

# Student School Safety Audit

*Safety in Our Schools*



*Student Advisory Council*  
2000-2001

Illinois State Board of Education • Making Illinois Schools *Second to None*

# STUDENT SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT

## Overview:

This audit is premised on three assumptions.

- Students are often the first and most aware of impending problems.
- Students are more likely to accept responsibility for school safety if they are involved and their views are represented.
- Students have the most at stake in keeping schools safe.

Consistent with the above, 40 members of the Student Advisory Council to the Illinois State Board of Education participated extensively in preparing this audit material. These students agreed to help develop audit instruments, and they shared their interests, views and suggestions during an intensive brainstorming session in December 1999. In January 2000, after a half-day session led by a nationally known security specialist, the Council reviewed and recommended revisions to the first drafts of the audit instruments. The Council suggested further refinements at its March 2000 meeting.

This packet contains four audit instruments designed to be used collectively or individually and complemented by a Response Information Sheet and a Summary and Recommendation Section...A Planning Reference.

## Purposes:

- Primarily, to assess student perceptions of the presence or absence of safety/security measures in their schools and to encourage the discussion of this topic
- To cue students to the characteristics of safe schools
- To ensure meaningful student input into school safety/security policies and programs
- To enlist student support and responsibility for safer schools
- To encourage schools to develop, update, and communicate their safety programs to staff and students as appropriate
- To provide bases for safety/security needs assessments

## Uses:

The audit materials are designed to be used separately or as a supplement to *Safe at School: A Resource Manual for Self-Assessment Planning and Training to Improve School Safety* (Illinois State Board of Education).

They can be used in any one or combination of the following ways:

- to structure discussions in focus groups and classes
- to guide school safety committees in seeking out student views and input
- as survey instruments for groups or individuals

*Note: The instruments in this Student School Safety Audit are designed for students but are equally appropriate for adults, including parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, police, security officers, etc. for purposes of needs assessment and planning.*

## Guidelines

- The format is purposefully flexible in that all or selected instruments may be administered.
- If used as a survey, the instruments may be administered to entire groups, randomly selected respondents or chosen groups whose views are deemed particularly important.
- Regardless of the use, their primary value is to generate discussion through responses to questions like those in the “Summary and Recommendations...A Planning Reference” section of the instrument.
- Audits should be done periodically.
- Results may be kept confidential or shared with appropriate persons as determined by school personnel.

Additionally, users are reminded that audits should lead to action. They must not become ends in themselves! The audits are for systematic needs assessment, policy/program development, evaluation, planning and training. Finally, the audit process should be instructional to those who participate.

### General Instructions

- Determine which audit instruments will be administered.
- Distribute and preview the instruments to be used.
  - Form A: Perceptions of Safety Conditions in the School...A Needs Assessment Reference
  - Form B: Perceptions of Safety Problems in the School...A Needs Assessment Reference
  - Form C: Perceptions of Safety Programs and Interventions in Place...A Planning Reference
  - Form D: Summary of Recommendations for Safety in the School...A Planning Reference
  - Form E: Perceptions of the Causes of School Violence in Schools About the Nation
- Advise participants of the importance and anticipated uses of their responses.
- Ensure them of anonymity, as appropriate.
- If student facilitators are used, remind leaders and recorders of their responsibilities.
- If used with groups (focus, classroom, select, etc.), once individuals have completed the forms, convene participants to respond to the “Summary and Recommendations...Planning Reference” section.
- Caution all leaders – student or staff – that their roles are to encourage and facilitate discussion and not to suggest or reinforce specific answers and views.
- Share the findings/recommendations as appropriate.

## **Special Instructions for Use by a Student Audit Team (SAT)**

ONE: Student talks to an administrator about the audit and requests a sponsor

TWO: Organizing a Student Audit Team (SAT) to coordinate and monitor the audit, functioning under an adult sponsor

The composition of the SAT will vary with the size and type of school, but it minimally should include:

- an administrator
- students from various grade levels
- school security officer or safety coordinator
- teachers
- support staff, such as secretaries, counselors, custodians, etc.
- others of choice: law enforcement and emergency service personnel, board members, parents, etc.

THREE: The SAT's functions range from planning through implementing and facilitating the audit. In any case, the following tasks are necessary:

- choosing the instruments of the audit to be used
- identifying desired respondent groups
- recommending sub-committees and their memberships and responsibilities
- facilitating, sometimes directing, focus groups and classroom discussion
- receiving, analyzing and evaluating the findings of written surveys and discussions to identify priorities among concerns, needs, recommendations/solutions and plans
- requesting technical assistance, as necessary
- reporting SAT findings and judgments to appropriate staff and stakeholders, particularly students and administrators
- planning and presenting safety programs throughout the year
- continuously monitoring school safety progress and periodically initiating additional audits

**Form A:      Perceptions of Safety Conditions in This School...**  
**A Needs Assessment Reference**

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_ Ethnicity/Race \_\_\_\_\_

For each item listed, check “yes,” “no” or “don’t know” as it relates to **your** school.

TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IN THIS SCHOOL ...

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
(1) students feel safe at school.	___	___	___
(2) security and safety policies are developed with student interests and views in mind.	___	___	___
(3) student views are identified through surveys, discussion groups, safety committee membership, security audits and campus walk-throughs.	___	___	___
(4) students are both comfortable and willing to notify school personnel of threats and impending problems.	___	___	___
(5) students know <u>how</u> and <u>who</u> to contact about fears, concerns, or anticipated problems.	___	___	___
(6) students believe they can safely report dangers, threats, and fears and that their identities will not be revealed.	___	___	___
(7) students understand danger indicators and signals and <u>what to do</u> , <u>where to go</u> , and how to <u>respond</u> when signals are given.	___	___	___
(8) crisis/emergency drills (fire, tornado, lock-downs, etc.) occur regularly and are taken seriously both by students and staff.	___	___	___
(9) students understand their critical role and responsibility in preventing violence, since they are often the first and most aware of impending problems.	___	___	___
(10) students want to help prevent violence.	___	___	___
(11) students recognize the importance of their own actions and attitudes in preventing school violence.	___	___	___

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
(12) school entrances and exits are effectively controlled to prevent school access by unauthorized persons.	___	___	___
(13) the school offers programs and instruction which teach responsible behavior, such as conflict resolution, anger management, interpersonal sensitivity, manners, etc.	___	___	___
(14) school, police, and emergency services personnel seem to work cooperatively toward school safety.	___	___	___
(15) student leaders understand and accept their responsibilities for keeping the school safe.	___	___	___
(16) in general, students understand and accept responsibility for keeping the school safe and secure.	___	___	___
(17) the school seriously addresses both special event security (athletics, concerts, dances, etc.) and school day security.	___	___	___
(18) all students have an adult in school to whom they can relate.	___	___	___
(19) members of the school and/or community have been identified for post crisis support and counseling.	___	___	___

Do you believe your views about school safety are similar to the views of other students in this school?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments**

Make any observations, qualifications or additions to the above in the space below.

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**Form B:                      Perceptions of the Extent of Safety Problems**  
**in This School...A Needs Assessment Reference**

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_ Ethnicity/Race \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your views as to the seriousness of the following in this school by marking “no problem,” “limited problem,” “serious problem,” or “don’t know”.

<u>Problems</u>	<u>No Problem</u>	<u>Limited Problem</u>	<u>Serious Problem</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Assaults/abuse:</u>				
(1) fights and physical assaults	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2) verbal abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3) sexual harassment	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4) bullying/intimidation	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5) person-to-person cruelty/teasing	_____	_____	_____	_____
(6) hazing	_____	_____	_____	_____
(7) date rape	_____	_____	_____	_____
other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Groups/gangs:</u>				
(8) street gangs	_____	_____	_____	_____
(9) cults	_____	_____	_____	_____
(10) alternative lifestyles – dress, music, interests, activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
(11) cliques (“inners” and “outers”)	_____	_____	_____	_____
(12) privileged groups	_____	_____	_____	_____
other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Drugs:</u>				
(13) marijuana	_____	_____	_____	_____
(14) cocaine/heroin	_____	_____	_____	_____
(15) methamphetamine	_____	_____	_____	_____
(16) ecstasy/MDMA	_____	_____	_____	_____
(17) inhalants	_____	_____	_____	_____
(18) over the counter prescription drug abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____
(19) alcohol	_____	_____	_____	_____
(20) availability of drugs at school	_____	_____	_____	_____
(21) sale of drugs at school	_____	_____	_____	_____
other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Weapons:</u>				
(22) guns	_____	_____	_____	_____
(23) knives, blades	_____	_____	_____	_____
(24) chemical sprays	_____	_____	_____	_____
other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Threats:</u>				
(25) bombs, other schoolwide threats	_____	_____	_____	_____
(26) individual and group threats	_____	_____	_____	_____
other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

<u>Problems</u>	<u>No Problem</u>	<u>Limited Problem</u>	<u>Serious Problem</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Other:</u>				
(27) racial/ethnic tension	_____	_____	_____	_____
(28) racial/ethnic conflict	_____	_____	_____	_____
(29) preferential treatment of groups/individuals	_____	_____	_____	_____
(30) impersonal treatment of students	_____	_____	_____	_____
(31) lack of respect/sensitivity for others	_____	_____	_____	_____
(32) strangers/intruders at school	_____	_____	_____	_____
(33) problem denial/avoidance	_____	_____	_____	_____
(34) suicides	_____	_____	_____	_____
(35) theft	_____	_____	_____	_____
(36) vandalism/graffiti	_____	_____	_____	_____
other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Have you, or others that you know, been victims of any of the above? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
 If yes, please describe. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, to what degree do you feel the school staff was aware of the problem(s) and willing to respond appropriately? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments**

Make any observations, qualifications or additions to any of the above in the space below.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## Form C: Student Perceptions of Safety Programs and Interventions in Place...A Planning Reference

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity/Race \_\_\_\_\_

Listed below are common means to prevent and/or minimize violence. For each, indicate whether or not the item exists in your school. Then, for each item found in your school, rate your perception of its effectiveness.

		WE HAVE IT.			IF "YES", rate "how effective" it is.		
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Not effective</u>	<u>Somewhat effective</u>	<u>Most effective</u>
<u>Access Control</u> such as							
(1)	restricted entrance to buildings and grounds	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	locked classroom doors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	greeters, hall monitors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	security personnel	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5)	metal detectors at doors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(6)	after hours alarm systems	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Anonymous Tip Lines</u>							
(7)	local/school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(8)	state police	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Badging/IDs</u> (worn or carried)							
(9)	student	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(10)	staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(11)	visitors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(12)	substitute teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Communication</u> (classroom & building):							
(13)	intercom	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(14)	phones (fixed or cell)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(15)	hand held radios/ walkie talkies	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(16)	panic alarms	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Discussion/dialogue of problems</u>							
(17)	classroom, home room, clubs, assemblies	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<u>Behavior standards</u>							
(18)	discipline/conduct codes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(19)	dress restrictions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(20)	book/handbag restrictions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(21)	school uniforms	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

		WE HAVE IT.			IF "YES", rate "how effective" it is.		
		Yes	No	Don't Know	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Most effective
<u>Drills</u>							
(22)	building evacuation	___	___	___	___	___	___
(23)	lockdowns	___	___	___	___	___	___
(24)	crisis response	___	___	___	___	___	___
(25)	emergency first aid kits	___	___	___	___	___	___
(26)	first aid/CPR trained persons	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___
<u>Instruction/Programs</u>							
(27)	anger/aggression management	___	___	___	___	___	___
(28)	conflict resolution	___	___	___	___	___	___
(29)	D.A.R.E.	___	___	___	___	___	___
(30)	peer mediation	___	___	___	___	___	___
(31)	suicide prevention	___	___	___	___	___	___
(32)	student court	___	___	___	___	___	___
(33)	peer counseling	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___
<u>Lighting</u>							
(34)	inside halls/passages	___	___	___	___	___	___
(35)	parking areas	___	___	___	___	___	___
(36)	entrances/exits	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___
<u>Support Services</u>							
(37)	psychologists	___	___	___	___	___	___
(38)	counselors	___	___	___	___	___	___
(39)	social workers	___	___	___	___	___	___
(40)	school security/ police officers	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___
<u>Searches</u>							
(41)	personal	___	___	___	___	___	___
(42)	lockers	___	___	___	___	___	___
(43)	vehicles	___	___	___	___	___	___
(44)	bags	___	___	___	___	___	___
(45)	dog sniffs	___	___	___	___	___	___
(46)	on site breath tests	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___
<u>Miscellaneous</u>							
(47)	student pledges of non-violence	___	___	___	___	___	___
(48)	faculty/staff familiarity with students and their needs	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___
<u>Surveillance: buildings and grounds</u>							
(49)	video cameras	___	___	___	___	___	___
(50)	convex mirrors	___	___	___	___	___	___
(51)	faculty/staff presence	___	___	___	___	___	___
	other _____	___	___	___	___	___	___

### Comments

Make any observations, qualifications or additions to any of the above in the space below.

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**Form D: Summary and Recommendations for Safety in This School...A Planning Reference**

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity/Race \_\_\_\_\_

**Upon reviewing the previous sections:**

**\*What kinds of problems are most likely to occur in this school?**

**\*Where are the places about the school that are least safe?**

**\*What types of things make students fearful in this school?**

**\*What should the school do to prevent violence and security problems?**

**\*Since students often are more aware of potential safety problems than the school staff is, how might the school encourage students to accept their responsibilities to prevent violence?**

**Form E: Student Perceptions of the Causes of School Violence  
In Schools About the Nation**

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Sex\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity/Race\_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the extent to which you think each of the following contributes to school violence in any school by marking “none,” “small,” “moderate,” or “great.” In addition, be encouraged to suggest and rate other causes.

<b>To what extent does each item contribute to school violence?</b>	<b><u>None</u></b>	<b><u>Small Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Moderate Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Great Amount</u></b>
<u>Amount</u>				
(1) Bullying/humiliation/intimidation/harassment/teasing	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2) Copycatting: imitating events at other schools	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3) Cliques/school groups	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4) Cultural: acceptance of violence as a way of life	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5) Drugs	_____	_____	_____	_____
(6) Emotional problems	_____	_____	_____	_____
(7) Gangs	_____	_____	_____	_____
(8) Impersonal treatment of students	_____	_____	_____	_____
(9) Lack of respect and sensitivity toward others	_____	_____	_____	_____
(10) Lack of discipline	_____	_____	_____	_____
(11) Lack of school security/policing	_____	_____	_____	_____
(12) Limited opportunity for meaningful school involvement	_____	_____	_____	_____
(13) Low self-esteem by students	_____	_____	_____	_____
(14) Media coverage (TV/radio/print)	_____	_____	_____	_____
(15) Parental irresponsibility	_____	_____	_____	_____
(16) Perceived lack of consequences for violators	_____	_____	_____	_____
(17) Restrictions on religion in schools	_____	_____	_____	_____
(18) Schools are too big	_____	_____	_____	_____
(19) Negative attitudes toward school	_____	_____	_____	_____
(20) Lack of someone to whom students can vent feelings	_____	_____	_____	_____

**To what extent does each item contribute to school violence?**

**None                      Small Amount                      Moderate Amount                      Great Amount**

Violence in/on:

(21) computer games	_____	_____	_____	_____
(22) movies	_____	_____	_____	_____
(23) internet	_____	_____	_____	_____
(24) television	_____	_____	_____	_____

Violence in/on:

(25) streets	_____	_____	_____	_____
(26) homes	_____	_____	_____	_____

Weapons and their availability:

(27) knives/blades	_____	_____	_____	_____
(28) guns	_____	_____	_____	_____
(29) chemical sprays	_____	_____	_____	_____

Other: (list and rate)

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Comments**

Make any observations, qualifications, or additions to any of the above in the space provided below.

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## *Appendices*

Appendix 1: Respondent Information

Appendix 2: Focus Group Guide

Appendix 3: Acknowledgements.  
Student Advisory Council  
Members

**RESPONDENT(S) INFORMATION**

In instances in which the audit is used for groups (i.e. focus, classroom, etc.), the moderator or recorder should summarize the group's composition by school, grade level, class, gender, and ethnicity:

<i>School or Schools:</i> _____
<i>Class or Classes:</i> _____

<i>Grade level(s) of participants:</i> _____
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<i>Gender composition (approximate percents):</i>	
_____ Females	_____ Males

<i>Ethnic distribution (approximate percents):</i>	
_____ African American	_____ White
_____ Asian	Other
_____ Hispanic	_____

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Moderator: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_



## **FOCUS GROUP GUIDE**

- Select 10-12 students chosen to represent grade levels and in- school behavior histories
- Seat students around a table with name plates (first names only)
- Schedule for about 2 hours

### **THE MODERATOR**

- ❖ Introduces self
- ❖ Provides overview and rules of activity
  - to learn student views
  - no right or wrong answers
  - students respond only when recognized
- ❖ Has students introduce themselves – name, grade, student activity interests
- ❖ Directs questions and elicits answers to one question and student at a time (Discourages discussion between students unless so invited.)
- ❖ Asks, “What types of school violence are most likely to occur in this school?”
- ❖ Asks, “Are you aware of any violent acts in this school since you have been here?” (If so, what?)
- ❖ Asks, “If a problem such as \_\_\_\_\_ occurred, whom would you contact first?”
- ❖ Asks, students to complete desired audit instruments, unless previously completed
- ❖ After completion, goes through items and
  - asks, “How many chose \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - occasionally says, “Tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - occasionally asks, “How many agree it’s a problem?” or “How many disagree?”
  - sometimes asks, “Why did you choose \_\_\_\_\_?”
- ❖ May record counts or ideas and/or collect completed surveys at end
  - asks, “How many chose \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - “What’s left out or should be added?”
- ❖ Wind up:
  - “What did we miss or omit?” (Suggestions/Concerns)
  - “Are your opinions similar to other students’ in this school?”
  - “If not, who else would you recommend asking?”

## **ON THE MODERATOR'S ROLE**

- · Remain neutral
- · Engage all participants equally
- · Explain items but **never** in a manner to influence decisions
- · Pick up papers and surveys at the end
- · Use flip charts if deemed appropriate

*NOTE: The use of a recorder may be employed to enhance efficiency. If so, the Recorder does not participate in the discussion other than to clarify or verify information.*

## Appendix 3

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### *Developer/Author*

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