**Did you know?**

**SCHOOL CRIME IS DECREASING.**

**THE FACTS**

The overall school crime rate decreased from the 1993 level of 164 school-related crimes for every 1,000 students ages 12 to 18 to 128 incidents in 1996. And, despite recent tragic school-related homicides, children are still safer in schools than in the community or at home: fewer than 1% of the 7,000 children who were murdered in 1992–93 were killed at school. The most common school-site crime is theft.

**NEXT STEPS**

Even though serious crime is down, some children are feeling less safe in schools: in 1989, 6% of students ages 12 to 19 feared being harmed at school; in 1995, 9% of students report such concerns. Gangs today have a larger presence in America’s schools, with 28% of students reporting such presence in their schools in 1995, up from 15% in 1989 (U.S. Department of Education, Annual Report on School Safety, 1998). Teachers also report greater discipline problems from children. Parents and families need to teach children respect for others and help them to use non-violent means for resolving conflicts. States, communities, and schools need to ensure that schools not only have and enforce codes of student behavior, but they also must have in place preventive approaches such as conflict resolution strategies and character education.

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**School-Related Crime, 1993 and 1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Crime</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Violent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Serious violent crimes are defined as rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes include serious violent crimes and simple assault.*


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REALITY CHECK

Many people believe the public schools are failing. Public schools must become better, but there have been major improvements in public education since the early 1980’s which are being ignored. In the current atmosphere, the negative is being emphasized and the positive pushed aside. These one-page policy briefs are meant to show the improvements that have occurred in public education while urging persistent efforts to bring a better education to more students.

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