) highlights the financial benefit to safe school planning. The process of conducting a needs assessment may enable a school to qualify for outside grant funds and resources—accurate and reliable data may enable schools to demonstrate their need for additional resources. For example, in past years, many states distributed Safe and Drug-Free Schools Greatest Needs funds based on the level of problem behavior in schools.[1] One condition of Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding is that it be used on efforts that research has demonstrated to be effective; incident data can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention interventions.

Many types of incident reporting are also required by districts, states, and the Federal Government. Well designed incident reporting systems will save time, a limited resource, when schools and districts are required to complete these reports.[2]

[1] This funding category has been eliminated from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Legislation (see *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act).

[2] Federal reporting requirements are described in appendix A.

1.4 Focusing Discipline Reform Efforts

Sugai and colleagues (2000) state that "school-wide discipline systems are the foundation from which all other efforts are based and directed." The Sugai article

- Recommends that administrators and faculty committed to improving the school-wide discipline systems in their school examine the distribution of office discipline referrals by student, location, and date;
- Explains that this information can then be used to determine where to focus school discipline reform efforts; and
- Notes that, for incident data to be of maximum value, they must include information on the perpetrator, date, location, referring teacher, primary rule violation, and consequence.

In another article on the subject (Sugai et al., 1998), the authors explain that school-wide discipline is more than simply establishing rules for problem behavior and then enforcing those rules by reacting to students who violate them. School-wide discipline is both proactive (positive and preventive) and reactive (responsive and ameliorative), and it emphasizes the establishment of a predictable, safe environment where successful teaching and achievement are promoted. In addition, the effectiveness of a school-wide discipline system is related to the effectiveness of the instructional support systems (e.g., literacy) that are in place (Shinn, 1997; Kaminski and Good, 1996; Kame'enui and Simmons 1998; Sugai et al.1998).

School-wide discipline is both proactive and reactive.

Schools that have been successful in implementing school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports have found

- Increases in attendance,
- Student reports of a more positive and calm environment,
- Teacher reports of a more positive and calm environment, and
- Reduction in the number of behavioral disruptions (Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Project, 2000).

Furthermore, several comprehensive reviews of school-based prevention programs (Gottfredson, Wilson, and Najaka, 2001; Gottfredson, 1997) have found that school-wide discipline efforts are highly effective in promoting safe school environments.

Attending to problem areas. Sprague and colleagues (1999) stress the importance of using data, rather than impressions, to guide decisions to maintain or modify what, how, and where changes in discipline policy and procedures are necessary.

Patterns in incident data indicate where prevention programming is needed (Sprague et al., 1999). For example, as Banks (2000) explains, bullying can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. If a school identifies a pattern of bullying in its incident data, then a bullying prevention program would be a prudent use of resources. Stephens (1994) describes one instance where, by having and using a good incident data system, administrators were able to determine that nearly every time a fight occurred on campus it involved a certain group of female students who had formed a "dance club." They learned that this club was really a new gang and were able to take measures to put a stop to the emerging gang activities.

With reliable data, school administrators will have information essential to problem solving.

Without systematic, data-based decisionmaking procedures, the implementation of the best discipline system is likely to be ineffective. School-wide discipline planning—setting the stage for positive reinforcement of responsible student behavior and developing strategies for getting students back on track when their behavior is disturbing learning—serves as an instrument enabling effective instruction and learning to take place. With reliable data, school administrators can work more efficiently. They will have the information essential to solving problems, selecting appropriate interventions, and providing better support for student learning (Nakasato, 2000). Incident data can also be used to assess the effects of interventions (Flannery, 1998).

2 Meeting the Challenges of Data Collection

As discussed in the preceding chapter, a safe environment, one that is free of threats and intimidation, provides a climate conducive to learning and teaching. Data collection is an important component in creating such an environment. Nonetheless, there are challenges to data collection. One challenge is accuracy—do the data represent what they are intended to represent? Other challenges include how interpretation of the data affects school image, especially how data are reported by the media, and costs of collecting data.

It is important to ensure confidentiality and protect student and staff privacy. It is necessary to exercise caution when sharing information with staff and other professionals serving schools. In addition, it is especially important to exercise caution when working with the public. The Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits schools and school districts from releasing most types of information about students. Many states also have legislation regarding the confidentiality of student records and information. The purpose of data collection is to support the mission of schools (i.e., to continue efforts to secure a safe and orderly learning place), and not to create a repressive environment.

It is important to ensure confidentiality and protect student and staff privacy.

Security is a more complicated issue now that many records are stored and transmitted electronically. Schools and school districts need to be sure that their computerized data are appropriately protected from unauthorized electronic access. Records can no longer be secured solely by locking the filing cabinet.

As previously described, incident data can be used to ensure the following:

- Enhancement of effectiveness and efficiency of successful programs;
- Timely modification or termination of ineffective discipline practices; and
- Provision of more specialized behavior supports that can be arranged quickly for students who display chronic problem behaviors (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2000).

2.1 Ensuring Accuracy

To create safe and orderly places for learning, incident data must be accurate. Staff training and other efforts to ensure the reliability and validity of data are critical.

2.1.1 The Incident Database

It is important that the database records incidents beyond state-mandated or legal violations.

Chapter 4, "Collecting Data," provides specific details on the Task Force recommendations for the elements to be included in an incident database. In addition to listing types of incidents, variables are identified (e.g., time, locale) and defined. A key feature of the incident database is the ability to interface with student and staff databases.

It is important that discipline referrals and disruptive incidents be recorded even when they do not cross the threshold for state-mandated reporting or legal violations. This information can be used to identify trends and link incidents to grade level, location, time of year, or other potentially useful factors (Cornell et al., 1999).

When designing a database system or purchasing one that is commercially available, users need to evaluate key features, such as whether users will be able to produce all reports necessary to identify problem areas. Problem reports and trend data can be used to set specific goals for preventing problem behavior, develop school improvement programs, and facilitate documentation of progress in addressing school needs (Cornell et al., 1999).

2.1.2 Training

Training is a critical element of data collection. It is important to train all school staff on what kinds of problem behavior are to be reported to administrators. It is important for administrators to be clear on how incidents are defined, and for both administrators and data entry personnel to understand the specifics of reporting procedures. Cornell and colleagues (1999) advocate statewide training for all school divisions on the implementation of an incident-based data collection and reporting procedure, as well as training on the appropriate use of such information for school safety planning and procedures.

School level administrators will be better prepared to guide their staff in district discipline policy if they themselves receive training from qualified instructors. District level administrators can educate school level administrators more effectively regarding state mandates if they have received guidance on the subject. A coordinated, integrated training program will provide both clarity of policy goals and consistency of implementation.

Providing guidance on discipline to administrators takes two forms: (1) training on recordkeeping and (2) instruction regarding definitions and classification of incidents and disciplinary actions. If school district administrators wish to compare incident data across schools, they need to do more than leave it to untrained school staff to simply choose the incident code that most nearly matches the infraction. Doing so may produce inconsistent data. Even with clear and concise definitions, training at all levels is crucial to ensure data comparability. Districts may want to consider forming discipline committees to review data, develop and implement plans for training, and revise codes as necessary. Including practice on identifying the types of misbehavior to be recorded would be beneficial. Examples of what does and does not meet the standard for each type of infraction will be important to differentiate among definitions (e.g., Battery (code 1300) versus Fighting (code 1700) versus Physical Altercation, Minor (code 2500) [See Chapter 4]).

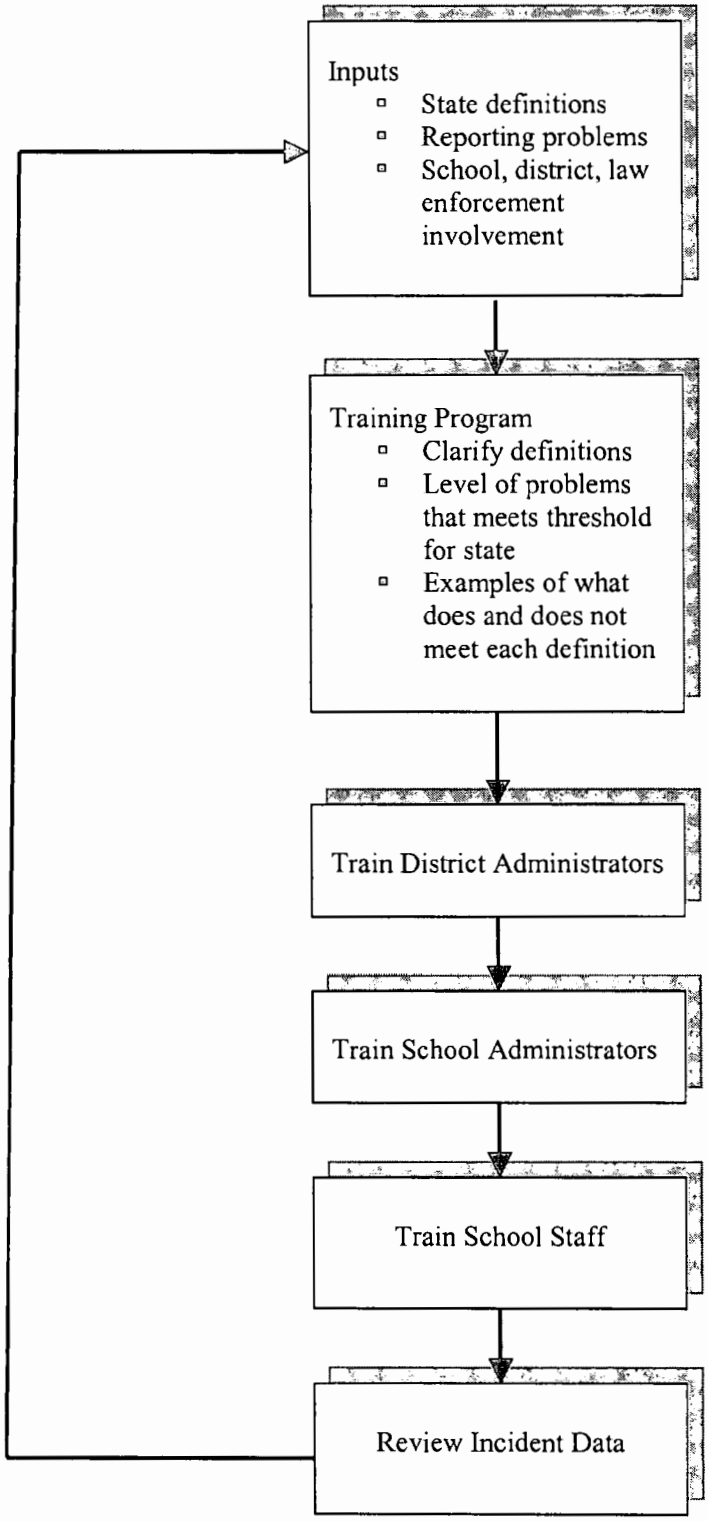
Even with clear and concise definitions, training at all levels is crucial.

Technical assistance staff in Florida provide guidance on incident reporting during regional workshops. School and district administrators are trained on how to categorize incidents and what level of problem behavior meets the threshold for state-mandated reporting. Before developing this program, state staff worked to identify reporting problems, revise and clarify definitions, and develop technical assistance materials such as video clips of examples and "nonexamples" of each type of incident. School and district administrators and law enforcement officials contributed to this process. The state also provides grants to school districts that need additional support to work with their schools on data collection issues.

Many districts in Florida follow this model (See Figure 2-1.). Training is provided to district staff, school administrators, and data clerks. This training addresses:

- Definitions,
- Problem areas, and
- Data uses.

Figure 2-1. Florida Training Effort



Davis, Hammond, and Benson (2000).

For example, "disorderly conduct" that rose to the level of "state reportable" was a significant problem one year in one district. District staff felt that school staff were coding many incidents as "disorderly conduct" when a less serious code would have been appropriate. Training focused on the definition of "disorderly conduct," and the number of reported incidents decreased substantially. Another district found that some principals were recording fights as multiple incidents—one incident for each participant. They held training on the structure of their database, which has separate modules for incident and perpetrator information; thus, the incident itself is recorded in one data file and the information on each perpetrator is recorded in a separate data file.

Documentation within schools is most likely to be accurate and consistent if school administrators or their assistants code infractions, but it is still very important that all school staff are trained regarding prohibited behaviors. Training within schools could follow the state and district model provided in figure 2-1.

School staff members need to be trained on what to report. Training will reduce the likelihood of inconsistent reporting. In addition, training can help ensure that minor problem behaviors are reported before they escalate. Including information on incident definitions and reporting procedures in teacher handbooks is recommended. Efforts to ensure consistency among staff members in the level of misbehavior that will be tolerated are also important. In addition, regular review of incident reporting and discipline problems at faculty meetings is useful.

2.1.3 Ensuring Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important components of data collection. The following components ensure that reporting is consistent (reliable) and that variables measure what they were intended to (valid):

- Clear definitions;
- Handbooks, rules, policies, practices, and data elements aligned with one another;
- Checks for completeness and accuracy;
- Comparison with and contrast to other data sources; and
- Detailed reports.

Training, as discussed earlier, is obviously an important component of ensuring reliability and validity. Before people can be trained, however, it is necessary to adopt clear definitions for incidents and incident elements and to ensure that these variables are consistently defined in student, staff, and parent handbooks and other written instructions.

Defining problem behavior. Chapter 4 describes the types of incidents to track and elements to record. The list of incidents in Chapter 4 is extensive; however, not all incidents will be appropriate for all schools and school districts. In addition, the list may miss incidents important to particular jurisdictions or schools.

Decisions on which incidents to include need to be made by the people they affect. Involving stakeholders in the decisionmaking process will generate support for data collection efforts—no effort can succeed without the support of front-line individuals. If data collection decisions are being made at the school level, it is critical to include teachers and other staff on the team that designs the incident-reporting system. If the decisions are being made at the district level, it is necessary to include school administrators and school staff in the process. If decisions are being made at the state level, it is important to include school and school district administrators in the process. It may also be helpful to include parents and community members on the incident committee. Information that is useful to individual schools may not be useful to the school district as a whole. For example, it may be important for a school to know whether an incident occurred in the locker room or in the cafeteria, but the school district may not need to know this. Similarly, a state may not need to know whether an attendance policy violation consisted of skipping class or forging an absence note.

Communication is essential to ensure reliability and validity.

Communication is essential to ensure reliability and validity. It is critical to clearly describe behaviors that have been defined as infractions in student, staff, and parent handbooks. Students need to know what behaviors are unacceptable before they can be expected to behave appropriately.[3] Staff must know the behaviors for which they are expected to discipline students before they can do so.[4] Finally, parents must be informed about how their children are expected to behave.

[3] Stating clear expectations for student behavior to parents, students, and staff in more than just the handbooks will likely be necessary to maximize appropriate behavior. Recommendations for how to teach appropriate behavior are beyond the scope of this report.

[4] Note: Distributing a staff handbook that includes information on infractions and their definitions should be considered a component of staff training, not a substitute.

Data checks. It is crucial that data be reviewed regularly for completeness and accuracy. It is also necessary to verify that all data elements are being recorded for each incident. During the data review process it is important to examine incident elements being tracked (e.g., time, perpetrator).

At the school level, all incidents recorded on paper need to be entered into the incident database. Staff need to note on each paper reporting form that the incident has been recorded before the form is filed. It is important to establish a system for recording this information (i.e., who enters what information when) to increase the likelihood that information will be recorded as intended. Reviewing paper files to determine whether or not incidents were recorded appropriately may also be useful in managing data entry systems. Assigning a key person the responsibility for oversight of all aspects of incident reporting can improve accuracy.

Assigning a key person the responsibility for oversight of all aspects of incident reporting can improve accuracy.

One way to assess accuracy is to compare a sample of incident forms to what has been recorded in the database for those incidents. When assessing accuracy, it is also important to consider differences from month to month or week to week in the number of each type of incident. If significantly more or fewer "bullying" incidents occurred in one time period than another, it is important to investigate why that is so. If a new bullying prevention program has been implemented, it would be logical for the number of incidents to increase just after the program takes hold. At that time staff will be more sensitive to the kinds of behavior that are unacceptable, and for incidents to decrease after a program has been in place for some time, as students learn more positive ways of interacting. The data must also "make sense." In other words, did a school really have 10 battery incidents last month, or is someone miscoding another type of infraction? Other basic data checks include assessing what percentage of students committed rule violations and which violations are the most frequent. An effective database has built-in checks for consistency of data. For example, if a weapon-related incident is recorded, the computer program will automatically prompt for type of weapon.

When analyzing schools within a district, district staff need to ask whether it is reasonable that School A has more "fights" than School B, given differences in enrollment. If not, more training may be required. Similarly, it will be useful for district and state staff to ask whether it is reasonable that District A has the same number of "fights" as District B, given differences in enrollment.

Compare and contrast. It is useful to compare incident data to other sources. Serious infractions (e.g., illegal behaviors) can be compared to police reports. Incidents involving injury can be compared to hospital records. Levels of problem behavior identified in self-reported data from student and teacher surveys can be contrasted with the level of problem behavior being recorded in incident databases. For many reasons, rates reported from these sources will differ from school or district databases. However, it is important to investigate significant disparities. For example, if students are reporting very high rates of drug use but there are very few drug infractions recorded, it will be valuable to learn why the difference exists.

2.2 Enlisting Public Support

Problem behavior will not go away if ignored.

It is reasonable to be concerned about how data will be used. Such concerns should not become barriers to effective data collection. Problem behavior will not go away if ignored. Without information on what kinds of problem behavior exist, schools will not be able to take steps to address their problems. It is important that information lead to action, not frustration. One use of data is to identify students, schools, and school districts in need of additional supports. Schools cannot demonstrate improvement without a way to establish a starting point—an incident database can provide this.

Parents and the public want schools to produce well-educated students. Given this focus, it is important to educate the public on the need to invest energy in creating safe and orderly schools. The premise that an orderly environment is an important factor in student achievement, and that students cannot be successfully engaged in academic work in a disorderly environment, must be communicated to parents, taxpayers, and policymakers (Squires, Huitt, and Segars, 1983). One way to do this is to develop strong media relations.

Positive media relations. Working with the media can help schools, districts, and states present data in ways that will help strengthen public support for their data collection and prevention efforts. In "A Short Guide to School Public Relations," Kinder (2000) explains that when the facts are known, the vast majority of people are supportive of the efforts of their school leaders. He notes that the time to launch a public relations effort is not during a crisis. A well-designed public relations program aims to prevent problems, not to solve them. Sound public relations efforts can be used to build public support for schools (Muir, 1999). The National School Public Relations Association recommends

enlisting the media to publicize efforts to promote school safety (Price, 1999). Another important strategy is to ensure that all communication contains some form of success story, even when problems are being identified, because this conveys the message that something can be done to improve matters (California Department of Education, 1997). Other experts on school public relations recommend that, when school officials are talking with the public, they approach problems as "needs"—that is, to let the public know what is needed to accomplish specific goals, and what the community can expect to gain for its support (Muir, 1999; Gaskins, 1999). If the school needs money to implement prevention programs, the public must know how effective these efforts can be. For example, Patterson Elementary School used the Effective Behavior Support Program to halve the school's office referrals. The program is aimed at teaching students appropriate conduct and involved tracking the number of students referred to the office, for what offenses, where the violations took place, and concentrated on the most disruptive students. (Sack, 1999). Such success can be very persuasive when asking the public's help in raising the money to implement a program in a specific set of schools.

Approach problems as "needs"—to let the public know what is needed to accomplish specific goals.

Public perception. Before sharing data with people outside the school building, school staff need to be aware of this information. Communicating with school staff is a vital part of safety planning and discipline improvement, and staff members will particularly appreciate receiving timely information directly from administrators. Providing staff members with data on behavior improvement gives them an opportunity to be proud of their accomplishments. In addition, it is important that they know what problems need to be addressed and that they are involved in deciding how the problems will be addressed (Bernhardt, 1998; Ross, 1999). Data can easily be shared at faculty meetings or through school improvement teams. Next, share information with parents. Presentations to parent/teacher associations and school newsletters are two possible communication tools. Reporting mechanisms and presentations are described in Chapter 4.

The California Department of Education (2001) suggests that, when reporting to the public, administrators stress the positive messages illustrated by the data (i.e., safety instead of crime) and how data have been used to develop successful programs. When administrators communicate statistical data in such a positive way, the public is presented with a solvable problem, not an insurmountable dilemma. Presenting data offers an opportunity to form a partnership with law enforcement or other community agencies—another potential resource for schools.

2.3 Financing Data Collection

Implementing a system that allows for early identification and intervention could result in substantial cost savings.

It is likely that there will be costs associated with efforts to clarify definitions; aligning handbooks, rules, policies, and practices; and training staff in what and how to report. However, these initial investments can have great payoffs. One of the most important results would be fewer incidents of problem behavior and a net gain in time spent on the task of learning. There is a strong association between students having academic and behavioral problems (e.g., Hinshaw, 1992; Yoshikawa, 1995). High levels of problem behavior are associated with early grade retention and grade retention is costly, adding at least the expense of an additional year of school to a child's education (Byrd and Weitzman, 1994). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2001), per-pupil spending averaged nearly $6,500 nationally for the 1998–99 school year. Implementing a system that allows for early identification of students with serious behavior problems and for early intervention (thereby supporting the prevention of grade retention and remediation of other problems) could result in substantial cost savings. The implementation of a system that assists with the prevention of violence and vandalism will also result in cost savings. In addition, schools with low rates of violence and vandalism are more effective places where more learning occurs (Squires, Huitt, and Segars, 1983). Thus, the rationale for data collection meets educational goals of a safe climate for academic achievement.

3 Reporting Incident Data

Sharing data voluntarily can help convey the message that a safe and orderly school environment is not only important but also a top priority of schools, districts, and states. Once incident data have been collected, schools, districts, and states must decide what information will be reported and to whom. One of the challenges of collecting data is how this information shapes school image, as discussed in Chapter 2. Proactive, voluntary sharing of data can help convey a message and has the potential to help frame schools in a positive light. While it is true that not all data are positive, it is important to report unfavorable results fully and openly along with an action plan to address the issues these data identify. This may mean not only informing parents and the media about the infractions and disciplinary actions that have occurred, but also determining whether data reflect an increase or decrease in the number or types of incidents, what the school has done to reduce incidents, or what the school plans to do to address an increased number of incidents. It is important to communicate this information to school and district staff before sharing it with the public.

Report even unfavorable results openly along with a plan to address the issues identified.

When sharing data, it is important to be alert to privacy issues. Incident data should not be presented in ways that identify individuals. In some cases this means aggregating, rather than disaggregating, categories of data so that small groups of staff or students cannot be identified by unique characteristics. As noted in Chapter 2, both the Federal Government and many states have legislation regarding the confidentiality of student records and information.

The remainder of this chapter presents recommendations for methods to present data and mechanisms for reporting this information.

3.1 Presenting Incident Data

Incident data may be presented in a written format, graphically, or by a combination of the two. Graphs can be particularly useful in differentiating among variables such as month of or type of disciplinary action as seen in figures 3-1 and 3-2.

Figure 3-1. Disciplinary actions by month—Sample Graph

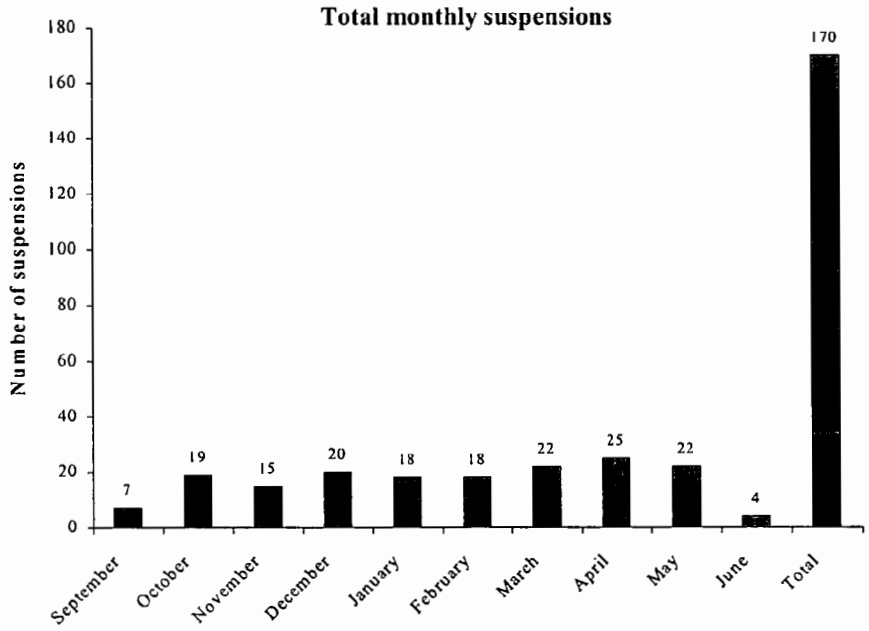
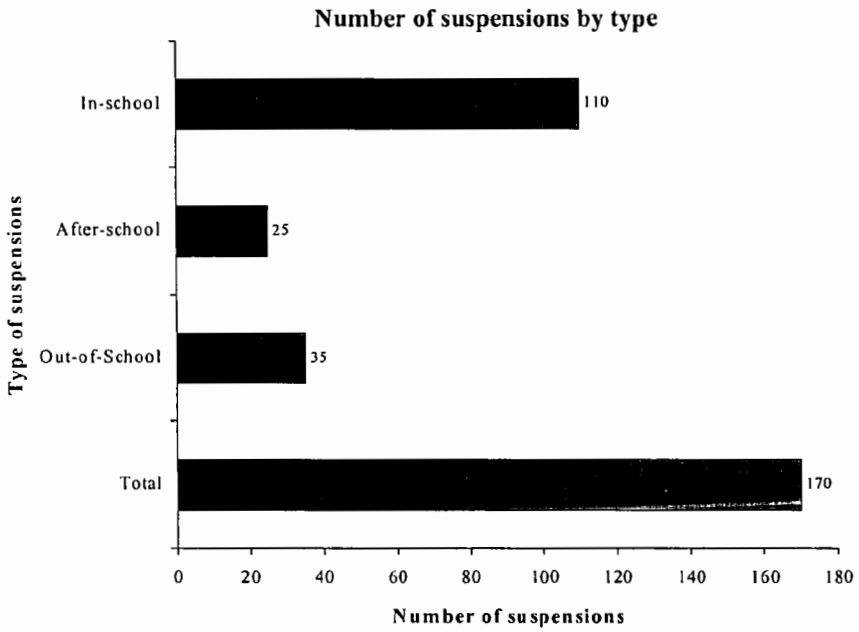


Figure 3-2. Disciplinary actions by type—Sample Graph



Incident data may be grouped by type or category in many ways including:

- By incident,
- By disciplinary action, and
- By student classification.

It may be useful to report rates as this helps to put levels of problem behavior in perspective. For example, if a school of 1,000 students had 20 fights, it certainly had more altercations than a school of 250 with 5 fights, but both schools had the same rate of fighting: 2 fights per 100 students. Furthermore, information on the cost of problem behavior may be of interest to parents and the public.

Reporting Incident Data. A concise explanation of what is being reported is an important first step when discussing the types of incidents that occurred in a school, district, or state. It may be useful to briefly explain the criteria used to determine the severity and the category of an incident and its results. For example, incidents reported to police may differ from those that resulted in suspension or expulsion (i.e., not all incidents that are reported to the police will result in a suspension or expulsion and not all incidents that result in a suspension or expulsion will be reported to police). Therefore, the criteria used to decide when an incident is reported to law enforcement should be clearly stated (e.g., a weapon was used or a student was seriously injured in the incident).

A concise explanation of what is being reported is an important first step when discussing the types of incidents that occurred in a school, district, or state.

It is also important to note whether or not law enforcement personnel are regularly stationed at the school. The presence of a school resource officer or other law enforcement officials may influence whether or not an incident is reported to law enforcement. Similarly, when discussing incidents that resulted in a suspension or expulsion, it is important to explain the category of suspensions being described. Are all suspensions (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and after-school suspension) being reported or are only specific types of suspensions reported? An explanation as to whether the data exclude incidents that resulted in other types of disciplinary actions (e.g., change in placement) will provide useful clarification.

Another way to report incident data is by category of problem behavior. For instance, data could be grouped into the following major categories:

- Drug and alcohol offenses,
- Crimes against persons,
- Property crimes,
- Disorderly conduct, and
- Other.

Clear, accurate reporting tells the reader exactly what is being described.

When grouping information, define each grouping by the types of behaviors contained within the group. Depending on the local or state criteria, drug and alcohol offenses might include Alcohol (code 1000), Drug (code 1600), and Inappropriate Use of Medication (code 2100), while excluding Tobacco (code 3300). Clear, accurate reporting tells the reader exactly what is being described.

Subcategorizing incident data can also be informative. Month-by-month data can show how the level of problem behavior has changed at a school as staff work to implement a new behavior management program. Time and location are also commonly used to subcategorize incidents. For example, grouping incidents by time of day could illustrate the need for additional supervision during problem times (e.g., before school, during lunch). A school might communicate this information with a request to parents for volunteers to help supervise students during these times.

Reporting Disciplinary Actions. The number of disciplinary actions may also be of interest to parents and the public. These data could include the number of detentions, expulsions, and suspensions that were assigned. These figures are likely to differ from the number of incidents, as a fight can result in more than one student being suspended. When reporting multiple types of information (e.g., incidents and disciplinary actions or number of students involved), it may be useful to highlight the differences among them. Disciplinary actions can also be subcategorized by variables such as month, time, and location.

Reporting the Number of Students Involved. Data regarding the number of students involved in incidents can be reported in several ways. It may be necessary to create one set of reports to fulfill state requirements and another set for parents and the public to identify areas of improvement.

Some reports will contain duplicated counts of students; that is, students will be counted more than once if they are involved in more than one incident or are disciplined more than once. Other reports contain unduplicated counts of students and count students only one time, regardless of the number of incidents in which they are involved. For example, the number of students suspended for fighting is an unduplicated count. It includes each student only one time regardless of how many times he or she was suspended for fighting. On the other hand, the total number of suspensions for fighting is a duplicated count of students, as a student is counted once for each time he or she was suspended for fighting. Clear labels are critical to identifying exactly what is being reported. Other figures of interest might include the number of students suspended more than once—an unduplicated count of students.

One of the benefits of maintaining separate data tables is that data can easily be aggregated to whatever level is desired. These data can also be readily subdivided by student characteristics such as gender or race/ethnicity. However, care needs to be taken when creating such figures that the presentation of information does not identify any small groups or individual students.

Some jurisdictions count incidents using the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). This system looks at "events" in several ways, including a "by offense" count. Incidents of crimes against persons (Assault, defined here as Battery—code 1300, and Fighting (incidents that are serious enough to result in arrest)—code 1700; Intimidation, defined here as Threat/Intimidation—code 3200; Kidnapping —2300; and Sex Offenses, both Sexual Battery—code 2800 and Sexual Offenses, Other (incidents that are serious enough to result in arrest)—code 2900) are counted as multiple events if they involve multiple victims (Uniform Crime Reporting Program, 2000). Having separate incident and victim data tables allows computation of such information.

If the public is aware of the specific amount that vandalism is costing a school district, the community might readily agree that spending a fraction of that cost on prevention efforts would be of great benefit.

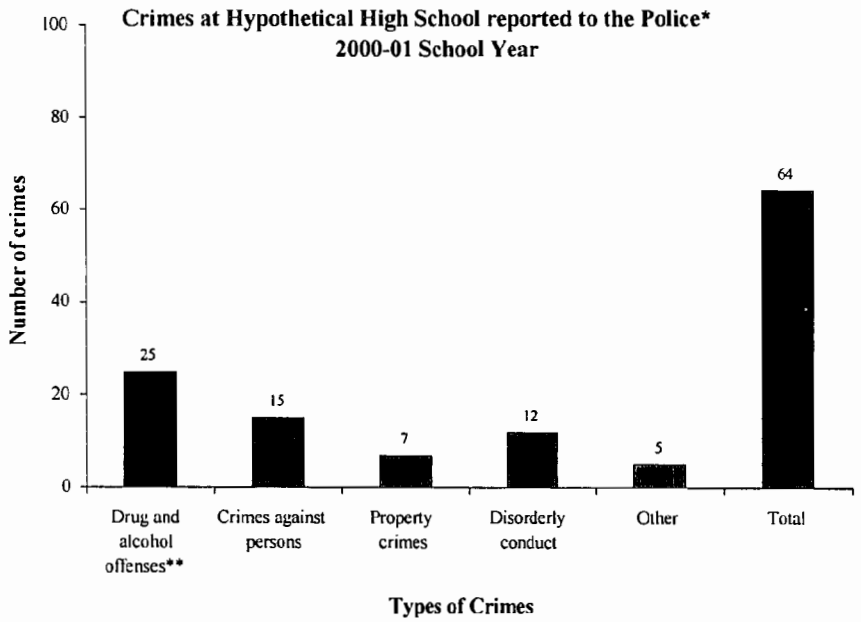
The Cost of Problem Behavior. Presenting data on the cost of problem behavior can be especially helpful when trying to obtain public support for prevention efforts. If the public is aware of the specific amount that vandalism is costing a school district, the community might readily agree that spending a fraction of that cost on prevention efforts would be of great benefit. The cost of personnel resources devoted to managing problem behavior and time lost to student learning should be included as part of the total cost. For example, a false bomb threat that requires a school of 250 students to be evacuated for 4 hours has a student learning cost of 1,000 hours.

Clear and concise identification of what is being reported will assist the target audience in focusing on key points.

Presentation. Just as important as what data are presented is how the information is identified during the presentation. Clear and concise identification of what is being communicated will assist the target audience in focusing on key points. As discussed above, the number of incidents that were reported to law enforcement may differ from the number of incidents that resulted in suspension. Similarly, the number of students suspended may not match the number of suspensions. Clear labeling will help alleviate confusion. Thus, if incident data reported to law enforcement are being described, the title on the chart might read "Crimes Reported to Law Enforcement . . ." (see figure 3-3). Conversely, if a chart describes the number of students suspended, its title should read, "Number of Students Suspended . . . " (see figure 3-4) in contrast to the total number of suspensions as presented in figures 3-1 and 3-2.

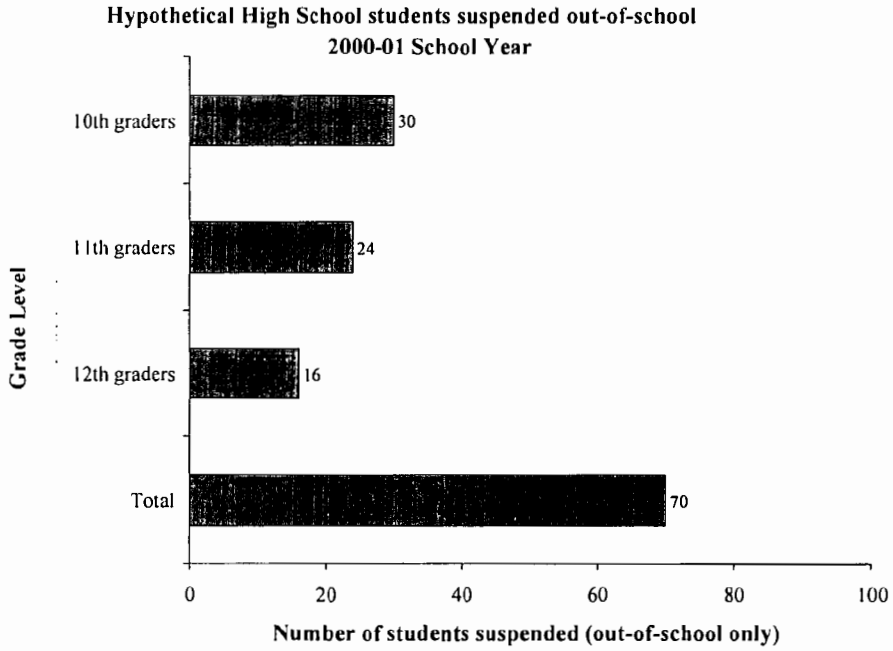
Data on incidents reported to law enforcement provide an opportunity for schools and communities to discuss how law enforcement can work with schools to address problem behavior. It is helpful to report information on school/law enforcement partnerships when releasing information such as those shown in figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3. Incidents reported to law enforcement—Sample Graph



* A School Resource Officer is stationed at Hypothetical High School during school hours.
** Incidents involving illegal drugs, alcohol, and/or inappropriate use of medicine, but not tobacco, are included here.

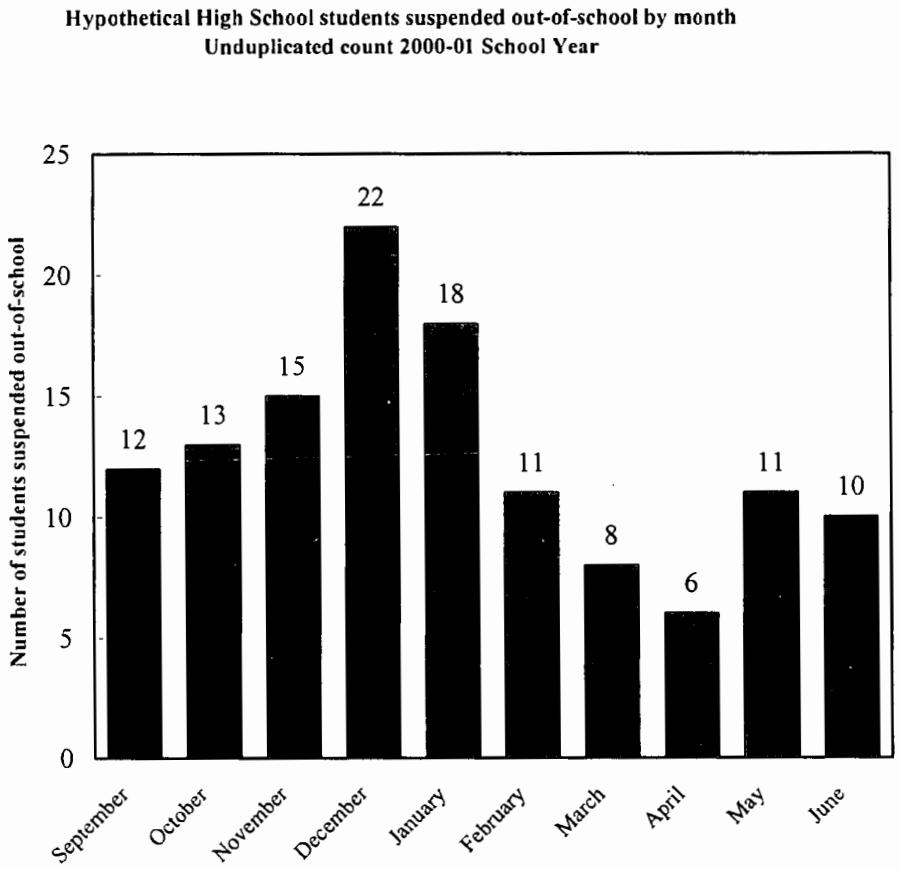
Figure 3-4. Number of students suspended (out-of-school)—Sample Graph



Illustrations need to be clear and simple. This rule is especially important to remember when reporting data by subcategories. The presentation must make sense for the subcategories being reported. For example, a figure showing the number of students suspended out-of-school at least once in a month (i.e., an unduplicated count by month) would omit a total column. In this example (see figure 3-5), some students would be included in more than one column—those suspended in more than one month. An unduplicated total would be smaller than the sum of the months and would be confusing to readers. Thus, total out-of-school suspensions would be reported separately, as in figure 3-4 above.

Keep illustrations clear and simple.

Figure 3-5. Number of students suspended by month—Sample Graph



3.2 Reporting Mechanisms

Many reporting methods are available to schools, districts, and states. The appropriate medium will be determined by reporting objectives. Options include additions to existing periodic reports, specific publications dedicated to reporting data, and press releases. Each of these formats may include general or specific data depending on the school or district goals. Many states produce special incident reports (e.g., Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia), while other states include incident data in their Safe and Drug-Free Schools reports (e.g., Idaho, Maine, South Dakota). Wisconsin produces monthly newsletters that routinely report incident data. In some states, incident data are posted on the department of education's web site (e.g., Michigan, Washington). Florida

distributes reports to the state legislature, state school board members, and school district superintendents.

Many states require schools and/or districts to produce report cards that include specific incident data, such as the number of certain types of incidents (e.g., drug and alcohol offenses, fights) or the number of students suspended. This information is often posted on school and district web sites in addition to being mailed to parents. Parent Teacher Association and other school newsletters may also provide a useful mechanism for reporting on problem behavior.

State and local newspapers often report on school discipline. Press releases from a school are a form of proactive reporting, acknowledging problem areas and potential solutions as well as areas that have seen improvement. When statewide data are released by a department of education, a specific school or district may find itself on the defensive. With proactive reporting, the public would have previously been made aware of any problem areas and the statewide data would not come as a surprise. In Florida, local newspapers often print school-by-school "report card" data. Releasing news about prevention efforts at the same time the school report cards were released helped one school district put this information in a positive light. The headline of the local paper's article on the subject read, "Schools Tackle Discipline in Classrooms" (Valle-Greene, 2000). This proactive report assured the public that the school district had a plan to improve student behavior.

Press releases from a school are a form of proactive reporting.

Public support is vital to the implementation of programs designed to ensure a safe, friendly learning environment. Schools and school districts need to examine and report not only data on incidents but also information on prevention and intervention programs. In this way, the public is not only informed, but also supports efforts to maintain discipline and enhance the education climate in the classroom.

4 Collecting Data

This chapter outlines elements important for inclusion in an incident database. Users may choose to collect some or all variables as best suits their needs. There may also be codes within a variable that are not useful for individual schools, districts, or states. This model was developed to be as inclusive as possible. The items included below are those that could be used to make a difference in the climate of a school, school district, or state.

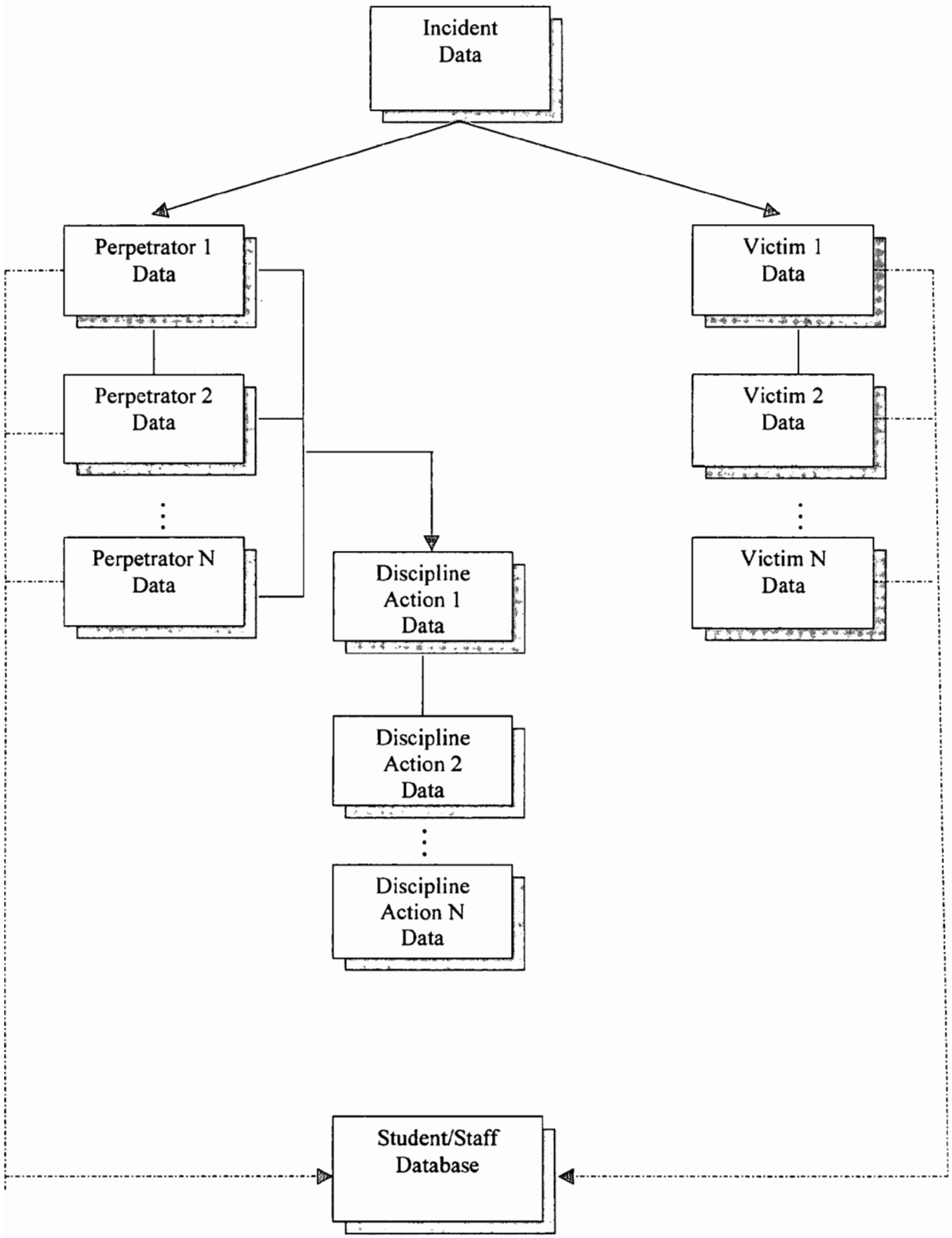
The elements discussed in this chapter are broken into four categories, as illustrated in Figure 4-1:

- Information about the incident itself—for example, when it occurred;
- Perpetrator data;
- Victim data; and
- Information about the disciplinary action taken.

Incidents often involve more than one perpetrator, victim, and/or disciplinary action. Relational databases allow users to record any number of components (e.g., multiple perpetrators, victims, disciplinary actions) without requiring that the number of components be predetermined by the application developer and therefore limited. For example, perhaps a fight occurs involving 10 perpetrators. If the incident database comprises a single data table which contains three perpetrator fields, it will not permit the school to record all the perpetrators' information in the same entry. However, if the database has a separate perpetrator table, users may simply record an entry for each perpetrator, linking the offenders to the incident with the incident identifier field. Similarly, it is likely that there will be incidents that involve multiple victims or that result in multiple disciplinary actions. Allowing for links from the victim and perpetrator modules to the student and staff databases will simplify data entry. Allowing all disciplinary actions for an incident to be recorded will permit complete review of the frequency with which particular penalties are applied and their relationship to future outcomes.

It is useful to collect victim data. Some people would argue that this is unnecessary as the victim did nothing wrong. However, if collected, this information can be useful in identifying patterns of victimization. In addition to their responsibility to take appropriate action against those who cause victimization, schools and districts have a responsibility to support the victims themselves. This includes prevention programs and other actions to prevent

Figure 4-1. Elements of an Incident Database



discrimination, harassment, and other problem behaviors. Victim data will facilitate this.

In many schools, staff complete one "incident referral" form for each participant in an incident. In such a school for the situation previously described involving 10 perpetrators, 10 referral forms would be generated. As noted above, a relational database will allow the information from all 10 forms to be linked by the same incident identifier.

The discussion in the remainder of this chapter presumes that a relational database linking victim and perpetrator elements to student and staff databases will be used.[5] It is critical to treat data on incidents, victims, perpetrators, and disciplinary actions as separate categories of information and create separate "modules" or data tables for each category.[6]

4.1 Incident Data and Codes

The variables described in this section capture information specific to the incident itself. That is, these variables are used to record what occurred and when. The codes for many variables allow either general or specific information to be collected. The codes are structured so that specific codes can be subsumed under more general codes. This will permit comparability between locales collecting specific information and locales collecting only general information.

Incident Identifier

1000

Incident Identifier. This is a locally assigned unique identifier (within the school or school district) to identify each specific incident or occurrence. The same identifier should be used to document the entire incident even if it included multiple offenses and multiple offenders. This is one of the key fields that link incident records to perpetrator, victim, and disciplinary action data. In addition to comprising a unique incident code, this variable could include the following elements:[7]

[5] Readers are reminded that the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student and Staff Data Handbooks* contain definitions and codes for data elements for a variety of demographic characteristics including race/ethnicity, gender, limited-English proficiency, students served under Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act Public Law 105-17 (IDEA), and students served under Section 504. These and other descriptive items are necessary for completion of a variety of state and Federal reporting requirements. If a traditional or independent incident database is employed rather than a relational database, in addition to the variables discussed in this chapter, codes for the above characteristics will need to be included so that users can respond to state and Federal mandates.

[6] It is important to maintain these data files for the length of time mandated by state and local jurisdictions.

[7] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student Data Handbook for Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education* for additional recommendations on constructing identifiers.

- School year,
- School identifier,
- School district identifier, and
- State identifier.

Including the school year is useful when records are maintained for more than one year. By including "location" elements (school, school district, and state), users can distinguish between incidents reported by multiple jurisdictions. The school identifier needs to be included when incident data are reported from the school to the school district. This variable could be a local school district code, the code assigned by the state, or the code assigned by some Federal surveys. The school and school district identifier needs to be included when incident data are reported from school districts to their state offices of education. The district identifier could be the state's code for the district or the code assigned by some Federal surveys such as the Common Core of Data (CCD). A state identifier would need to be included only if incident data are reported to the Federal Government. The level of detail included in this variable will be determined by individual needs.

School Number

1010

School Number. This number is assigned by the school district or state for the school where the incident occurred. If the incident occurs during an activity or on transportation that is sponsored by the school, district, or state and not attached to a particular school, use a code that is not already assigned to a reporting unit. For example, 9s can be used to capture these "other" situations. Thus, if the state-assigned school code is a four-digit variable, use the code "9999." If a school identifier is included in the incident identifier, as discussed above, it need not be included separately.[8]

Incident Date

1020

Incident Date. Use this variable to identify the date when the incident occurred. Allow two digits to capture the day, two digits to capture the month and four digits to capture the year: MM-DD-YYYY. (Consideration of computer operating systems will dictate the format in which the data are stored.)

Time

1030

Time. This variable identifies when the incident occurred and whether or not it occurred during school hours. It is important to record specific information about when an incident occurred. For example, instead of simply recording that an incident occurred during school hours, noting that an incident took place while

[8] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student Data Handbook for Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education* for additional recommendations on assigning school numbers.

Time (continued)

1030

students were in transit between regular classes or during lunch would make the information more useful. Rather than recording the exact time of the incident, using descriptors may be more meaningful, as the exact time an incident occurred would not be meaningful outside of the school building—while 8:15 a.m. might be "before school hours" on one campus, it could be "during class" at another. Using these descriptors permits greater comparability across schools and districts. Additionally, given that over the course of the school year adjustments to the school schedule do occur (e.g., snow days), while 9:00 a.m. might be "during class" most of the time, on the day of a particular incident it may be "before class." Specific time descriptors will be useful if users are trying to identify when problem behavior is most likely to occur.

Although specific descriptors are recommended, this may not be useful for all schools and districts. For this reason, the coding structure permits the more specific codes that describe exactly when "during school hours" (110-199) an incident occurred to be subsumed under the general "during school hours" code (100). Thus, two locales need not both use specific codes for all incidents during school hours to be comparable.

100	**During School Hours**	**Select from specific codes below. Use these codes for incidents occurring <u>during the regular school day.</u>**
110	*Before classes*	The incident occurred before the start of regular classes.
120	*During class*	The incident occurred during a regular class period.
130	*During passing*	The incident occurred while students were in transit between regular classes.
140	*During lunch/recess*	The incident occurred during lunch or recess.
150	*After classes*	The incident occurred after the end of regular classes.
197	*Other time during school hours*	The time when the incident occurred cannot be captured by the above categories, but did take place during school hours.

Time (continued)

1030

200	**In Transit**	**The incident occurred while students were <u>on the way to or from school.</u>**
210	*On the way **to** school*	The incident occurred while students were on their way **to** school.
220	*On the way **from** school*	The incident occurred while students were on their way **from** school.
300	**Outside School Hours**	**Select from specific codes below. Use these codes for incidents that occurred outside of school hours at times <u>when students were not in transit to or from school.</u>**
310	*School-sponsored activity*	The incident occurred during a school-sponsored activity. Examples might include athletic events, academic clubs or other school programs.
320	*Nonschool-sponsored activity*	The incident did not occur during a school-sponsored event, but it involved one or more students.
397	*Other*	The time when the incident occurred cannot be captured by the above categories, but did take place outside school hours.
999	**Unknown**	**It is unknown when the incident occurred.**

Location

1040

Location (Where). This variable identifies where the incident occurred. The primary codes for this variable capture whether the incident occurred on or off the school campus. Again, record specific information about where an incident occurred. For example, rather than simply recording that an incident occurred on campus, record that it took place in a classroom. Specific location descriptors will be useful if users are trying to identify where problem behavior is most likely to occur.

100	**On Campus**	**Select from specific codes below. Use these codes for incidents occurring <u>on the school campus.</u>**
101	*Administrative offices*	The incident occurred in a school office (e.g., main office, principal's office).
102	*Cafeteria*	The incident occurred in the cafeteria or in another area where students eat meals.
103	*Classroom*	The incident occurred inside a classroom.
104	*Hallway or stairs*	The incident occurred in a hallway or stairwell.
105	*Locker room or gym*	The incident occurred in a locker room or gym facility.
106	*Restroom*	The incident occurred in a bathroom.
107	*Library/Media center*	The incident occurred in a library or media center.
108	*Computer lab*	The incident occurred in a computer lab.
109	*Auditorium*	The incident occurred in an auditorium.
129	*Other inside area*	The incident occurred in another area inside the school building(s).
130	*Athletic field or playground*	The incident occurred on an athletic field or playground.
131	*Stadium*	The incident occurred in a stadium.
132	*Parking lot*	The incident occurred in the school parking lot.
197	*Other outside area*	The locale where the incident occurred cannot be captured by one of the above categories, but did take place on campus.

Location (continued)

1040

200	**Off Campus**	**Select from specific codes below. Use these codes for incidents occurring off the school campus.**
201	*Bus stop*	The incident occurred at a bus stop.
202	*School bus*	The incident occurred on a school bus.
203	*Walking to or from school*	The incident occurred while students were walking to or from school.
210	*Other school*	The incident occurred at another school in the district.
220	*Other school district facility*	The incident occurred at another school district facility (e.g., central administration building).
297	*Other off-campus location*	The location where the incident occurred cannot be captured by one of the above categories, but took place off campus.
999	**Unknown**	**The incident occurred at an unknown location.**

Facilities Code

1050

Facilities Code. This variable is intended for school-specific codes that capture precise information on the location where the incident occurred. For example, a school might record class number, hall number, or school bus number. This information will be most useful if schools plot incident locations, but the data may not be necessary for all schools. The codes for this variable are to be user-defined.[9]

Cost

1060

Cost. If the incident resulted in a quantifiable monetary loss for any entity involved, identify and record the value of that loss. Cost may be reported by specific dollar amount or range. For example, if vandalism of a school facility results in having repairs made, the value of those repairs should be reported. In addition, the value of personnel resources used for repairs (e.g., time spent painting over graffiti) or consumed by the incident (e.g., time involved in evacuating during a false fire alarm) should be recorded here. Also record the value of stolen items here.[10]

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[9] Refer to the National Forum on Education Statistics' *Education Facilities Handbook* (in press) for additional recommendations on developing codes to identify facilities data.

[10] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics' handbook *Financial Accounting for Local and State School Systems* for additional recommendations on developing codes to capture the cost of losses.

Reporter
1070

Reporter. This variable is used to identify the individual who reported the incident. The codes given below permit very specific coding of the individual reporting the incident. Again, individual schools and districts may find that capturing such detailed information is not useful. If that is the case, use code 100 to record that a student reported the incident, rather than codes 110 or 120 to describe exactly what type of student reported the incident. Thus, to be comparable, two locales need not both use the specific codes since all "100s" represent students.

100	**Student**	**The incident was reported by an individual who was enrolled in an instructional program in a school at the time the incident occurred.**
110	*Student enrolled in the school where the incident occurred*	The incident was reported by a regularly enrolled student in the school where the incident was reported at the time the incident occurred.
120	*Student enrolled in another school*	The incident was reported by a student who, at the time the incident occurred, was enrolled in a school other than the one where the incident was reported.
130	*Suspended or expelled student*	The incident was reported by a student who was suspended or expelled from regular classes in the school at the time the incident occurred.
197	*Other student*	The type of reporter cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the incident was reported by a student.

Reporter (continued)

1070

200	**Professional Staff**	**The incident was reported by a member of the professional staff at the school at the time the incident occurred.**
210	*Teacher*	The incident was reported by a teacher in the school at the time the incident occurred.
220	*Substitute*	The incident was reported by a substitute teacher in the school at the time the incident occurred.
230	*Media specialist/ Librarian*	The incident was reported by a media specialist or librarian in the school at the time the incident occurred.
240	*Counselor*	The incident was reported by a school counselor (e.g., guidance counselor) in the school at the time the incident occurred.
250	*Social worker/ School psychologist*	The incident was reported by a social worker or school psychologist in the school at the time the incident occurred.
260	*Medical staff*	The incident was reported by a member of the medical staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
297	*Other professional staff*	The type of reporter cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the incident was reported by a professional staff member.

Reporter (continued)

1070

300	**Administrator**	**The incident was reported by an administrator in the school (or school district) at the time the incident occurred.**
310	*Principal/Head of school*	The incident was reported by the principal or head of the school at the time the incident occurred.
320	*Assistant principal/ Vice principal*	The incident was reported by an assistant principal or vice-principal in the school at the time the incident occurred.
330	*Dean*	The incident was reported by a dean in the school at the time the incident occurred.
340	*District level administrator*	The incident was reported by a district level administrator in the school district at the time the incident occurred.
350	*School board member*	The incident was reported by a school board member in the school district at the time the incident occurred.
397	*Other administrator*	The type of reporter cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the incident was reported by an administrator.

Reporter (continued)

1070

400	**Other School Staff**	**The incident was reported by another school staff member (e.g., school support personnel, maintenance personnel) in the school at the time the incident occurred.**
410	*Bus driver/ Transportation staff*	The incident was reported by a bus driver or member of the transportation staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
420	*Clerical staff*	The incident was reported by a member of the clerical staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
430	*Custodial staff*	The incident was reported by a member of the custodial staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
440	*Food service staff*	The incident was reported by a member of the food service staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
450	*Paraprofessional, aide, assistant*	The incident was reported by a paraprofessional, aide, or assistant in the school at the time the incident occurred.
460	*Security personnel*	The incident was reported by a security officer (for law enforcement officers see code 500) in the school at the time the incident occurred.
497	*Other staff*	The type of reporter cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the incident was reported by a school staff member.

Reporter (continued)

1070

500	**Law Enforcement Officer**	**The incident was reported by a law enforcement officer at the time the incident occurred.**
510	*Municipal law enforcement officer assigned to the school*	The incident was reported by a municipal law enforcement officer (e.g., town, city, county police officer, school resource officer, or sheriff) assigned to the school.
520	*Municipal law enforcement officer **not** assigned to the school*	The incident was reported by a municipal law enforcement officer (e.g., town, city, county police officer, school resource officer, or sheriff) **not** assigned to the school.
530	*School district police officer assigned to the school*	The incident was reported by a school district police officer (i.e., directly employed by the school district) assigned to the school for some or all of the school day at the time the incident occurred.
540	*School district police officer **not** assigned to the school*	The incident was reported by a school district police officer (i.e., directly employed by the school district) **not** assigned to the school for some or all of the school day at the time the incident occurred.
597	*Other law enforcement officer*	The type of reporter cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the incident was reported by a law enforcement officer.

Reporter (continued)

1070

600	**Nonschool Personnel**	**The incident was reported by an individual who did not attend or work for the school (e.g., parent, community member).**
610	*Parent/guardian*	The incident was reported by a parent or guardian of a student.
620	*Representative of visiting school*	The incident was reported by a representative of a visiting school (e.g., teacher, coach).
630	*Other adult*	The incident was reported by another adult in the community.
640	*Nonstudent youth*	The incident was reported by a nonstudent youth (e.g., dropout).
697	*Other nonschool personnel*	The type of reporter cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the incident was reported by nonschool personnel.
999	**Unknown**	**Use this code for incidents that were anonymously reported.**

Reporter ID

1080

Reporter ID. This variable allows users to record pre-existing school or district staff and student identifiers, when the individual who reported the incident is a student or staff member. This allows descriptive information about the individual to be linked to the incident via the student or staff database.[11]

Weapon Type

1090

Weapon Type. This variable is used to identify the type of weapon used during an incident. The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act requires states to report the number of students expelled for bringing firearms to school[12] by type of firearm. The following codes permit detailed coding of the type of weapon used in the incident.

[11] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student Data Handbook for Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education* and *Staff Data Handbook for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education* for additional recommendations on constructing identifiers.

[12] The Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) requires that each state receiving Federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) have a state law that requires all local educational agencies (LEAs) in the state to expel from school for at least 1 year any student found bringing a firearm to school. It also requires that state laws authorize the LEA chief administering officer to modify any such expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the GFSA states that it must be construed so as to be consistent with the IDEA.

Weapon Type (continued)

1090

10	**Firearm**	**Select from specific codes below. A firearm is any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any machine gun.**
11	*Handgun*	The weapon involved was a handgun or pistol.
12	*Shotgun/rifle*	The weapon involved was a shotgun or rifle.

13	*Other type of firearm (e.g., bombs, grenades, or starter pistols)*	The weapon involved was another type of firearm not named above, including zip guns, starter guns, and flare guns. As defined by the Gun-Free Schools Act, other firearms include:
		▪ Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive;
		▪ The frame or receiver of any weapon described above;
		▪ Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; and
		▪ Any destructive device, which includes:
		  ○ Any explosive, incendiary (e.g., bomb, grenade), or poison gas;
		  ○ Any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and
		  ○ Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

Weapon Type (continued)

1090

20	**Knife**	**The weapon involved was a knife.**
21	*Knife with blade length **less than** 2.5 inches*	The weapon involved was a knife with a blade **less than** 2.5 inches in length.[13]
22	*Knife with blade length **at least** 2.5 inches, **but less than** 3 inches*	The weapon involved was a knife with a blade **at least** 2.5 inches in length, **but less than** 3 inches in length.
23	*Knife with blade length **greater than or equal to** 3 inches*	The weapon involved was a knife with a blade **3 inches or greater in length.**[14]
29	*Other knife*	The weapon involved was another type of knife.
30	**Other Sharp Objects**	**The weapon involved was another type of sharp object, (e.g., razor blade, ice pick, dirk, Chinese star, other pointed instrument [used as a weapon]).**
40	**Other Object**	**The weapon involved was another known object (e.g., chain, nunchakus, brass knuckle, billy club, electrical weapon or device [stun gun], BB or pellet gun).**
50	**Substance Used as Weapon**	**The weapon involved was a substance (e.g., mace, tear gas) that was used as a weapon.**
97	**Other**	**The incident involved a weapon other than those described above.**
98	**No Weapon**	**No weapon was used in the incident.**
99	**Unknown Weapon**	**A weapon was used in the incident, but the type is unknown.**

[13] As of January 2002, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Office of Special Education Programs differentiates between knives with blades 2.5 inches or longer and blades less than 2.5 inches when collecting information on incidents involving students with disabilities.

[14] ED's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program collects information on incidents involving knives with blades 3 inches or longer. See appendix A for additional information regarding Federal reporting requirements.

Injury
1100

Injury. Record whether or not any participants were physically injured, and if so, identify whether the injury was major or minor.

10	**Minor injury**	At least one participant received a minor physical injury as a result of the incident. A minor injury is one that does not require professional medical attention such as a scrape on the body, knee or elbow; and/or minor bruising. **Medical attention from the school nurse qualifies the injury as minor unless further medical attention is required.**
20	**Major injury**	At least one participant received a major physical injury as a result of the incident. A major injury is one that requires professional medical attention which may include, but is not limited to, a bullet wound, a stab or puncture wound, fractured or broken bones, concussions, cuts requiring stitches, and any other injury with profuse or excessive bleeding.
96	**No injury**	No one was physically injured during the course of the incident.

Reported to Law Enforcement
1110

Reported to Law Enforcement. The incident should be coded as reported to law enforcement if the school resource officer or any other law enforcement official was notified about the incident, regardless of whether official action was taken.

1 = Yes

2 = No

Related Elements
1200

Related Elements. Related elements capture supplemental information about incidents. Use these codes when the primary offense is more serious in nature than alcohol or drug, etc. offenses, but includes one of the elements described below.

This information will be useful in expanding the understanding of the scope of these specific types of problems. These elements should be used to describe whether an incident was related to alcohol, drugs, or gang activity, hate-motivated, or weapon-related. For example, if a student committed vandalism while under the influence of alcohol, alcohol was not the primary offense, but the incident was alcohol-related. When it is unknown whether an incident was related to any of these elements, code the incident as not related. For the purpose of determining the scope of "alcohol" problems, for example, being uncertain whether or not the incident was alcohol-related or knowing that it was not alcohol-related are effectively the same thing.

Alcohol-Related
1210

Alcohol-Related. The incident is alcohol-related if those involved in the incident were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident or if there is evidence that they had been drinking, based on testing or investigation of a police officer at the scene, or if the incident is somehow related to possession, use, or sale of alcohol. Do **not** report "Yes" here if the main offense during the incident was possession, use, or sale of alcohol. In that case, report this as an alcohol offense (code 1000).

1 = Yes

2 = No

Drug-Related
1220

Drug-Related. The incident is drug-related if those involved in the incident were under the influence of drugs at the time of the incident, based on testing or investigation done by police as a result of the incident, or if the incident is somehow related to possession, use, or sale of drugs.[15] Do **not** report "Yes" here if the main offense during the incident was possession, use, or sale of drugs. In that case, report this as a drug offense (code 1600).

1 = Yes

2 = No

[15] Drugs include illegal substances such as marijuana and cocaine and unauthorized use of controlled substances such as demerol and morphine. Consult local and state laws for a complete list of these substances.

Gang-Related

1230

Gang-Related. The incident is gang-related if it is gang-motivated or if gang membership caused the incident or contributed to actions that occurred during the incident. For example, an incident of vandalism or robbery might be part of an initiation into a gang, or a fight might be caused by gang rivalry. Report an incident as gang-related only if certain that gang membership contributed to the incident. A gang is an organized group characterized by turf concerns, symbols, special dress, and/or colors that engages in delinquent or illegal activity.

1 = Yes

2 = No

Hate-Related

1240

Hate-Related. The incident is hate-related if it is motivated by hate due to some characteristics or perceived characteristics of the victim including race, gender, religion, color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, age, social and family background, linguistic preference, or disability. Any act, or attempted act, is hate-related if it is designed to cause physical injury, emotional suffering, or property damage through intimidation, harassment, racial/ethnic slurs and bigoted epithets, vandalism, force, or the threat of force, motivated all or in part by hostility to some real or perceived characteristic of the victim. It may be helpful to distinguish between hate motivated incidents that are related to the victim's race, for example, and hate motivated incidents that are related to the victim's religion with additional user-defined codes if a school, district, or state has a special concern about one or more of these characteristics.

1 = Yes

2 = No

Weapon-Related

1250

Weapon-Related. This includes incidents where any of those involved in the incident possessed or used a weapon during the incident or the incident was somehow related to possession, use, or sale of weapons. Do **not** report "Yes" here if the main offense during the incident is possession, use, or sale of weapons. In that case code this as weapons possession (code 3700).

1 = Yes

2 = No

Also code the type of weapon used under "Weapon Type" (see variable 1090).

Incident Codes

1300

Incident Codes. This section presents recommendations for categorizing behavior incidents into specific incident codes. These codes are presented alphabetically. Users may wish to assign a hierarchy so that the code assigned describes the most serious component of the incident (where multiple components exist). A hierarchy could be based on capturing the type of problem behavior that causes the most injury or greatest loss of property, or it could be based on locally defined parameters. As noted earlier, some incident codes are structured so that one can choose to record specific types of violations (e.g., attendance policy violations). Also as noted above, only record specific information if it will be useful. More specific information on certain types of misbehavior (e.g., 3600-Violation of School Rules) might be of use to a school or district. The use of subcodes as necessary will meet these needs.

In some cases, it may be difficult to determine the code that most accurately describes an incident. For example, a fight could be construed as a more serious (1300-Battery) or less serious (2500-Physical altercation, minor) incident. Training staff on how to apply definitions is important to accurate reporting. Similarities are identified below with references to other codes that may describe an incident more accurately.

Note: Many incidents described here are illegal behaviors and need to be reported to law enforcement in addition to any action taken by school officials.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

1000 Alcohol (liquor law violations: possession, use, sale)

Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol. Suspicion of being under the influence of alcohol may be included if it results in disciplinary action.

Violations can be specifically coded as:

1010 Sale of alcohol	Selling alcoholic beverages.
1020 Distribution of alcohol	Distributing (i.e., giving away) alcoholic beverages.
1030 Drinking alcohol	Drinking alcoholic beverages.
1040 Possession of alcohol	Having alcoholic beverages in one's pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc.
1050 Suspicion of alcohol use	Exhibiting behaviors that suggests that an individual consumed alcohol.
1097 Other alcohol	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve an alcohol violation.

Note: When an incident involves two or more alcohol offenses, code the most serious.

1100 Arson (Setting a Fire)

To unlawfully and intentionally damage, or attempt to damage, any school or personal property by fire or incendiary device. Firecrackers, fireworks, and trashcan fires would be included in this category if they were contributing factors to a damaging fire.

Notes: Without a fire, firecrackers and fireworks should be coded as disruptive behavior. This category does not include a simple act of lighting a match.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

1200	**Attendance Policy Violation (Not Attending School or Classes as Required)**	**Violation of state, school district, or school policy relating to attendance.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

1210	*Forging absence excuse*	To be locally defined.
1220	*Skipping class*	To be locally defined.
1230	*Tardiness*	To be locally defined.
1240	*Truancy*	To be locally defined.
1297	*Other attendance policy violation*	The incident above cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve an attendance policy violation.

1300	**Battery (Physical Attack/Harm)**	**Touching or striking of another person against his or her will or intentionally causing bodily harm to an individual.**

Examples: Striking that causes bleeding, broken nose; kicking while a student is down.

Notes: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category. This category should be used when the attack is serious enough to warrant calling the police or security or when serious bodily harm occurs. Include an attack with a weapon in this category. (This offense may be referred to by law enforcement as aggravated assault.)

See also: 1700-Fighting and 2500-Physical Altercation, Minor.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

1400 Burglary/Breaking and Entering (Stealing Property/ Unlawful Entry) — **Unlawful entry or attempted entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime.**

Example: Offender forces a door or uses a mechanical contrivance (e.g., passkey, skeleton key) to unlawfully enter a school for the purpose of burglarizing.

Notes: When using this code, record the value of any property loss or the cost of repairing or replacing any damaged property under "Cost." It is not necessary that force be used in gaining entry; neither is it necessary that property loss occur.

See also: 2600-Robbery, 3100-Theft, 3400-Trespassing, and 3500-Vandalism.

1500 Disorderly Conduct (Disruptive Behavior) — **Any act that disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function; behavior which substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment.**

See also: 2200-Insubordination and 3600-Violation of School Rules.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

1600	**Drugs Excluding Alcohol and Tobacco (Illegal Drug Possession, Sale, Use/Under the Influence)**	**Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, solicitation, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drugs (e.g., demerol, morphine) or narcotic substance.** [16]

Violations can be specifically coded as:

1610	*Sale of illegal Drug*	Selling illegal drugs.
1620	*Sale of substance **represented as** an illegal drug*	Selling a substance represented as an illegal drug (e.g., selling oregano represented as marijuana).
1630	*Distribution of illegal drug*	Distributing (i.e., giving away) illegal drugs.
1640	*Distribution of substance **represented as*** an illegal drug	Distributing (i.e., giving away) substance represented as an illegal drug.
1650	*Use of illegal drug*	Smoking, snorting, injecting, ingesting, or otherwise using an illegal drug.
1660	*Possession of illegal drug*	Having an illegal drug in one's pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc.
1670	*Possession of drug paraphernalia*	Having equipment (e.g., bong) for use in consuming illegal drugs in one's pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc.
1680	*Suspicion of use*	An instance where an individual's behavior suggests that he or she used illegal drugs.
1697	*Other drug offense*	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve illegal drugs.

Note: When an incident involves two or more drug offenses, code the most serious.

See also: 2100-Inappropriate Use of Medication.

[16] Consult local and state laws for a complete list of these substances.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

1700	**Fighting (Mutual Altercation)**	**Mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence, where there is no major injury.**

Notes: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category. Where serious injury occurs, the incident may be coded as battery for all participants. Does not include verbal confrontations, tussles, or other minor confrontations. (This offense may be referred to by law enforcement as simple assault.)

See also: 1300-Battery and 2500-Physical Altercation, Minor.

1800	**Harassment, Nonsexual (Physical, Verbal, or Psychological)**	**Repeatedly annoying or attacking a student or group of students or other personnel which creates an intimidating or hostile educational or work environment.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

1810	*Bullying*	Repeated negative behaviors intended to frighten or cause discomfort. These may include, but are not limited to verbal or written threats or physical harm.
1820	*Hazing*	Committing an act or acts against a student or coercing a student to commit an act that creates risk of harm to a person in order to be initiated into a student organization or class.
1897	*Other nonsexual harassment*	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve nonsexual harassment.

Note: When above incidents are hate-related, administrators need to record code "Hate-Related" (see variable 1240) as Yes.

See also: 3200-Threat/Intimidation.

1900	**Harassment, Sexual (Unwelcome Sexual Conduct)**	**Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.**

Examples: Leering; pinching; grabbing; suggestive comments, gestures, or jokes; or pressure to engage in sexual activity.

Note: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category.

See also: 1800-Harassment, Nonsexual and 2400-Obscene Behavior.

2000	**Homicide (Murder or Manslaughter)**	**Killing a human being.**

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

2100	**Inappropriate Use of Medication (Prescription or over-the-counter)**	**Use, possession, or distribution of any prescription or over-the-counter medication (e.g., aspirin, cough syrups, caffeine pills, nasal sprays) in violation of school policy.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

2110 Sale of medication	Selling prescription or over-the-counter medication.
2120 Distribution of medication	Distributing (i.e., giving away) prescription or over-the-counter medicine in violation of school rules.
2130 Use of medication in violation of school rules	Using prescription or over-the-counter medicine in violation of school rules.
2140 Possession of medication in violation of school rules	Having prescription or over-the-counter medication in one's pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc., in violation of school rules
2150 Suspicion of use of medication in violation of school rules	An instance where an individual's behavior suggests that he or she used prescription or over-the-counter drugs in violation of school rules.
2197 Other inappropriate use of medication	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve the use of prescription or over-the-counter medication in violation of school rules.

Note: When an incident involves two or more inappropriate uses of medicine offenses, code the most serious.

See also: 1600-Drugs.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

2200	**Insubordination (Disobedience)**	**Unwillingness to submit to authority, refusal to respond to a reasonable request, or other situations in which a student is disobedient.**

See also: 1500-Disorderly conduct.

2300	**Kidnapping (Abduction)**	**Unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian. This category includes hostage-taking.**
2400	**Obscene Behavior**	**Language or actions, written, oral, physical, or electronic, in violation of community or school standards.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

2410	*Displays of affection in violation of school policy*	Holding hands, kissing, sexual touching, or other displays of affection in violation of school policy.
2420	*Obscene written messages*	Writing obscene messages on paper, on black boards, or elsewhere on school property (e.g., on bathroom wall).
2430	*Drawing obscene pictures*	Creating illustrations of a sexually explicit or vulgar nature.
2440	*Obscene electronic communication*	Posting obscene messages on Internet message boards, sending obscenities via Internet chat rooms/instant messaging, and downloading or emailing obscene material.
2450	*Obscene gestures*	Gestures that are offensive, socially unacceptable, or otherwise not suitable for an educational setting.
2460	*Obscene language/profanity*	Suggestive, explicit, or vulgar language, cursing, or abusive language.
2497	*Other obscene behavior*	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve obscene behavior.

Note: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category.

See also: 1900-Harassment, Sexual and 2900-Sex Offenses, Other.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

2500	**Physical Altercation, Minor (Pushing, Shoving)**	**Confrontation, tussle, or physical aggression that does not result in injury.**

Note: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category.

See also: 1300-Battery, 1700-Fighting, and 1810-Bullying.

2600	**Robbery (Taking of Things by Force)**	**The taking of, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. A key difference between robbery and theft is that the threat of physical harm or actual physical harm is involved in a robbery.**

Note: When using this code record the value of the taken item(s) under "Cost."

See also: 1400-Burglary and 3100-Theft.

2700	**School Threat (Threat of Destruction or Harm)**	**Any threat (verbal, written, or electronic) by a person to bomb or use other substances or devices for the purpose of exploding, burning, causing damage to a school building or school property, or to harm students or staff.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

2710	*Bomb threat*	Intentionally making a false report of potential harm from a bomb, dynamite, explosive, or arson-causing device.
2720	*Fire alarm*	Verbally or otherwise (e.g., ringing alarm bells) making a false report of fire.
2730	*Chemical/biological threat*	Intentionally making a false report of potential harm from dangerous chemicals or biological agents.
2740	*Terroristic threat*	Making terroristic threats to harm students or school officials, and/or to destroy school property.
2797	*Other school threat*	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve a school threat.

See also: 3200-Threat/Intimidation.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

2800	**Sexual Battery (Sexual assault)**	**Oral, anal, or vaginal penetration forcibly or against the person's will or where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Includes rape, fondling, indecent liberties, child molestation, and sodomy.**

Note: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category.

See also: 2900-Sex Offenses, Other.

2900	**Sexual Offenses, Other (Lewd Behavior, Indecent Exposure)**	**Sexual intercourse, sexual contact, or other behavior intended to result in sexual gratification without force or threat of force. Code statutory rape here.**

Note: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category.

See also: 2400-Obscene Behavior and 2800-Sexual Battery.

3000	**Suicide**	**Act or instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.**

Incidents can be specifically coded as:

3010 Suicide	Taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.
3020 Attempted suicide	Attempting to take one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.
3097 Other suicide offense	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve the threat or mention of suicide.

Incident Codes (continued)

1300

3100	**Theft (Stealing Personal or School Property)**	**The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person without threat, violence or bodily harm. Electronic theft of data should be coded here. Do not include dealing in stolen goods in this category (see 9900-Other Offenses).**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

3110 Theft, General	Taking or attempting to take money or property belonging to another person or the school with the intent to permanently deprive the victim of his or her possessions.
3120 Motor Vehicle Theft[17]	Theft of a motor vehicle. This category includes theft of a car, truck, motorcycle, dune buggy, snowmobile, RV, or anything that is self-propelled.
3197 Other theft	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve theft.

Notes: When using this code record the value of the stolen item(s) under "Cost." Consider coding theft of low value items (e.g., pencil, pad of paper) as 3600-Violation of School Rules.

See also: 1400-Burglary and 2600-Robbery.

[17] Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (SDFS) reporting requires that Motor Vehicle Theft be reported separately from other Theft. Thus, administrators may want to consider using multiple categories of theft to save time when completing SDFS reporting requirements. See Appendix A.

Incident codes (continued)

1300

3200	**Threat/Intimidation (Causing Fear of Harm)**	**Physical, verbal, written, or electronic action which immediately creates fear of harm, without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

3210 Physical threat	Threatening an individual or group of individuals with a gesture(s) or body language.
3220 Verbal threat	Threatening an individual or group of individuals with spoken words or sounds.
3230 Written threat	Threatening an individual or group of individuals in writing (e.g., letter, note, message on chalkboard).
3240 Electronic threat	Threatening an individual or group of individuals by email, postings on Internet sites, or through other electronic mechanisms.
3297 Other threat	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve a threat.

Note: Consider age and developmentally appropriate behavior before using this category.

See also: 1800-Harassment, Nonsexual, 1810-Bullying, 1820-Hazing, 2700-School Threat, and 3700-Weapon Possession.

Incident codes (continued)

1300

3300	**Tobacco (Possession or Use)**	**Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products.**
	Violations can be specifically coded as:	
	3310 Sale of tobacco	Sale of tobacco products (e.g., cigarettes, chewing tobacco).
	3320 Distribution of tobacco	Distribution (i.e., giving away) tobacco products.
	3330 Use of tobacco	Smoking, chewing, or otherwise using tobacco.
	3340 Possession of tobacco	Having tobacco in one's pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc.
	3350 Suspicion of use of tobacco	An instance where an individual's behavior, breath, etc., suggests that he or she used tobacco.
	3397 Other tobacco offense	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve tobacco.
3400	**Trespassing (Unlawful or Unauthorized Presence)**	**To enter or remain on a public school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry.**

See also: 1400-Burglary and 3500-Vandalism.

Incident codes (continued)

1300

3500 Vandalism (Damage to School or Personal Property) — **Willful destruction or defacement of school or personal property.**

Violations can be specifically coded as:

3510	*Vandalism of school property*	Willful destruction or defacement of school property.
3520	*Vandalism of personal property*	Willful destruction or defacement of personal property.
3597	*Other vandalism*	The incident cannot be coded in one of the above categories but did involve vandalism.

Examples: Destroying school computer records, carving initials or words in desk top, spray painting on walls, or damaging vehicles.

Note: When using this code record the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged property under "Cost."

See also: 1400-Burglary and 3400-Tresspassing.

3600 Violation of School Rules (Disobeying School Policy) — **This category comprises misbehavior not captured elsewhere. Problem behaviors could include dress code violations, running in the halls, possession of contraband, cheating, lying to authorities, or falsifying records.**

See also: 1500-Disorderly conduct.

Incident codes (continued)

1300

3700	**Weapons Possession (Firearms and Other Weapons)**	**Possession of an instrument or object to inflict harm on other persons. Both firearms and other weapons should be coded here.**

Notes: When using this code, remember to record the type of weapon involved under "Weapon Type." If a weapon was used in the commission of another offense (e.g., battery, homicide) use that code to capture the event and code "Weapon-Related" as yes.

See also: 3200-Threat/Intimidation.

9000	**Other Offenses (e.g., Forgery, Extortion)**	**Any significant incident resulting in disciplinary action not classified previously. Offenses could include bribery, fraud, embezzlement, forgery, resisting arrest, gambling, extortion, or dealing in stolen property.**

Note: Whenever possible, insert additional subcodes under already existing codes. For example, if it is necessary to create a new category of School Threat, do so under code 2700 the School Threat category.

4.2 Perpetrator Information

These variables identify the type of perpetrator (offender) involved in the incident. As illustrated in figure 4-1, recording this information in a separate module permits linking to the incident data table and student and staff databases.[18] This will facilitate the coding of multiple perpetrators.

Perpetrator

2000

Perpetrator. The codes provided below permit very specific recording of the type of individual(s) who committed the incident. Again, individual schools and districts may find that capturing such detailed information is not useful. If that is the case, use code 100 to record that a student was the perpetrator rather than codes 110 or 120 to describe exactly what type of student committed the incident. Thus, to be comparable, two locales need not both use the specific codes because all "100s" represent students.

100	**Student**	**The perpetrator was an individual who was enrolled in an instructional program in a school at the time the incident occurred.**
110	*Student enrolled in the school where the incident occurred*	The perpetrator was a regularly enrolled student in the school where the incident was reported at the time the incident occurred.
120	*Student enrolled in another school*	The perpetrator was a student who, at the time the incident occurred, was enrolled in a school other than the one where the incident was reported.
130	*Suspended or expelled student*	The perpetrator was a student who was suspended or expelled from regular classes in the school at the time the incident occurred.

[18] Readers are reminded that the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student and Staff Data Handbooks* contain definitions and codes for data elements for a variety of demographic characteristics including race/ethnicity, gender, limited-English proficiency, students served under IDEA, and students served under Section 504. These and other descriptive items are necessary for completion of a variety of state and Federal reporting requirements. As noted in section 4.1, if a traditional or independent incident database is employed rather than a relational database, in addition to the variables discussed in this section, codes for the above characteristics will need to be included so that users can respond to state and Federal mandates.

Perpetrator (continued)

2000

200	**Professional Staff**	**The perpetrator was a member of the professional staff at the school at the time the incident occurred.**
210	*Teacher*	The perpetrator was a teacher in the school at the time the incident occurred.
220	*Substitute*	The perpetrator was a substitute teacher in the school at the time the incident occurred.
230	*Media specialist/ Librarian*	The perpetrator was a media specialist or librarian in the school at the time the incident occurred.
240	*Counselor*	The perpetrator was a school counselor (e.g., guidance counselor) in the school at the time the incident occurred.
250	*Social worker/ School psychologist*	The perpetrator was a social worker or school psychologist in the school at the time the incident occurred.
260	*Medical staff*	The perpetrator was a member of the medical staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
297	*Other professional staff*	The type of perpetrator cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the perpetrator was a professional staff member.

Perpetrator (continued)

2000

300	**Administrator**	**The perpetrator was an administrator in the school (or school district) at the time the incident occurred.**
310	*Principal/Head of school*	The perpetrator was principal or head of the school at the time the incident occurred.
320	*Assistant principal/ Vice principal*	The perpetrator was an assistant principal or vice principal in the school at the time the incident occurred.
330	*Dean*	The perpetrator was a dean in the school at the time the incident occurred.
340	*District level administrator*	The perpetrator was a district level administrator at the time the incident occurred.
350	*School board member*	The perpetrator was a school board member in the school district at the time the incident occurred.
397	*Other administrator*	The type of perpetrator cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the perpetrator was an administrator.

Perpetrator (continued)

2000

400	**Other School Staff**	**The perpetrator was another school staff member (e.g., school support personnel, maintenance personnel) in the school at the time the incident occurred.**
410	*Bus driver/ Transportation staff*	The perpetrator was a bus driver or member of the transportation staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
420	*Clerical staff*	The perpetrator was a member of the clerical staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
430	*Custodial staff*	The perpetrator was a member of the custodial staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
440	*Food service staff*	The perpetrator was a member of the food service staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
450	*Paraprofessional, aide, assistant*	The perpetrator was a paraprofessional, aide, or assistant in the school at the time the incident occurred.
460	*Security personnel*	The perpetrator was a security officer (for law enforcement officer's see code 500) in the school at the time the incident occurred.
497	*Other staff*	The type of perpetrator cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the perpetrator was a school staff member.

Perpetrator (continued)

2000

500	**Law Enforcement Officer**	**The perpetrator was a law enforcement officer at the time the incident occurred.**
510	*Municipal law enforcement officer assigned to the school*	The perpetrator was a municipal law enforcement officer (e.g., town, city, county police officer, school resource officer, sheriff) **assigned to the school.**
520	*Municipal law enforcement officer **not** assigned to the school*	The perpetrator was a municipal law enforcement officer (e.g., town, city, county police officer, school resource officer, sheriff) **not assigned to the school.**
530	*School district police officer assigned to the school*	The perpetrator was a school district police officer (i.e., directly employed by the school district) **assigned to the school** for some or all of the school day at the time the incident occurred.
540	*School district police officer **not** assigned to the school*	The perpetrator was a school district police officer (i.e., directly employed by the school district) **not assigned to the school** for some or all of the school day at the time the incident occurred.
597	*Other law enforcement officer*	The type of perpetrator cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the perpetrator was a law enforcement officer.

600 Nonschool Personnel	**The perpetrator was an individual who did not attend or work for the school (e.g., parent, community member).**	*Perpetrator (continued)* 2000
610 Parent/guardian	The perpetrator was a parent or guardian of a student.	
620 Representative of visiting school	The perpetrator was a representative of a visiting school (e.g., teacher, coach).	
630 Other adult	The perpetrator was another adult in the community.	
640 Nonstudent youth	The perpetrator was a nonstudent youth (e.g., dropout).	
697 Other nonschool personnel	The type of perpetrator cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the perpetrator was another type of nonschool personnel.	
999 Unknown	**The perpetrator is unknown.**	

Perpetrator ID. This variable allows coding of pre-existing school or district staff and student identifiers, when the perpetrator is a student or staff member. This will allow descriptive information about the individual to be linked to the incident via the student or staff database.[19]

Perpetrator ID 2100

[19] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student Data Handbook for Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education* and *Staff Data Handbook for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education* for additional recommendations on constructing identifiers.

Perpetrator Injury

2200

Perpetrator Injury. Record whether or not the perpetrator was physically injured, and if so, identify whether the injury was major or minor.

10	**Minor injury**	The perpetrator received a minor physical injury as a result of the incident. A minor injury is one that does not require professional medical attention such as a scrape on the body, knee or elbow; and/or minor bruising. **Medical attention from the school nurse qualifies the injury as minor unless further medical attention is required.**
20	**Major injury**	The perpetrator received a major physical injury as a result of the incident. A major injury is one that requires professional medical attention which may include, but is not limited to, a bullet wound, a stab or puncture wound, fractured or broken bones, concussions, cuts requiring stitches, and any other injury with profuse or excessive bleeding.
96	**No injury**	No one was physically injured during the course of the incident.

4.3 Victim Information

These variables identify the type of victim involved in the incident. As discussed above, recording this information in a separate data table permits links to the incident module and student and staff databases.[20] This will facilitate the coding of multiple victims.

[20] Readers are reminded that the National Center for Education Statistics' Student and Staff Data Handbooks contain definitions and codes for data elements for a variety of demographic characteristics including race/ethnicity, gender, limited-English proficiency, students served under IDEA, and students served under Section 504. These and other descriptive items are necessary for completion of a variety of state and Federal reporting requirements. As noted in section 4.1, if a traditional or independent incident database is employed rather than a relational database, in addition to the variables discussed in this section, codes for the above characteristics will need to be included so that users can respond to state and Federal mandates.

Victim

3000

Victim. The codes provided below permit very specific recording of the type of individual(s) victimized in an incident. Again, individual schools and districts may find that capturing such detailed information is not useful. If that is the case, using code 100 records that a student was victimized. It is not necessary to code 110 or 120 to describe exactly what type of student was victimized. Thus, to be comparable, two locales need not both use the specific codes, since all "100s" represent students.

100	**Student**	**The victim was an individual who was enrolled in an instructional program in a school at the time the incident occurred.**
110	*Student enrolled in the school where the incident occurred*	The victim was a regularly enrolled student in the school where the incident was reported at the time the incident occurred.
120	*Student enrolled in another school*	The victim was a student who, at the time the incident occurred, was enrolled in a school other than the one where the incident was reported.
130	*Suspended or expelled student*	The victim was a student who was suspended or expelled from regular classes in the school at the time the incident occurred.

Victim (continued)

3000

200	**Professional Staff**	**The victim was a member of the professional staff at the school at the time the incident occurred.**
210	*Teacher*	The victim was a teacher in the school at the time the incident occurred.
220	*Substitute*	The victim was a substitute teacher in the school at the time the incident occurred.
230	*Media specialist/ Librarian*	The victim was a media specialist or librarian in the school at the time the incident occurred.
240	*Counselor*	The victim was a counselor (e.g., guidance counselor) in the school at the time the incident occurred.
250	*Social worker/ School psychologist*	The victim was a social worker or school psychologist in the school at the time the incident occurred.
260	*Medical staff*	The victim was a member of the medical staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
297	*Other professional staff*	The type of victim cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the victim was a professional staff member.

Victim (continued)

3000

300	**Administrator**	**The victim was an administrator in the school (or school district) at the time the incident occurred.**
310	*Principal/Head of school*	The victim was the principal or head of the school at the time the incident occurred.
320	*Assistant principal/ Vice principal*	The victim was an assistant principal or vice principal in the school at the time the incident occurred.
330	*Dean*	The victim was a dean in the school at the time the incident occurred.
340	*District level administrator*	The victim was a district level administrator at the time the incident occurred.
350	*School board member*	The victim was a school board member in the school district at the time the incident occurred.
397	*Other administrator*	The type of victim cannot be captured by one the above codes, but the victim was an administrator.

Victim (continued)

3000

400	**Other School Staff**	**The victim was another school staff member (e.g., school support personnel, maintenance personnel) in the school at the time the incident occurred.**
410	*Bus driver/ Transportation staff*	The victim was a bus driver or member of the transportation staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
420	*Clerical staff*	The victim was a member of the clerical staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
430	*Custodial staff*	The victim was a member of the custodial staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
440	*Food service staff*	The victim was a member of the food service staff in the school at the time the incident occurred.
450	*Paraprofessional, aide, assistant*	The victim was a paraprofessional, aide, or assistant in the school at the time the incident occurred.
460	*Security personnel*	The perpetrator was a security officer (for law enforcement officers see code 500) in the school at the time the incident occurred.
497	*Other staff*	The type of victim cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the victim was a school staff member.

Victim (continued)

3000

500	**Law Enforcement Officer**	**The victim was a law enforcement officer at the time the incident occurred.**
510	*Municipal law enforcement officer assigned to the school*	The victim was a municipal law enforcement officer (e.g., town, city, county police officer, school resource officer, or sheriff) **assigned to the school.**
520	*Municipal law enforcement officer **not** assigned to the school*	The victim was a municipal law enforcement officer (e.g., town, city, county police officer, school resource officer, or sheriff) **not assigned to the school.**
530	*School district police officer assigned to the school*	The victim was a school district police officer (i.e., directly employed by the school district) **assigned to the school** for some or all of the school day at the time the incident occurred.
540	*School district police officer **not** assigned to the school*	The victim was a school district police officer (i.e., directly employed by the school district) **not assigned to the school** for some or all of the school day at the time the incident occurred.
597	*Other law enforcement officer*	The type of victim cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the victim was a law enforcement officer.

Victim (continued)

3000

600 Nonschool Personnel	**The victim was an individual who did not attend or work for the school (e.g., parent, community member).**
610 Parent/guardian	The victim was a parent or guardian of a student.
620 Representative of visiting school	The victim was a representative of a visiting school (e.g., teacher, coach).
630 Other adult	The victim was another adult in the community.
640 Nonstudent youth	The victim was a nonstudent youth (e.g., dropout).
697 Other nonschool personnel	The type of victim cannot be captured by one of the above codes, but the victim was another type of personnel.
700 None	**Use this code for incidents where no persons were victimized (e.g., vandalism, drug possession).**

Victim ID

3100

Victim ID. This variable allows coding of pre-existing school or district staff and student identifiers when the victim is a student or staff member. This allows descriptive information about the individual to be linked to the incident via the student or staff database.[21]

[21] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics' *Student Data Handbook for Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education* and *Staff Data Handbook for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education* for additional recommendations on constructing identifiers.

Victim Injury
3200

Victim Injury. Record whether or not the victim was physically injured and, if so, identify whether the injury was major or minor.

10	**Minor injury**	The victim received a minor physical injury as a result of the incident. A minor injury is one that does not require professional medical attention such as a scrape on the body, knee or elbow; and/or minor bruising. **Medical attention from the school nurse qualifies the injury as minor unless further medical attention is required.**
20	**Major injury**	The victim received a major physical injury as a result of the incident. A major injury is one that requires professional medical attention which may include, but is not limited to, a bullet wound, a stab or puncture wound, fractured or broken bones, concussions, cuts requiring stitches, and any other injury with profuse or excessive bleeding.
96	**No injury**	No one was physically injured during the course of the incident.

4.4 Discipline Information

The codes described in this section are those necessary to capture information about the outcome of the incident, including the type of punishment that was assigned and its duration. The database structure described above permits multiple disciplinary actions to be recorded for each incident—not only more than one per incident, but also more than one per participant.

Disciplinary Action
4000

Disciplinary Action. This variable identifies the consequences of the incident to the student(s) involved in the incident.[22] It is a comprehensive list and was developed to be as inclusive as possible. Some codes may not be appropriate to individual schools and districts given local policies and procedures. Use only those that apply.

[22] Record disciplinary actions taken against school staff in the staff database or in a location specified by district or state guidelines. Recommendations for codes to capture that information are beyond the scope of this report.

Note that, when data is requested by the U.S. Department of Education, for example, multiple codes might fit each disciplinary action specified by a data collection. To illustrate, the Office for Civil Rights collects information on out-of-school suspensions (see appendix A). Disciplinary actions described as change of placement (codes 120-150) may be categorized as out-of-school suspensions by some jurisdictions and would be reported as such for those localities.

These codes are presented alphabetically. Individual schools, districts, or states may wish to assign a hierarchy based on locally defined parameters for severity of the penalty.

100	**Bus suspension**	The student was prohibited from riding the school bus.
110	**Change of placement (long-term)**	The student was permanently (i.e., for at least one semester) reassigned to another school facility or program that allowed him/her to continue to participate in the general curriculum at a school setting, including students receiving prescribed special education services who continued to receive these services.[23]
120	**Change of placement (reassignment), pending an expulsion hearing**	The student was assigned to an interim alternative setting that allowed him/her to continue to participate in the general curriculum at a school setting pending an expulsion hearing called as a consequence of the incident. Include students receiving prescribed special education services who continued to receive these services.[24]

[23] When a change of placement is prescribed for a special education student, IDEA requires that the student's Individual Educational Planning Team meet.

[24] When a change of placement is prescribed for a special education student, IDEA requires that the student's Individual Educational Planning Team meet.

Disciplinary Action (continued)

4000

130	**Change of placement (reassignment), resulting from an expulsion hearing**	The student was assigned, as a result of an expulsion hearing, to an interim alternative setting that allowed him/her to continue to participate in the general curriculum at a school setting. Include students receiving prescribed special education services who continue to receive these services.[25]
140	**Change of placement (reassignment), temporary**	The student was removed from his or her regular classroom and assigned to an interim alternative setting that allowed him/her to continue to participate in the general curriculum at a school setting for a period of time **less than one semester.** Include students receiving prescribed special education services who continue to receive these services.
150	**Community service**	The student was assigned to perform community service (e.g., cleanup work).

See also: 330-Restitution and 430-Work Detail.

160	**Conference with and warning to student**	An administrator discussed the incident with the student and issued a warning regarding the consequences of subsequent offenses.

See also: 320-Reprimand.

170	**Conference with and warning to student and parent/ guardian**	An administrator discussed the incident with the student, issued a warning regarding the consequences of subsequent offenses, and contacted the parent/guardian to discuss the incident.

See also: 320-Reprimand.

180	**Confiscation of contraband**	Taking away an item(s) defined as prohibited by school or district policy.
190	**Conflict resolution or anger management services mandated**	The student was required to participate in conflict resolution or anger management counseling or classes.

See also: 200-Counseling.

[25] When a change of placement is prescribed for a special education student, IDEA requires that the student's Individual Educational Planning Team meet.

Disciplinary Action (continued)

4000

200	**Corporal punishment**	The student was physically punished (e.g., paddled) in accordance with state laws.
210	**Counseling mandated**	The student was required to participate in a counseling program.
	See also: 360-Substance abuse counseling.	
220	**Demerit**	The student received a mark of poor conduct.
	See also: 420-Unsatisfactory behavior grade.	
230	**Detention**	The student was assigned to before- or after-school detention or detention at lunch.
	See also: 380-Suspension after school.	
240	**Expulsion recommendation**	The student was removed from his or her regular classroom, barred from school grounds, and the principal asked the school district to expel the student.
	See also: 120-Change of placement pending an expulsion hearing.	
250	**Expulsion with services**	The student was expelled from his/her regular school setting with arrangements for the provision of education services.
	See also: 140-Change of placement resulting from an expulsion hearing..	
260	**Expulsion without services**	The student was expelled from all school district settings, with total cessation of educational services.
270	**Juvenile justice referral**	The student was referred to juvenile justice authorities.
280	**Law enforcement referral**	The incident was reported to law enforcement officials.
290	**Letter of apology**	The student was required to submit a formal letter of apology.

93

Disciplinary Action (continued)

4000

300 Loss of privileges The student lost a privilege (e.g., recess, parking).

See also: 350-School probation.

310 Physical activity The student was required to participate in a physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups).

320 Reprimand The student was rebuked.

See also: 160-170-Conference.

330 Restitution The student was required to make restitution for the damages caused by the incident.

See also: 150-Community service.

340 Saturday school The student was assigned to attend Saturday school.

350 School probation The student was restricted from school or school functions.

See also: 300-Loss of privileges.

360 Substance abuse counseling mandated The student was required to participate in substance abuse counseling.

See also: 210-Counseling.

370 Substance abuse treatment mandated The student was required to participate in substance abuse treatment.

380 Suspension after school The student was assigned to a suspension after-school program.

See also: 140-Detention.

390 Suspension, in-school The student was removed from his or her regular classroom and assigned to an in-school-suspension program.

Disciplinary Action (continued)

4000

400	**Suspension, out-of-school, with services**	The student was removed from his or her regular classroom and barred from school grounds for a specified length of time and **continued** to receive educational services.
410	**Suspension, out-of-school, without services**	The student was removed from his or her regular classroom and barred from school grounds for a specified length of time and **did not** receive educational services.
420	**Unsatisfactory behavior grade**	The student received an official appraisal from school personnel that indicated unsatisfactory behavior.

See also: 130-Demerit.

430	**Work detail**	The student was assigned to a work detail.

See also: 150-Community service.

440	**No action**	No action was taken in response to the incident.
997	**Other**	There was a consequence to the perpetrator because of his or her actions, but none of the above codes apply.
998	**None**	No consequences resulted from the perpetrator's actions.
999	**Unknown**	It is unknown if any consequences resulted from the perpetrator's actions.

Note: Where subsequent events such as a hearing or appeal result in changes to the consequences of an incident, it is necessary that the database be updated to reflect the final action(s).

Start Date of Disciplinary Action

4010

Start Date of Disciplinary Action. This variable is used to record the date on which the disciplinary action begins. Use two digits to capture the day, two digits to capture the month, and four digits to capture the year: MM-DD-YYYY. (Consideration of computer operating systems will dictate the format in which the data are stored.)

End Date of Disciplinary Action

4020

End Date of Disciplinary Action. This variable is used to record the date through which the disciplinary action is in effect. Use two digits to capture the

day, two digits to capture the month, and four digits to capture the year: MM-DD-YYYY. (Consideration of computer operating systems will dictate the format in which the data are stored.)

Duration of Disciplinary Action
4030

Duration of Disciplinary Action. This variable is used to record the length, in school days, of the disciplinary action. Use decimal places for fractions of school days (e.g., when a student is removed from only a single class period in an 8 period day, .125 is a single class period).

Related to Special Education Manifestation Hearing
4040

Related to Special Education Manifestation Hearing. This variable records whether or not any of the disciplinary actions taken against a student were imposed as a consequence of the incident were related to a special education manifestation hearing.

1 = Yes

2 = No

Related to Zero Tolerance Policy
4050

Related to Zero Tolerance Policy.[26] This variable records whether or not any of the disciplinary actions taken against a student were imposed as a consequence of state or local zero tolerance policies.

1 = Yes

2 = No

Full Year Expulsion
4060

Full Year Expulsion. An expulsion with or without services for a period of one full year (i.e., 365 days).

1 = Yes

2 = No

[26] See state and local regulations for violations covered by these policies.

Shortened Expulsion

4070

Shortened Expulsion. An expulsion with or without services that is shortened to a term of less than one year by the superintendent or chief administrator of a school district.

1 = Yes

2 = No

CONCLUSIONS

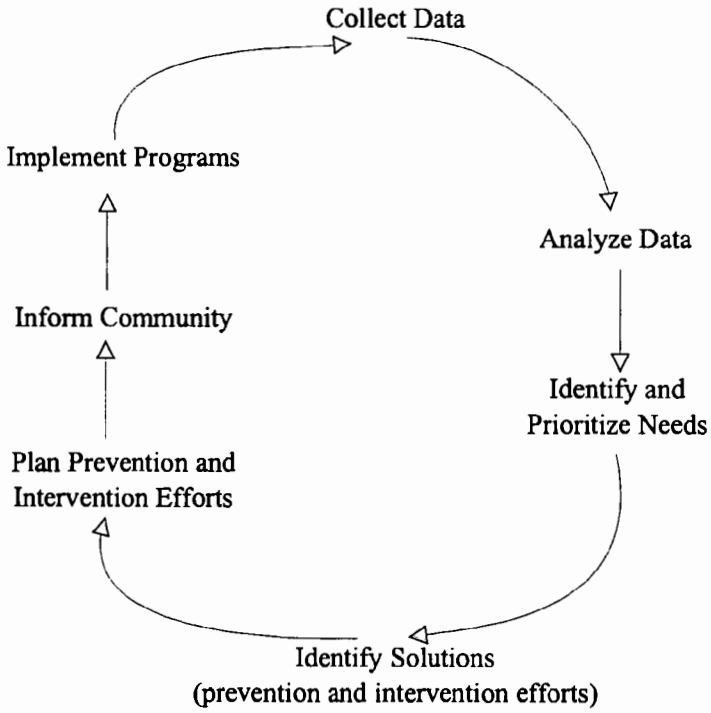
Incident data are vital to focus school efforts to maximize the success of students (Holcomb, 1998). To reiterate the theme of this report, collecting and using incident data are essential to creating the safe and orderly environments that students need in order to learn. Data are important to help

- Replace hunches with facts,
- Identify the causes of problems,
- Assess needs so that services can be targeted,
- Determine whether goals are being accomplished,
- Understand the impact of prevention and intervention, and
- Answer community questions regarding the results of their investment (Bernhardt, 1998).

Accurate data make it possible to take appropriate steps to create a climate conducive to learning.

While a comprehensive incident database makes it easier to manage resources and complete state and Federal incident reports (see Appendix A), the most important reason to collect data is to facilitate activities that promote learning (i.e., improving school safety and focusing discipline reform efforts). Using incident data to make a difference in schools is a cyclical activity. Without accurate data, it is difficult to take appropriate steps to create climates conducive to learning. The figure below illustrates the cycle of data collection which begins and ends with gathering information on disciplinary incidents.

The Cycle of Data Collection



Communicating with the community about prevention needs is especially important. Parents, community members, and funders need facts to make informed decisions about the needs of schools (Bernhardt, 1998). Legislatures and community foundations have targeted millions of new dollars for prevention and intervention efforts after learning about incident data. For example, Pennsylvania, responding to increasing concerns about violence in schools, awarded nearly 9 million dollars in safe-school grants to school districts across the state to strengthen their violence prevention programs and to make schools safer (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001). Similarly, the Colorado Trust in 1999, recognizing the need for violence prevention efforts, committed 1 million dollars over 3 years to support the *Safe Communities - Safe Schools Initiative* in 8 schools and school districts (Colorado Trust, 2000).

Accurate data can be collected when a comprehensive database is developed and staff are trained on what kinds of problem behaviors are to be reported.

This process is a never-ending story. Along the way, it will be necessary to address the challenges of data collection such as ensuring accuracy and concerns about school image. Accurate data can be collected when a comprehensive database is developed and staff are given training about what types of problem behaviors are to be reported. Actions to ensure reliability and validity are important. Such actions include clearly defining problem behavior,

performing data checks, and comparing and contrasting incident data with other sources. While it is reasonable to be concerned about how data will be used, proactively communicating with the public regarding school needs (i.e., the problems that need to be addressed) and educating the public about the need to invest resources in efforts to promote school safety are critical to gaining support.

In closing, it is insufficient to simply collect incident data. Rather, collecting incident data is the beginning of working towards school improvement. It is important for schools, school districts, and states to use that data to develop plans for action in order to make a difference and improve the teaching and learning environment.

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A. FEDERAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Three offices of the U.S. Department of Education currently require incident data to be submitted annually:

- Office for Civil Rights (OCR),
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (SDFS).

These offices require a significant amount of information on incidents and disciplinary actions at the school, district, and state levels. A reliable database can substantially reduce the amount of time needed to comply with the requirements described below.

Reporting requirements vary greatly among these offices given the differences in statutory mandates. For example, the data the SDFS office requires on disciplinary incidents differ from those required by OSEP. OSEP requires specific information only on drug and weapon offenses. In contrast, SDFS collects data on many different types of incidents. Providing the data necessary to comply with these requirements involves sorting incident and disciplinary action data with variables such as educational level, gender, race/ethnicity, and disability category. This underscores the need for the incident database to interface with student information systems as discussed in Chapter 4. Again, a database with this capacity that can easily be programmed to produce ad hoc reports will speed fulfillment of these Federal and any state and local reporting requirements.

Note: these requirements, though current as of January 2002, are subject to change.

Office for Civil Rights

OCR collects school and district level data on the Civil Rights Compliance Reports. For each school, OCR collects the number of students subject to specific disciplinary actions during the school year. One question the OCR report asks for the number of students who receive

- Corporal punishment,
- Out-of-school suspension, and
- Expulsion
    - With total cessation of educational services and
    - Due to Zero Tolerance Policy.[27]

For the OCR reports, students are to be counted once under corporal punishment and out-of-school suspension regardless of the number of times they experience these disciplinary actions. This information is to be subdivided by

- Gender,
- Race/ethnicity, and
- English proficiency.

A second question on the OCR report requests information on disciplinary actions for students with disabilities. Information is required on the unduplicated count of disabled students who receive

- Corporal punishment,
- Long-term suspension: noncessation of services, and
- Long-term suspension: cessation of services.

Again, students are to be counted once for each category regardless of the number of times they were disciplined. These data are further categorized based on whether students are served under the *Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act* (IDEA) or Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*.

[27] See state and local regulations for violations covered by these policies.

For further information, visit OCR on the World Wide Web at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/reports2000/index.html.

Office of Special Education Programs

OSEP collects discipline data from states on students with disabilities. The program's questions cover the number of children with disabilities who were subject to

- Unilateral removal by school personnel (i.e., not by an IEP team) to an alternative educational setting for drug or weapons offenses,
- Removal by a hearing officer regarding likely injury to the student or others, and
- Single or cumulative suspensions of greater than 10 days.

OSEP requires that these data be sorted by disability category and by race/ethnicity.

For further information, visit OSEP on the World Wide Web at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

The SDFS Program collects two types of information from states to fulfill requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Data needed for the Gun-Free Schools Act Report are limited in scope in contrast to those required for the State Education Agency Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs Report.

Gun-Free Schools Act Reporting. Under this data collection, states are required to submit data on firearm-related incidents. The required data include:

- The number of students expelled for bringing firearms to school, both
  - expulsions lasting one year and

* shortened expulsions

- The number of students who were expelled for weapons violations, but were referred to alternative settings.

Disciplinary actions for students expelled, but referred to alternative settings are defined as "expulsion **with** services" in Chapter 4. Expulsion data must be sorted by type of firearm and educational level.

State Education Agency Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program Report. States must currently submit data on incidents sorted in a number of ways. A series of questions are asked for each educational level:

- How many incidents occurred on school property,
- How many victims were involved by type of victim (e.g., student, school personnel, nonschool personnel),
- How many offenders were involved in those incidents by type of offender, and
- How many incidents were weapons-related.

In addition, states are required to categorize schools by the number of incidents that occurred during the school year. The question asks: "How many schools in your state reported a) no incidents, b) between 1 and 5 incidents, c) between 6 and 10 incidents, etc." Incidents to be reported here include the following:

- Homicide,
- Sexual battery (including rape),
- Robbery,
- Battery,
- Breaking and entering/burglary,
- Larceny/theft,
- Motor vehicle theft,
- Kidnapping,
- Arson,
- Threat/intimidation,

- Use or possession of drugs (other than alcohol),
- Sexual harassment,
- Sex offenses (non-forcible),
- Vandalism,
- Weapon possession,
- Unclassified offense,
- Alcohol (liquor law violations),
- Tobacco (where declared illegal),
- Trespassing,
- Fighting,
- Disorderly conduct,
- Other major offenses, and
- Other state (district or municipal) defined offenses.

The SDFS form does not provide definitions for "unclassified offenses," "other major offenses," and "other state (district or municipal) defined offenses." It is recommended that School Threats (code 2700) be included in the "other major offenses" category. Under "other state (district or municipal) defined offenses" include Attendance Policy Violations (code 1200), Harassment, Non Sexual (code 1800), Suicide (code 3000), and Other Offenses (code 9900). It is important to report "unclassified offenses" as appropriate to meet state or local requirements.

These requirements are likely to change based on the 2001 Education Legislation, *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,* which resulted changes to the SDFS program. For further information, visit SDFS on the World Wide Web at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The Reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,* was signed into law January 8, 2002. One of the basic principles of the Act stipulates stronger accountability for results. This may translate into new and revised data collection activities although no new reporting requirements were identified in the legislation itself. For the most current information about new Department of Education incident reporting requirements, visit the No Child Left Behind homepage at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/.

In summary, responding to current Federal reporting requirements requires a great deal of information. These requirements are likely to increase as the Department of Education works to implement *No Child Left Behind.* With a comprehensive database, schools and school districts can substantially reduce the amount of time needed to complete mandated reporting.

B. OTHER NCES HANDBOOKS

National Forum on Education Statistics/National Center for Education Statistics Publications

Basic Data Elements for Elementary and Secondary Education Information Systems
Building an Automated Student Record System
The Core Data Task Force Report
Privacy Issues in Education Staff Records
Protecting the Privacy of Student Records: Guidelines for Education Agencies
Safeguarding Your Technology
Staff Data Handbook for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education: 2001 Edition
Standards for Education Data Collection and Reporting (SEDCAR).
Student Data Handbook for Elementary, Secondary, and Early Childhood Education: 2000 Edition and 2001 update
Technology @ Your Fingertips

These documents are available at http://nces.ed.gov/forum/publications.asp.

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