

**The Florida Safe and Drug-Free Schools
Quality Data Management Project**

Annual Report

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The following acronyms are used throughout this annual report.

CBO	Community-Based Organization(s)
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
FSES	Florida School Environment Survey
FYSAS	Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey
IRDAR	Incident and Disciplinary Action Report
LEA	Local Education Agency
MTF	Monitoring the Future Survey
SESIR	School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting
UMIRS	Uniform Management Information and Reporting System
YRBS	Youth Risk Behavior Survey

PREFACE

In 2005, the Florida Department of Education (Florida DOE) contracted with the Florida State University Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research to conduct its Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) Quality Data Management Project. The purpose of the project is three-fold:

1. assess the local- and state-level prevention information management and reporting systems currently in place in Florida,
2. develop protocols and recommendations for improving those prevention systems, and
3. train personnel in methods of data collection and reporting and in the use of empirical evidence to evaluate and improve their drug and violence prevention programs.

The importance of the project is reflected in the vision articulated by its staff: to ensure safer school and effective prevention programs in Florida through data accuracy and improvement. Over the past two years, the objectives and activities of the project worked toward the realization of this vision by expanding the capacity of the Florida DOE and the community-based organizations in Florida to collect, analyze, and use data to improve the quality of drug and violence prevention programs. School safety is a legitimate concern for students, parents, and educators. The SDFS-QDM Project is about measuring school safety so that policy-makers and practitioners can monitor levels of school safety and ensure that available resources for prevention and intervention are used appropriately and efficiently.

This annual report of the SDFS-QDM Project to the Florida DOE describes the major activities associated with the project and presents the results of the second year of assessing the current status of data collection and reporting in Florida. The following introduction is divided into four sections. Section 1 provides background information and places the project in the larger context of school reform and accountability. Section 2 outlines the scope of the project and describes its three interrelated components. Section 3 presents a discussion of the concept of “data quality” and how it is defined within the context of this project. The final section of the Preface, Section 4, provides an overview of the remainder of the report.

Introduction

Background

The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) grant that supports the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Quality Data Management (SDFS-QDM) Project was made available by way of federal legislation that evolved from a long line of education-related legislation and reform. The most recent incarnation of this legislation is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and set in motion a nationwide effort by state education agencies (SEAs) to implement policies and processes by which they could meet its tougher standards. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA), Part A of Title IV of NCLB, actually descends from the ESEA via the marriage of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1988¹ and the 1994 Safe Schools Act. This 1994 legislation authorized funding “for federal, state, and local programs to assist schools in providing a disciplined learning environment free of violence and drug use, including alcohol and tobacco” (Cooper, 2003). The 2002 passage of NCLB amended and reauthorized SDFSCA within ESEA and reinforced the accountability aspect of the Act with its requirement of a Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) for all states.

Table 1: Chronology of Major Education-Related Federal Legislation in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Year Enacted	Title	Purpose/Goals
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	“Allocated large resources to meet the needs of educationally deprived children, especially through compensatory programs for the poor” (Schugurensky, 2006)
1967	Elementary and Secondary Amendments of 1967	Title IV – General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)
1986	Anti-Drug Abuse Act	Title IV, Subtitle B, created the DFSCA
1988	Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) Act	Drug Abuse Prevention
1994	Goals 2000: Educate America Act	Title VII created the Safe Schools Act
1994	The Safe Schools Act	“To help local school systems achieve Goal Six of the National Education Goals, which provides that by the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning, by ensuring that all schools are safe and free of violence” (Title VII, Sec. 701. Short Title; Statement of Purpose)

¹ Title IV, Subtitle B, of the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act.

Year Enacted	Title	Purpose/Goals
1994	Improving America's Schools Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reauthorized the ESEA • Extended, amended, and renamed the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) of 1988 • Added violence prevention by incorporating the Safe Schools Act • "Funding was authorized for federal, state, and local programs to assist schools in providing a disciplined learning environment free of violence and drug use, including alcohol and tobacco" (Cooper, 2003)
1994	Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA)	Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act provides for Federal assistance to support programs to meet Goal 7 of Goals 2000 by preventing violence in and around schools and by strengthening programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and are coordinated with related Federal, State, and community efforts and resources.
2002	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended and reauthorized SDFSCA within ESEA as Part A of Title IV – 21st Century Schools • "to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools; that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; that involve parents and communities; and that are coordinated with related Federal, State, school, and community efforts and resources to foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that supports student academic achievement . . . "

Table 1 presents a chronology of the major education-related federal legislation that preceded NCLB and the purpose/goals of each piece. In his announcement of "No Child Left Behind," newly-elected President George W. Bush expressed concern that despite the billions of Federal dollars designated for educational programs since the passage of the ESEA, "too many of our neediest children are being left behind" (Bush, 2001)². In an effort to address this situation, "the President called for bipartisan solutions based on accountability, choice, and flexibility in Federal education programs" (Ed.gov, 2006).

² See "The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001" at www.ed.gov/nclb.html for a full summary of President Bush's address.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS)

The Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS), described in section 4112(c) (3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by NCLB, has been the guiding document by which the SDFS-QDM Project has prioritized its goals and objectives for the three-year period of the grant. The Federal reporting requirements outlined in this piece of the NCLB legislation include data related to the following:

- truancy rates
- the frequency, seriousness, and incidence of violence and drug-related offenses resulting in suspensions and expulsions in elementary schools and secondary schools
- the incidence and prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk, and perception of social disapproval of drug use and violence by youth in schools and communities
- the types of preventative curricula, programs, and services provided by the state's chief executive officer, the state education agency, local education agencies, and non-governmental entities

To assist states in meeting these reporting requirements, the U.S. DOE issued an invitation for applications for "Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs" (Federal Register, 2004). Specifically these grants were to "provide support to states to explore strategies that will address the challenges they face in collecting and using data to manage the implementation of drug and violence prevention programs" (p. 1). The Florida DOE was among the first of the state agencies to receive funds under this initiative, which it used to create the SDFS-QDM Project. Since these grants to states were distributed, the U.S. DOE has provided further assistance in the form of a report prepared by WESTAT and EMT (2005), which presents a draft plan to establish a uniform data set (UDS) for the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System that can be adopted by every state in the nation.

The Florida SDFS-QDM Project and the Broader Scope of U.S. DOE's Data Grants

In addition to assisting states in meeting the explicit reporting requirements of NCLB, the U.S. DOE “data grants” have the stated purpose of assisting states:

to expand the capacity of local educational agencies and community-based organizations that receive SDFSCA funds to use data to assess needs, establish performance measures, select appropriate interventions, monitor progress toward established performance measures, and inform the public about drug and violence prevention programs.

(Federal Register, 2004)

This second purpose of U.S. DOE's initiative is much broader in scope and potentially more complex than the goal of meeting the requirements of UMIRS. To begin with, this *one purpose* involves two very separate and distinct collections of agents—local education agencies and community-based organizations—directed by two very separate and distinct state-level agencies – the Florida Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Drug Control (FODC). Secondly, it articulates five different possible uses of data, without prioritizing these uses or providing for separate benchmarks for each different use. In essence, the stated second *purpose* of the “Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs” is actually a conglomeration of 10 different *purposes*. In the proceeding chapters, this report addresses the current status of Florida's capacity to meet these objectives and the plans in place to improve its capacity in each of the separate areas outlined by U.S. DOE.

Scope of the SDFS-QDM Project

Since the passage of the NCLB Act, the U.S. DOE has elaborated on the President's call for “solutions based on accountability, choice, and flexibility” by outlining and defining the “Four Pillars of NCLB:”

1. Stronger accountability for results
2. More freedom for states and communities
3. Proven education methods
4. More choices for parents

(ED.gov, 7/18/2006)

The accountability component of NCLB is at the heart of the SDFS-QDM Project, but the Project also has strong ties to each of the other three of NCLB's "Four Pillars." "More freedom for states and communities" also means more competition for federal education funds. The SDFS-QDM project seeks to provide accurate and useful data to Florida's local school districts so they can demonstrate their prevention needs with empirical evidence. "Proven education methods" refers to "programs and practices that have been proven effective through rigorous scientific research" (ED.gov, 2006). Prevention programs, too, are expected to meet this standard, and the SDFS-QDM project is working to ensure the documentation and reporting of the evidence-based prevention programs being implemented in Florida. "More choices for parents" means that not only can parents choose to transfer their children based on measures of academic quality, they can also choose to transfer their children based on measures of school safety. The SDFS-QDM project has as one of its goals, the accurate and timely reporting of incidents of school crime and violence and disciplinary actions, as well as the provision of accurate data for identifying persistently dangerous schools.

Florida's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Quality Data Management Project is the result of a proposal by Florida DOE to U.S. DOE to improve the state's data collection, management, and reporting systems as they relate to safe and drug-free schools and communities. Florida was one of eleven states to receive funding for data improvement from U.S. DOE in 2004, with a proposal that encompassed both data collection and reporting and the effective use of data among local education agencies and community-based organizations supported with SDFSQA funds. Florida DOE's contract with the Florida State University (FSU) Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research to carry out the objectives of the grant involves a three-year commitment of close to \$1.5 million for personnel, travel, training, and support services.

There are two main first-year goals of the SDFS-QDM project: (1) develop relationships with stakeholders and (2) assess the current state of data collection, management, and reporting. Toward achieving the first goal, project staff has communicated on the progress of the project through monthly activities reports and ad hoc meetings with representatives of the Florida DOE, the Florida Office of Drug Control (FODC), and the Florida Department of Children and Families (FDCF).

As noted above, NCLB outlines specific Safe and Drug-Free Schools-related information, divided into four categories, in its mandated Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS). These separate categories are mirrored in the structure of the project staff organization and primary focus areas. In working toward the second goal of Year 1, the SDFS-QDM project examined the current status of data collection and reporting in Florida as it relates to each of the four components of UMIRS and has made recommendations for immediate changes, where possible, and/or developed strategies to address specific areas in which the Florida system has yet to implement sufficient means by which to meet U.S. DOE standards. The project activities associated with these efforts are detailed in proceeding chapters on school and self-report data collection and on the project's plan for the standardization of the data collection process for community-based organizations.

There five goals for the second year of this project include: (1) addressing the findings from needs assessment through the provision of training and technical assistance; (2) develop and administer a web-based SESIR training module; (3) conduct software system site visits to districts; (4) analyze SESIR and discipline data for the department; and (5) analyze data for community-based organizations that received SDFS funding. Year 2 goals and the activities conducted to meet these goals are discussed in this report.

Data Quality

That the concept of “data quality” is central to this project is indicated by its prominence in the title of the grant itself, and “data quality” has been the primary focus of the first two years of project activities and will continue in Year 3. However, the phrase needed to be defined within the context of this particular project and the definition needed to be agreed upon by members of the project staff. This section presents that definition and some of the arguments for defining “data quality.”

In the social sciences, *data* quality is closely associated with *measurement* quality, the criteria for which include precision and accuracy but weight more heavily considerations of reliability and validity (Babbie, 2004). For the purposes of this project, these same criteria are being used to assess the quality of Florida’s data on incidents of crime and violence in its public schools; the self-reported delinquency, attitudes, and perceptions of its youth; and the “the types of preventative curricula, programs, and services provided” (WESTAT/EMT, 2005) to its schools and communities. The project’s ultimate goal of improving the quality of the data that are collected, reported, and used for measuring prevention needs will be pursued with a common definition of data/measurement quality that includes precision, accuracy, reliability, validity, and utility.

One of the documents guiding the project’s activities and plans is a report prepared by WESTAT and EMT for the U.S. DOE entitled “The Uniform Data Set: A Review Draft of Data Elements for the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System” (December 5, 2005). According to this report, data quality is primarily a function of data accuracy, which is primarily a function of common definitions and measures—a.k.a. *uniformity*.

Regarding the component of the project concerned with self-report data to measure “the incidence and prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk, and perception of social disapproval of drug use and violence by youth in schools and communities” (WESTAT/EMT, 2005), Year 1 activities included a review of the literature on self-report survey data to assess the advantages and limitations of using these data to measure crime and delinquency. Year 2 activities involved developing and administering a self-report survey for middle and high school students. For community-based organizations providing prevention services, the data quality issues uncovered in the first-year assessment are primarily related to the availability and utility of the data being reported. During Year 2 of the project, staff worked with the Office of Drug Control to address data accuracy and uniformity to a greater degree.

Overview of Report Chapters

This report is divided into chapters that correspond with the major components of the SDFS-QDM project: an overview of bullying (Chapter 1), youth self-report data (Chapter 2), SESIR and discipline data (Chapter 3), training and technical assistance (Chapter 4), and analyzing data on the community-based organizations funded with SDFS (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1 summarizes the academic literature on bullying. This topic has moved to the forefront of school-related issues in the past decade. In addition, this year was the first year that SESIR included bullying as an incident type.

Chapter 2 briefly reviews existing self-report surveys in Florida and discusses the development and administration of the Florida School Environment Survey (FSES) developed through this project. The FSES is a school-level self-report survey for prevention planning and needs assessment.

Chapter 3 describes the SESIR and discipline data collected by Florida DOE. Topics cover the history and purpose of the SESIR system, the data elements collected and reported, and the project goals and objectives related to school data.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the SESIR training and technical activities for the second year of the project. The primary activity involved developing, pilot testing, and administering a SESIR on-line training module.

Chapter 5 presents the collaboration with the Office of Drug Control to refine the data collection process for community-based organizations. In addition, the analysis of the first six months of 2007 data is summarized.

CHAPTER 1 BULLYING

1.1 Introduction

The primary aim of the SDFS-QDM Project is to improve the quality of data on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse, school violence, and serious delinquency among Florida's youth. Accurate and reliable data allows Florida's SDFS office and local education agencies (LEAs) to accurately assess needs central to the "principles of effectiveness" provision of the NCLB Act of 2004. This Act requires LEAs receiving SDFS funds to: (1) conduct needs assessments, (2) set measurable objectives, (3) utilize research-based programs, and (4) evaluate progress toward objectives. In sum, improving data quality is central to prevention efforts. This chapter provides an overview of some of the key methodological concerns in the measurement of school bullying and bullying victimization. As knowledge increases about bullying, prevention efforts can increase in effectiveness and efficiency.

Research on bullying and peer violence involves studies from multiple academic disciplines including education, counseling and clinical psychology, criminology, public policy, epidemiology and public health, legal studies, and sociology. Moreover, the areas of interest in bullying research are quite diverse and include the psychological effects of bullying and victimization (Espelage and Swearer, 2004; Griffin and Gross, 2003; Rigby, 1999), the influence of school climate (Eith, 2005; Gottfredson, 2001; Morrison, 2007), the evaluation of prevention programs (Demaray and Malecki, 2006), the measurement of bullying and victimization (Cornell and Brockenbrough, 2004; Greif and Furlong, 2006; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou and Lindsay, 2006; Walton, 2005) and the role of bystanders (Crothers and Kolbert, 2004; Phillips, 2007). Given this wide scope of bullying research, this chapter does not address all of the current research on bullying. Rather, the chapter focuses on current research addressing the ancillary conditions and antecedents of bullying behavior. Specifically, the chapter examines the social dimensions of bullying and victimization and the ongoing debate regarding the proper "unit of analysis" for the examination and prevention of bullying. To begin, the definition of bullying has been a topic of some debate on the measurement and prevalence of bullying and victimization.

1.2 Defining Bullying

Developing a clear definition of bullying is important for prevention efforts because it addresses how to measure bullying for needs assessment and program evaluation. Further, the definition of bullying shapes the strategies utilized by LEAs to reduce or curtail bullying. For example, bullying has been defined as both a psychological disorder within the bully and as a perceived threat by the victim. The specific definition may shift the focus on either "treating the offender," or changing the behavior of the victim. Acts of physical violence, verbal threats, robbery, vandalism, or social ostracism *may* be classified as bullying. However, each of these negative or harmful acts alone may not

necessarily constitute bullying. Bullying behaviors are defined by the social position of the actors and the context in which it occurs.

While there is considerable disagreement over the appropriate definition of bullying (Griffin and Gross, 2004); there are some core elements that are typically found in most definitions. Generally, definitions of bullying include **repetitive oppressive behavior against an individual that has the intent of harm**. For example, Rigby (1996) defines bullying as "repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons." Similarly, Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001) define bullying as a specific type of aggression in which the behavior is intended to harm or disturb, is repeated over time, and includes an imbalance of power—with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one. Likewise, Olweus (1993) states, "A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students." Most definitions of bullying include two elements:

1. Repetitive negative behaviors
2. A powerful offender and less powerful victim

Implicit within the definitions of bullying is the concept that the victim is an individual or small group and not a large social entity such as a nation, an ethnic group, or a social class. Another assumption in bullying research is that the negative behaviors of bullies are limited in severity to acts that are not overly serious, such as homicide, nor unduly minor, such as rude behavior rather; they are somewhere in between.

Some researchers have argued that an act constitutes bullying only if the offender or group of offenders has the "intent to harm" the victim (Morrison, 2007; Kyriakides, 2006; Nansel et al., 2001). This inclusion of intent in the definition attempts to distinguish bullying from other forms of peer interactions, such as teasing or pranks. However, few studies measure the intent of offenders (see Phillips, 2007 for an example of research that examines intent). Additionally, many researchers make a distinction between physical bullying and psychological bullying or "relational bullying." Relational bullying refers to manipulation of friendship patterns and social interactions to demean or ostracize a victim from his or her peers. Subsequent sections in this chapter provide discussions of some of the evidence suggesting the presence of gender differences between physical and relational bullying and victimization as well as cyberbullying, a specific form of relational bullying.

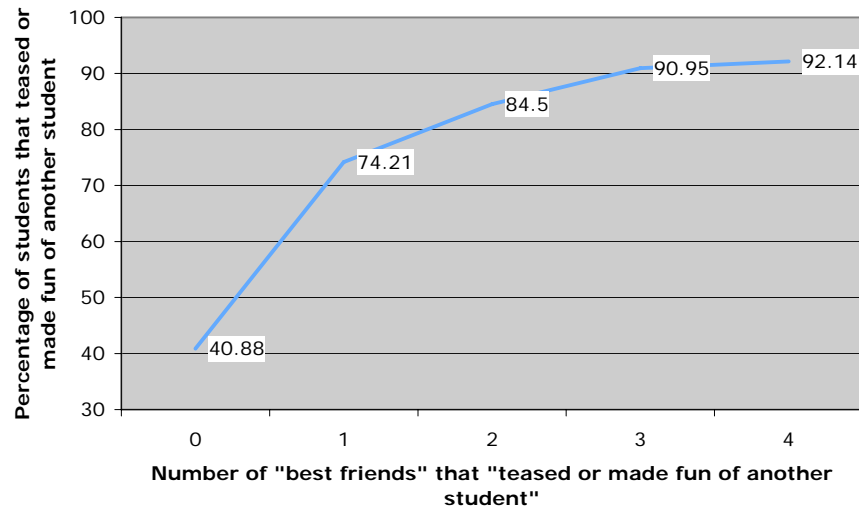
Variation in the way bullying is defined has contributed to wide disparity in the measurement of bullying, which complicates efforts aimed at prevention and intervention. Indeed, in a review of research on bullying behaviors, Griffin and Gross (2004) argue that there is a lack of consistency and uniformity in the measurement of bullying, caused by differences in definitions and differences in the operationalization of concepts. This has also resulted in variation in the reported prevalence of bullying across studies. Griffin and Gross write that "...it seems problematic to simply compare prevalence rates from various studies with little attention to the disparate definitions and

methods of assessing bullying utilized by different researchers, particularly across cultures (2004).” Additionally, Griffin and Gross argue that bullying research is spread over a number of academic disciplines, thus adding more difficulty to the empirical study of bullying. Indeed, the authors write, “It is often the case that researchers are unaware of findings in other disciplines that could be beneficial in guiding further research aimed at developing an integrated theory of bullying.” An examination of the definitional variations of bullying across disciplines is beyond the scope of this chapter, however it is worth noting that there is disagreement on the topic.

For the purposes of this chapter, bullying is defined as **repetitive negative acts of humiliation or status degradation against individuals or small groups**. Negative acts may be physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, shoving) or psychological (e.g., threats, intimidation, harassment, social ostracism). Humiliation or status degradation captures the social aspect of bullying. Bullying is a social phenomenon because it involves the interaction between the victim and offender. Beyond the immediate social exchange between victim and offender, bullying may be conceptualized as a social process because outsiders shape both the interpretation of the act as well as the frequency and severity of bullying acts. Indeed, it has been asserted that 85 percent of bullying episodes among adolescents and young adults occur in the context of a peer group (see O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig, 1999). In an examination of the social elements of bullying in the United States, Phillips (2007) found that bullying among 12 to 18 year old males was primarily perpetrated to bolster the social status of the offender among his peers.

In examining the social nature of bullying, Rigby (2002) reviewed findings from a self-report questionnaire on bullying and noted that "What is most striking about these results is that the most hurtful aggressive acts were those that we had categorized as relational, such as 'somebody trying to break up my friendships', or 'people ganging up on me' and 'being excluded' and 'being deliberately hit or kicked' was way down on the list. From this study we were left to conclude that we could have greatly underestimated the effects of relational aggression, especially on boys" (p.64).

Data from the Florida School Environment Survey (FSES), a survey developed and administered by this project, also illustrates the social nature of bullying. Figure 1.2.1 indicates that the relationship between having friends that “tease and make fun of another student” was strongly related to respondents’ bullying behaviors. Forty-one percent of survey respondents who reported that *none of their four closest friends* “teased or made fun of another student in the past 30 days” also reported that they had teased or made fun of others. However, of the survey respondents who reported that *all four of their closest friends* engaged in making fun of others, 92 percent of them reported that they had teased or made fun of others.

Figure 1.2.1 Best friends teasing others and self-reported teasing of others

Source: Florida School Environment Survey, 2007 (SDFS-QDM Project)

As previously mentioned, a common definition of bullying is important to correctly measure and assess the needs of schools and the effectiveness of prevention programs. The previous section provided an overview of some of the key elements of bullying and presented a working definition of bullying. The next section addresses some of the concerns in the measurement of bullying behavior in schools.

1.3 Measures of Bullying Behavior and Victimization

There are three fundamental methods for measuring bullying behaviors in schools: (1) teacher reports, (2) disciplinary referrals, and (3) self-report surveys. Teacher reports assess the level of bullying behavior in the classroom through teacher identification of victims and offenders. Additionally, teacher reports may be used to assess the prevalence of bullying by an overall count of incidents. There has been some evidence to support the accuracy of teacher reports over other methodologies. For example, Cornell and Brockenbrough (2004) found that teacher identification of bullies and victims tended to match students' identification of bullies and victims in the classroom, whereas self-reported offending and victimization did not match well with either teacher or student reports. Additionally, teachers may worry less about social desirability when reporting others' behaviors as opposed to their own behaviors (Carney, Hazler, and Higgins, 2002). However, there are some problems with teacher reports. First, many bullying incidents in schools take place in areas without adult supervision (Farrington, 1993), thus teachers may be unaware of a substantial amount of bullying incidents. Additionally, teachers are not passive actors in the classroom, but instead engage in interactions with students in a way that alters student behavior (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Thus, teacher reports may reflect both the behaviors of the students and the behaviors of the teachers. Teacher

reports can be a valuable source of data on bullying; however as with all data, results should be evaluated with some caution.

Disciplinary referrals are “official” measures of bullying behaviors or administrative documentation of a disciplinary action. In Florida, many LEAs have specific codes of student conduct that define bullying behavior and outline disciplinary actions for violations of district rules regarding bullying. Referrals to the office or deans may include data for violations of district policies regarding bullying behavior. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, serious incidents of violence and delinquency in Florida are recorded through the SESIR system. The SESIR system has a specific data element for recording primary incidents of bullying behavior. Additionally, starting in the 2006-07 school year, bullying may also be recorded as a related element to other SESIR incidents. For example, a fight may be recorded as the primary incident and the related element of bullying may be recorded along with the SESIR fight incident. As with teacher reports, disciplinary referrals may result in an undercount of school bullying because many incidents are undetected by school officials.

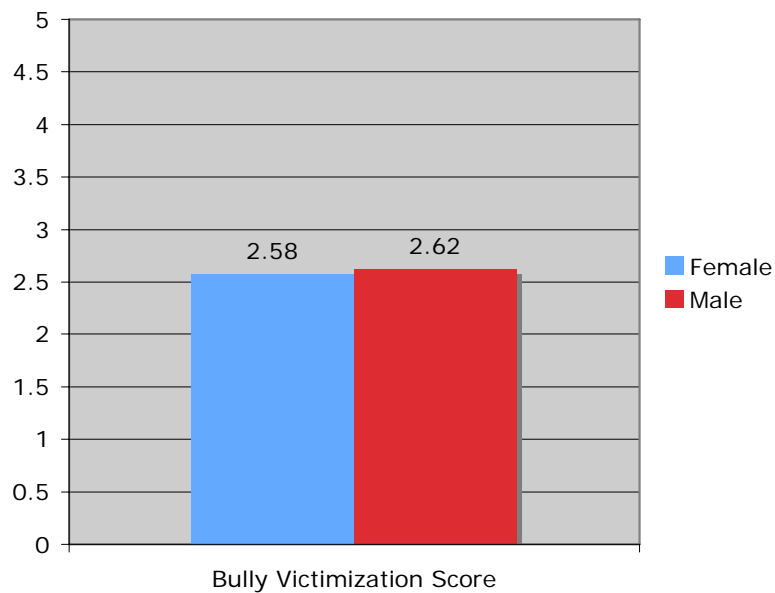
Self-reported data on bullying is the most common method of gathering data about victims and offenders (Griffin and Gross, 2003). There are generally two approaches to measuring bullying in a student self-report questionnaire. The first approach is to define the term “bullying” for the students and provide example behaviors that constitute bullying, and then ask students a series of questions regarding their experiences with these behaviors (see Hunt, Myers, Jarrett and Neel, 2005; Olweus, 1993 for examples of this technique). Self-report surveys that define bullying for students tend to have higher levels of self-reported offending and victimization; however it is unclear whether this is due to increases in recall by students or inadvertently “priming” students to falsely report higher rates of bullying. In a review of three of the most common bullying self-report questionnaires that define “bullying” for students (the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, the Renolds Bully Victimization Scale, and Swearer’s “the Bully Surveys”), Greif and Furlong (2006) argue that self-report survey data on bullying behaviors lack the specific processes and contextual factors to understand bullying and victimization. Greif and Furlong argue that the wording of surveys on bullying is too complex; for example, drawn out questions and definitions reduce comprehension of the questionnaire. Additionally, the authors argue that questions about bullying should be experience-based and avoid priming and emotionally laden terms such as “bullying.”

The second approach to measuring bullying behaviors using self-report surveys is to ask students a series of questions regarding their personal accounts or direct experiences of bullying and victimization. For example, the FSES ask students six different questions such as “[i]n the past 12 months, how often have you teased or made fun of another student(s)?” The items are aggregated together to create a bullying score. Additionally, other items are aggregated to create a victim-score. This additive index-scale approach has the advantage of measuring bullying without priming students, but the main concern is that this technique results in an underreporting of bullying behaviors.

Another critical issue regarding the self-reported measure of bullying is the use of a dichotomous versus a continuous measure of bullying. In other words, should bullying be measured as an “either/or” factor where a student is either a bully or not a bully or should bullying be measured on a continuum with no bullying behaviors on one end of the continuum and all bullying behaviors on the other end of the continuum? Some studies have measured bullying behavior as an either/or factor. For example, in a study of 558 middle school students, Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999) reported that 80 percent of students engaged in bullying behavior. The authors measured bullying by asking students how many times they did the following in the past 30 days (1) “I called other students names,” (2) “I teased students,” (3) “I said things about students to make other students laugh,” (4) “I threatened to hit or hurt another student,” (5) “I pushed, shoved, slapped, or kicked other students.” According to the authors, a student participated in bullying if that student responded positively to any option other than they “never” engaged in the listed activity. Bosworth and colleagues’ measure of bullying behavior includes a range of behaviors; however, their definition of bullying counts all incidents of “bullying” equally and may lead to an over-reporting of bullying behavior. Alternatively, the authors also combined all of the responses to the 5 items and created a “bullying scale.” The advantage of measuring bullying offending and victimization on a continuous scale is that it allows for an examination of the range and intensity of bullying behaviors.

The FSES uses continuous measures of bullying and victimization as well as specific measures of cyberbullying, physical bullying, and relational bullying. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the FSES methodology. Figure 1.3.1 presents results of a 13-point bully victimization scale (0-12) by gender from the FSES. Four items were used to create the scale; students were asked the frequency of the following events over the previous year: (1) called names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way, (2) other students told lies about you, spread rumors, or tried to get others to dislike you, (3) other students hit, kicked, or pushed you at school with the aim of seriously hurting you, (4) another student threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club at school. Statistical analysis of the data results displayed in Figure 1.3.1 indicates that there are no differences in Bullying Victimization Scores between males and females.³

³ Simple two-tailed student t-test with a 95 percent confidence interval was used for all bivariate means tests in this chapter. Correlations and α -scores for scale construction are available by request.

Figure 1.3.1 Bullying Victimization Score by Gender

When the bullying victimization score is disaggregated to create two scores (physical bullying victimization and relational bullying victimization), statistically significant gender differences emerge (see Figures 1.3.2 and 1.3.3). Male students report more victimization of physical bullying relative to females, whereas females report more victimization of relational bullying compared to males. These findings are consistent with prior research on bullying (Farrington, 1993).

Figure 1.3.2 Physical Bullying Victimization Score by Gender

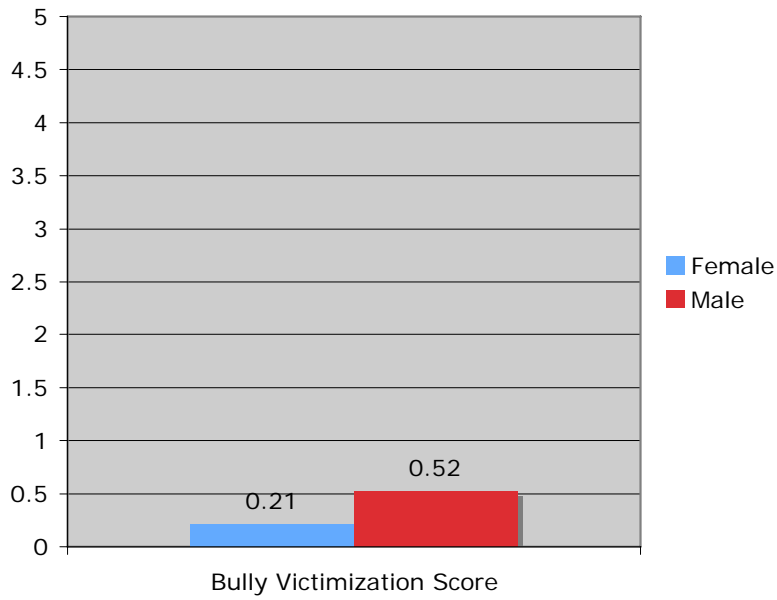
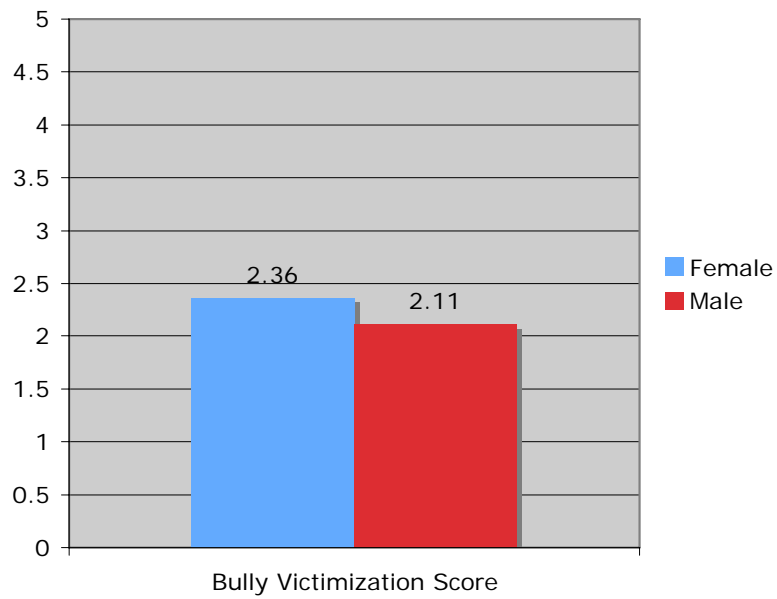


Figure 1.3.3 Relational Bullying Victimization Score by Gender



A relational bullying offending score was also created using data from the FSES. Four items that measured bullying behavior over the past year were combined to create a 13-point scale (0-12): (1) teased or made fun of another student(s), (2) been mean to another student because your friends did not like them, (3) tried to get others to dislike someone in order to get even, and (4) bullied or picked on another student(s). A comparison of gender differences for the relational bullying offending score was conducted (see Figure 1.3.4). Statistical analysis indicates that male students engage in relational bullying at a significantly greater frequency relative to female students.

Figure 1.3.5 presents gender differences in the cyberbullying offending score, a 7-point score created by combining two items: (1) how often have you used a website, such as myspace, facebook, or a web blog, to post negative comments about another student(s), (2) how often have you left negative comments on another student's myspace page or web blog. Interestingly, these statistically significant findings indicate that female students engage in cyberbullying more frequently than their male peers. All of the data from the FSES presented different ways of measuring bullying and victimization from self report data.

Figure 1.3.4 Relational Bullying Offending Score by Gender

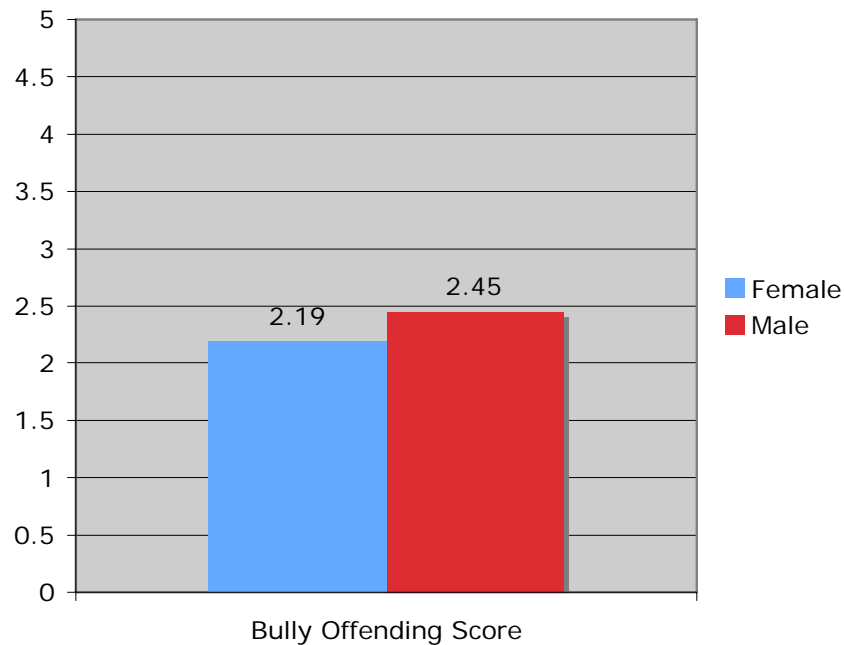
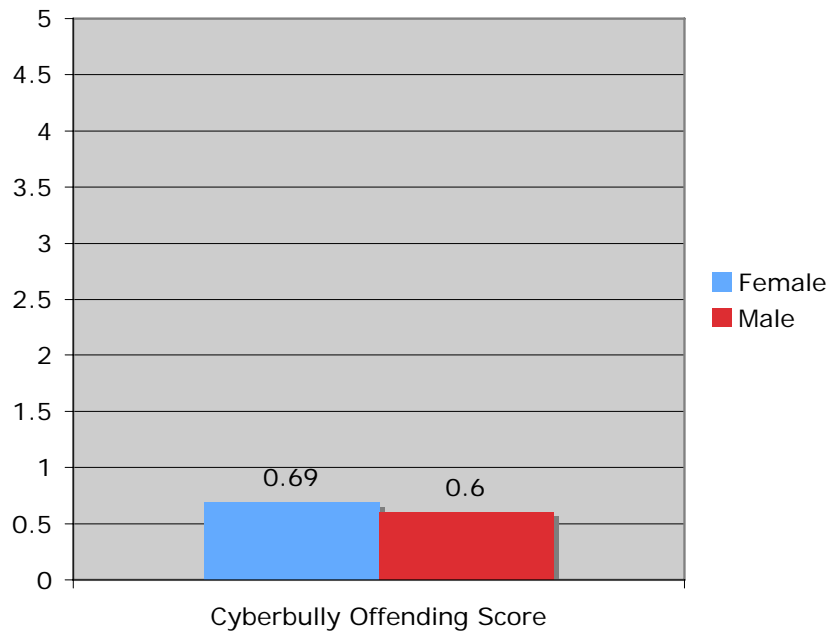


Figure 1.3.5 Cyberbullying Offending Score by Gender

It is also important to recognize that there are additional measures of bullying that are less commonly used such as peer nomination (Crick and Grotpeter, 1995; Salmivalli and Nieminen, 2002), qualitative focus groups and in-depth interviews (Philips, 2007), and direct observation (Pelligrini and Long, 2002). Moreover, it is likely that as the findings from different measures of bullying are aggregated, our measurement and understanding of this important social problem will be advanced.

1.4 The Psychological Versus the Global

Another current debate in the study of bullying prevention is determining the proper social level or “unit of analysis” to conceptualize and prevent bullying. Bullying may be examined from multiple perspectives ranging from the individual to the societal. Differences in perspective have profound effects on both the understanding of the causes of bullying and the subsequent selection of prevention strategies by schools. For example, some bullying programs have focused on “treating the offender;” other programs have attempted to “change the school climate.” All prevention programs share the goal of reducing bullying, but some approaches may be more effective than others by targeting the most influential individuals or social units. This section provides a brief overview of the major perspectives on bullying.

1.4.1 Psychological Perspectives on Bullying

Many researchers and prevention specialists perceive bullying as a byproduct of offenders' psychological maladjustment or as pathological behavior (Griffin and Gross, 2003; Nansel et al., 2007; Unnever and Cornell, 2003; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2004;). For example, Morrison (2007) argues that bullying and violence are the result of feelings of alienation by students and that social exclusion is the precedent of alienation. According to Morrison:

Both students who bully and students who are victimized are caught up in cycles of alienation, although their patterns of behavior are different. For some, the social cycle of alienation and the associated psychological void continues to widen, affecting themselves and others through different life stages and social domains, becoming evident in behaviors that reflect poor psychological and social adjustment.

Similarly, Swearer, Song, Eagle, and Mickelson (2001) argue that both bullies and victims experience higher rates of depression and anxiety relative to their peers and that prevention programs should focus on treating “internalized psychopathologies” of victims and offenders. In an examination of the link between bully victimization and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Unnever and Cornell (2003) conclude, “...students with ADHD are at increased risk for being victimized by bullies...” and the authors conclude that this finding has implications for the delivery of educational and mental health services to these students. Underlying the psychological perspective is the belief that bullying behaviors are rooted within individuals and treatment efforts should target offenders and victims. Anti-bullying programs from the psychological perspective are directed primarily at changing the behaviors of individual students.

In contrast to the psychological perspective, Walton (2005) argues that one of the fundamental problems with the conceptualization of bullying is the emphasis on individuals as the cause of bullying. Walton posits that bullying researchers root their theorizing in role theory, with research focused on modifying the “bully” the “bullied” and the “bystander.” According to Walton, “The focus of much of the literature on bullying is on individuation and behavior, stripped of school or community contexts and driven by narrowly-focused definitions of bullying.” Walton asserts that changing the social context is critical to the prevention of bullying behaviors.

1.4.2 School Influences on Bullying

Emanating from the perspective that bullying is the result of the school environment and context, school-wide prevention programs strive to alter those school climate aspects that contribute to bullying behaviors (Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, and Hohnson, 2004). In an examination of bullying patterns among high school students, Dixon, Smith, and Jenks (2004) argue for a “systemic approach” or a whole-school perspective to understanding bullying. Similarly, Yoneyama and Naito (2003) argue that research on school factors as causes of bullying have been limited and are not the focus of many studies. According to

the researchers, “If student bullying, at least in part, reflects a structural problem, then instead of focusing on ‘problem students’ and ‘problem behavior,’ it becomes necessary to examine the social structure of the school itself.” Rigby (1997) found that a high prevalence of a ‘culture of bullying’ differentiated high-bullying schools from low-bullying schools. Indeed, schools differ significantly in the amounts of reported bullying, even when socio-economic and other variables are controlled for (Galloway and Roland, 2004), and a lack of appropriate resources within schools is also associated with higher levels of school bullying (Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 1985).

Conversely, rampant or widespread bullying in a school can create a climate of fear and reduces the quality of life for all students and school personnel (Twemlow, Fonagy, and Sacco, 2001). Results from the FSES indicate that there is a strong relationship between being bullied and feeling unsafe at school (see Table 1.4.1). Students that reported “never” feeling unsafe at school report a bully victimization Score of 2.04 (on a scale from 0–12), whereas students who reported “always” feeling unsafe at school reported a bully victimization score of 6.65.

Table 1.4.1 Average Score on a 12-point Bullying Victimization Scale and Feelings of Schools Safety

Q: How often do you feel unsafe at school?	
	<u>Average Victimization Score*</u>
Never	2.04
Sometimes	2.57
Most of the time	2.59
Always	6.65

* Victimization Score included 4 items to create a 13-point scale (0-12).

The relationship between school climate and bullying behaviors may be considered complex because it includes physical or material characteristics of schools (e.g., the size of the student body, the teacher to pupil ratios, the expenditure per pupil, the condition of facilities) and the social aspects of the school (e.g. school bonding, involvement in extra-curricular groups, community involvement) (Eith, 2005; Kasen at al., 2004). Additional research is needed to examine the multiple influences that school structure has on bullying behavior and victimization.

1.4.3 Cultural Perspectives on Bullying

The proposition that bullying is culturally based and considered as normative in the larger society is reflective of another dominant perspective in the literature. Unnever and Cornell (2003) define a “culture of bullying” as a “multidimensional phenomenon characterized by a normative set of shared beliefs that support or encourage bullying

behavior.” Similarly, Phillips (2007) argues that bullying is a culturally normative practice among adolescent males in Western society. Phillips argues the norm of masculinity constitutes the ideal-type as “superior, in control, strong, tough, respected, and infallible.” Bullying is posited as a natural extension of masculinity. A substantial portion of the research on bullying over the last two decades has been conducted in Canada, Europe, Japan and Australia; the international perspective has added to the examination of cultural differences (for a review of international research see Farrington, 1993; Griffin and Gross, 2003). For example, in a cross-cultural comparison of school bullying, Yoneyama and Naito (2003) argue that Japanese schools have less bullying behaviors relative to the United States because Japanese schools have a more authoritarian structure relative to “Western liberal-democratic” educational systems.

Cultural differences in attitudes towards violence and aggression may also explain differences in bullying behaviors between sub-populations. For example, Walton (2005) argues that the distinction between male and female bullying is not derived from distinct differences in bullying styles, but instead reflects the gender stereotypes of the larger society. Cultural explanations of bullying behavior present problems for prevention specialists because of the difficulty in changing societal attitudes or culture. However, recent changes in public attitudes towards behaviors such as tobacco use and drunk driving provide some support for the effectiveness of targeted social movements (Kellermann, 1997).

The previous sections have examined three different perspectives on bullying: the psychological, the school-based perspective, and cultural influences. Undoubtedly, bullying and victimization have a myriad of underlying causes and determinants. Swearer and Espelage (2004) write that bullying “is encouraged and/or inhibited as a result of the complex relationships between the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and culture.” Drawing from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Social-Ecological Systems Perspective, Swearer and Espelage (2004) argue that bullying should be viewed from multiple perspectives. The researchers state, “Ecological-systems theory purports that all individuals are part of interrelated systems that locate the individual at the center and move out from the center to include all systems that affect the individual.” This perspective acknowledges the multiple influences that shape bullying and victimization; however, Ecological-systems theory designates individuals and psychological influences as the primary unit of analysis. Future research should examine multiple approaches to curtailing or preventing bullying behavior from the perspective that has the most explanatory power and impact on change.

1.5 Conclusion

Over the past decade, public concern for school safety and the mental health of children has resulted in increased attention to school bullying and victimization. This chapter provided an overview of issues and research findings on bullying. The complexity of defining and measuring bullying was provided together with an overview of the major research perspectives on bullying. There are three key findings relevant for future research on bullying:

- The definition of bullying has a direct impact on the measurement of bullying behavior.
- Differences in prevalence and incident rates of bullying between studies may be the result of definitional variation as well as disparity in measurements.
- Differences in perspectives toward bullying may result in multiple approaches to developing prevention strategies and programming.

CHAPTER 2

SELF-REPORT DATA: THE FLORIDA SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

2.1 Introduction

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Quality Data Management Project (SDFS-QDM) Project is developing the Florida School Environment Survey (FSES), a middle and high school self-report survey. The FSES is designed to both integrate with current data sets in Florida and to provide new information that was not previously available and would be beneficial for program planning. The FSES has the goal of improving state self-report data quality in five key ways: (1) provide *school-level* self-report data; (2) support the School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) data by providing self-report data on many incidents that conform to SESIR codes and definitions; (3) provide self-report data on bullying prevalence and victimization; (4) provide a cost-efficient tool for school administrators to self administer and generate school-level, relevant needs assessment data; and (5) use district administrators' insights to provide schools with cross-sectional and longitudinal data at the school level regarding substance use, bullying, peer behavior, and other forms of delinquency.

Currently, there are several student self-report surveys conducted in Florida that gather data regarding alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Monitoring the Future (MTF), and the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) [formerly the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA)] are three nationally representative self-report surveys that are administered in Florida and supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, the State of Florida supports a number of state level surveys such as the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), a state- and district-level survey of youth delinquency, the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), a district-level survey of youth attitudes and behaviors regarding tobacco use, and a state-level YRBS in Florida. In Florida, the YRBS is administered by the Department of Health and the FYSAS is administered by the Department of Children and Families.

During the 2006-07 school year, the preliminary middle school and high school versions of the FSES were pilot tested in three school districts. Pilot test results provide important data on the survey instrument as well as the procedures for administering the FSES. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the FSES and initial findings. Section 2.2 reviews the goals of the Florida School Environment Survey. Section 2.3 examines results from the pilot test of the FSES and provides a discussion of proposed changes to the survey, and the Section 2.4 provides a summary discussion.

2.2 FSES Goals

As previously mentioned, one of the main goals of the FSES is to provide school-level self-report data that is currently unavailable to Florida’s local education agencies (LEAs). Schools within the same district or geographical area can often vary widely in terms of the populations they serve as well as drug use and victimization rates (Eith, 2006). Indeed, schools often develop their own communal culture and organizational structure that can have both direct and indirect effects on delinquency (Payne, 2004). From a prevention standpoint, school-level data would allow for identifying needs and targeting program efforts rather than taking a common approach to all schools. Although there are some districts in Florida that already collect school-level data (e.g. Hillsborough), many other districts (particularly mid-size districts) would benefit from school-level data. Likewise, the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), a survey administered by the Department of Children and Families, may be administered at the school level, but it is cost prohibitive for many districts and would not address specific programming needs. The FSES is a self-report survey that improves the quality of data at the school-level and, ultimately, may benefit local program planning.

The second goal of the FSES is to provide self-report data on incidents that conform to SESIR codes and incident definitions. The aim of creating uniformity in measurements of incidents is to facilitate the comparison and integration of FSES data and existing data sets in Florida, thus providing a multidimensional understanding of youth behavior and attitudes toward delinquency. Providing self-report data of incidents that conform to the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) (mandated by the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools) reporting requirements and SESIR incident definitions enables comparisons of the FSES data with other school-level data (such as SESIR) and state and national data (such as UMIRS). Thus, the FSES should integrate into other data sources in Florida to provide a more complete measurement and understanding of school safety.

The third goal of the FSES is to provide self-report data on bullying prevalence and victimization. Currently, there is limited empirical data on bullying, particularly among females and bullying through new technologies, such as digital communication and computerized public forums (Morrison, 2006; Simmons, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 1, many prevention efforts now focus on the negative effects of bullying—shifting away from the paradigm of bullying being a youth’s “rite of passage” or normative experience.

Fourth, the FSES should provide a cost efficient, self-administered data collection tool for LEAs. As discussed previously, one of the factors that is currently preventing LEAs from implementing school-level self-report surveys has been the cost associated with conducting survey research. Smaller school districts often lack the resources to purchase needs assessment surveys or to conduct “in house” surveying. The FSES is designed to be a lower cost alternative to private survey companies and is designed to be simple to administer and collect data. However, even the most basic survey requires some complexity in analyzing results and, thus, it is likely that LEAs will need some form of continued technical assistance in using the FSES.

The fifth goal of the FSES is to provide LEAs with cross-sectional and longitudinal data at the school level regarding substance use and other forms of delinquency. The FSES includes a number of other variables associated with delinquency (e.g. low self control, peer association, use of free time, parental monitoring) and additional demographic variables. Additionally, the FSES includes a number of control variables at the individual and school level to address needs of individual LEAs. The FSES is also designed for LEAs to have the ability to assess changes in behaviors over time, at the school level. These five goals have shaped the design and administration protocols of the FSES. The survey development (refinement) is ongoing.

2.3 Preliminary FSES Survey Findings

Survey design and administration involve a number of procedures including constructing questions and response categories, ordering the questions appropriately, designing the layout of the pages, assessing the length and age appropriateness of the survey instrument, providing clear instructions for administration, complying with institutional policies, creating sampling protocols, addressing ethical concerns regarding human protections from harm and violations of privacy, and field testing and analyzing results for revision. One of the main accomplishments of the SDFS-QDM Project over the past year was to design and field test the FSES in order to identify key methodological issues. This section provides an overview of the FSES pilot test including administration and protocols, the evaluation survey, data “cleaning” procedures, and the survey results.

2.3.1 Survey Administration

In the spring of 2007, a total of 3,268 students in 5 schools from 3 school districts participated in the pilot test of the FSES. The target population of the FSES is the student population of the school, thus the survey seeks to provide various estimates at the school level. Ideally, all the students in a school would participate in the FSES to provide the most accurate data. This is sometimes referred to as convenience sampling, because the aim is to try to include as many people as possible in the survey to avoid systematically excluding a particular group through a complex sampling design. All of the students in the schools were asked to participate in the FSES, including students who were absent the day of the survey. The final participation rate was 84.4 percent. This rate is relatively high. For example, in 2006 the FYSAS had a student participation rate of 80 percent for middle school students and 75 percent for high school students. The large sample size of the FSES provides confidence to the generalizability of the results. Of course, as with all surveys, results should be viewed as a generalized indicator of attitudes and behaviors and not as an absolute or “true” assessment scale.

Protocol for administering the pilot test followed a standard survey methodology. Once districts agreed to participate in the FSES pilot test, project staff contacted school district administrators to discuss the survey and review the district’s policies. In this year’s pilot test, all of the districts approved passive consent procedures, where parents needed to sign a form to indicate that their child should not participate. Next, in collaboration with the school principals, dates and school periods were chosen for survey administration.

Additionally a count of students and classrooms were obtained to prepare for survey copying and distribution.

One week prior to the survey administration, parent permission forms were distributed in each classroom. Classes received the parent permission forms in a large envelope with instructions for the teacher attached to the outside of the envelope as well as the inside. One week later, the surveys, pencils, and teachers' instructions were delivered to the classrooms. Again, teacher instructions were attached to the outside of the envelope as well as inside. After students completed the survey (except students that excused themselves or that did not have parental approval), the surveys were placed back into the envelopes and sent to a central location (e.g. office, school library, school counselors office). During the pilot test, project staff waited in the central location to collect the surveys and identify classrooms that did not return surveys. Extra surveys and materials were also kept at this location and the school's daily attendance count was recorded. At one pilot test site, school staff administered the survey and, in the future, it is intended that school administrators will fill this role.

Once returned in the envelopes, the surveys were transported to FSU's Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research where project staff assigned an individual ID number, a school ID number, and classroom ID number to each survey. The entire survey data set was entered into a spreadsheet twice to ensure data entry accuracy. Additionally, the survey administration protocol was reviewed after each pilot test of the FSES and refined as necessary to address minor concerns regarding teacher instructions for the distribution and collection of the parental permission forms. Given the time and cost of entering survey results manually into electronic format, one of the most notable changes for next years survey administration will be the addition of optical read surveys.

2.3.2 Survey Validity

Survey validity was assessed using three methods: (1) comparison of FSES data to the prior years' data for FYSAS; (2) examination of survey items designed to measure inaccurate responses or the *discriminant validity*, and (3) examination of survey items in aggregate, referred to as *construct validity*. Comparisons of results from three key items (current alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use) from the FSES and the 2006 FYSAS indicate a high level of consistency or *concurrent validity* (results presented in Figure 2.3.1, Figure 2.3.2, and Figure 2.3.3). Empirical analysis indicates that there is high probability that there are no meaningful differences between the FYSAS and the FSES on the key items of interest.

Figure 2.3.1 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

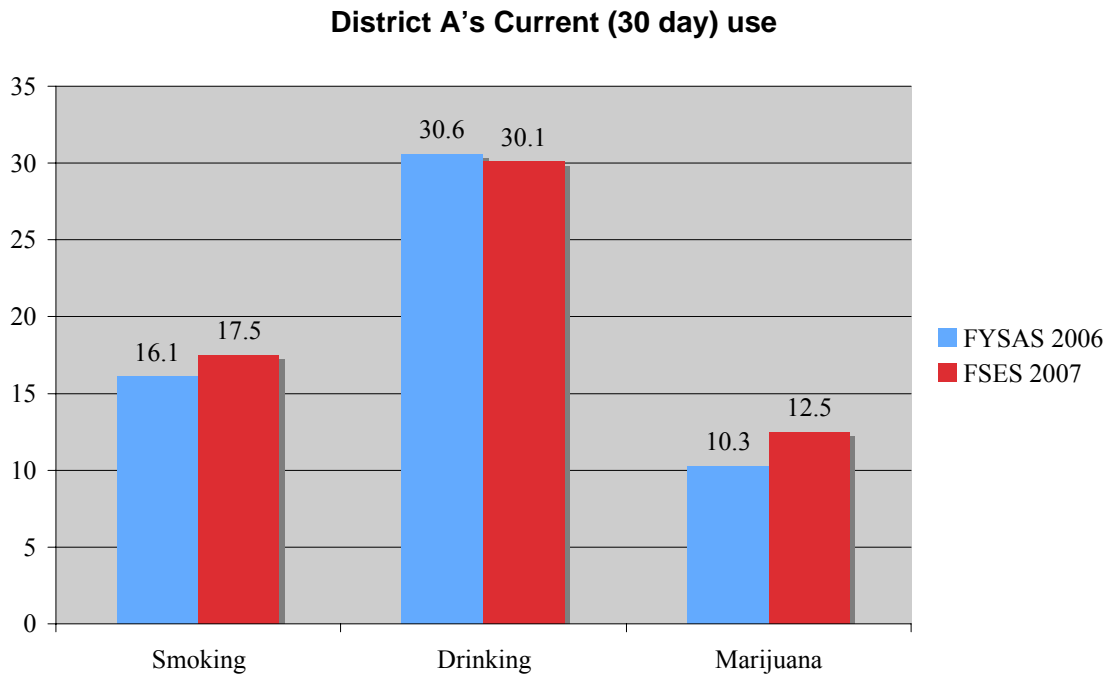


Figure 2.3.2 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

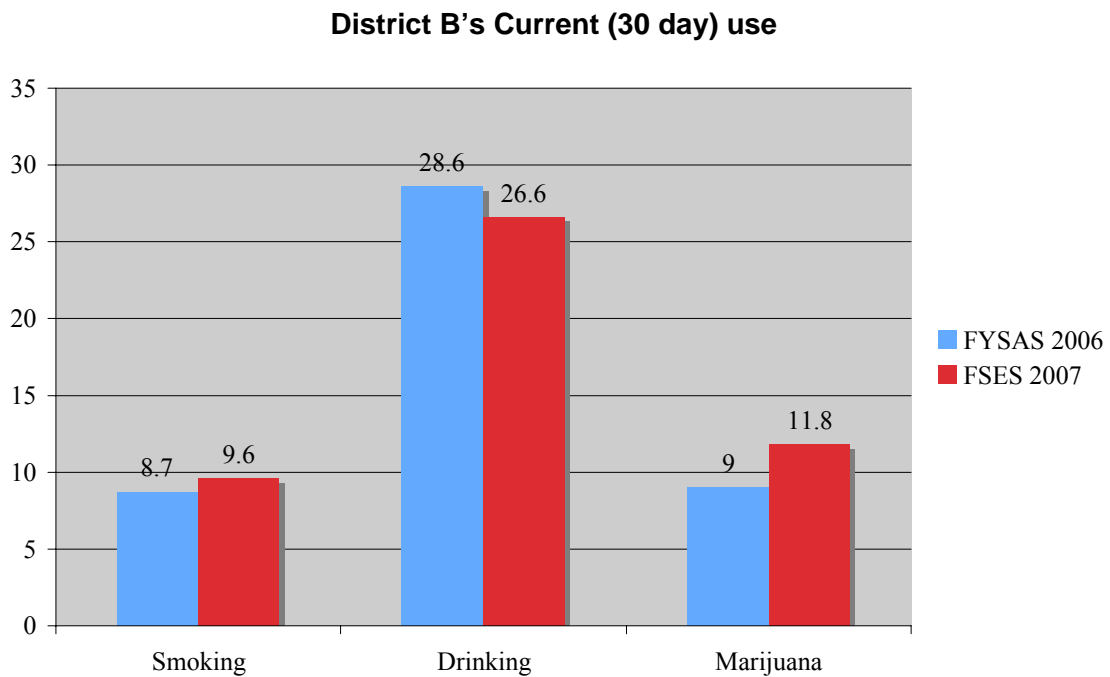
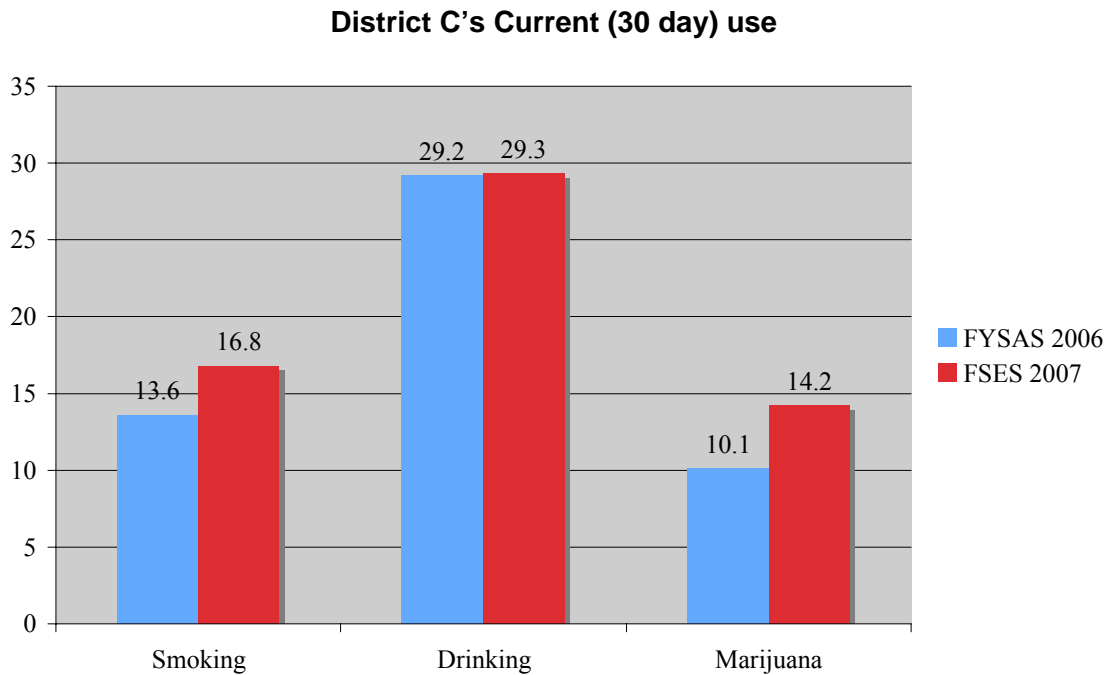


Figure 2.3.3 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

Examining false response items on the survey also served as a means of assessing the validity of the FSES. Most surveys of adolescents and young adults have some form of validity check to identify false responses. The FSES has three main assessment procedures for determining false responses. First, data was analyzed for logical inconsistencies in responses. For example, if a participant responds that he/she has never had a drink of alcohol on one item and also responds that he/she engages in binge drinking on another item, then the respondent's answers would be marked for further assessment. The second validity check was participants' selection of implausible response categories. For example, a participant responds that he/she uses a highly potent drug or combination of drugs every day over the last thirty days would be examined for validity across other responses. The third validity check was an independent item on the survey: "During the past 30 days, how many times did you use clorovisen or zens?" The drug "clorovisen" is a false or "made-up" drug and is used to check the accuracy of the survey respondents. Surveys that have one or more indicators that "flag" the survey for validation concerns are analyzed separately to assess false responses. Of the 3,268 surveys from the pilot test, 174 (5.3 percent) were marked as potentially "false" or containing at least one invalid survey response. The validity of all of the items on the survey is considered in the statistical analysis of survey data.

2.3.3 Item Rationale

This section provides an overview of the rationale employed for item selection. The survey can be divided into eight categories: demographic characteristics, delinquency measures, attitudinal items, social influences, self-control measures, routine activities/micro-life course measures, validity checks, and miscellaneous items. As previously stated, some items were selected to correspond with the Federal UMIRS requirements and the SESIR definitions. Items that match the UMIRS requirements are also comparable to items on other self-report surveys, such as the FYSAS or YRBS and, therefore, accomplish one of the data improvement goals discussed for this project. Examining constructs however, is the most important determinant for assessing the appropriateness of an item on the survey. This section describes the constructs included in the high school survey instrument. Pilot test analysis explicitly identifies the constructs that are measured, and adjustments are made as necessary if important constructs are missing or if some items appear superfluous. Each of the eight survey categories is presented below.

2.3.4 Demographic Characteristics

The first nine items of the high school FSES provide demographic information about the participants. The items relate to participants' age, race/ethnicity, gender, country of origin, adults in the household, grades, and parents' educational attainment. Demographic characteristics of individuals are often correlates of a variety of delinquent behaviors and attitudes (Agnew, 2006). Additionally, items that measure demographic characteristics are used to control or hold constant variance that exists in the sample. In other words, demographic information makes it possible to compare similarly situated individuals to one another.

Age is one of the strongest predictors of drug use and other forms of delinquency. Generally speaking, the propensity toward drug use and criminal offending increases with age throughout adolescence and young adulthood and reaches a peak in the late teens and early twenties (Farrington, 1996; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983, Warr, 2002). There are several explanations as to why age has an effect on delinquent behavior: decreased parental monitoring, greater frequency and duration in association with peers, and increased availability or access to the elements of delinquency are only a few of the reasons that age has a strong relationship to delinquent behavior.

Race and ethnicity are often key factors in research on delinquency. In quantitative analysis of individual-level data, the inclusion of race and/or ethnicity is often essential as either a key variable of interest or as a control variable for model specification. Despite the common inclusion of race and ethnicity in empirical research, there is often little discussion about the substantive meaning or construction of race and ethnicity as a variable. For example, a racial and ethnic measure serves as a construct of a larger theoretical concept such as ascribed status in discrimination research, self-concept in identity research, or cultural membership in theories of inter-cultural differences. The theoretical justification for the inclusion of race and ethnicity in a model also has implications for its measurement. For example, research on identity benefits from a measure that is self-defined, on the other hand, self-definitions may not be important for

research on discrimination. The combination of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity and race into a single “ethnoracial” concept was included in the high school FSES and is a common practice in statistical research (Hollinger, 1995; Torres-Saillant, 2003). Although this ethnoracial combination matches with individuals’ self-identification of Hispanic or Latino is synonymous with racial identity in the United States (Lee and Bean, 2003), it may not accurately reflect individuals’ cultural experience (Hollinger, 1995).

For this survey, an item that asks participants to identify their place of birth (U.S./non-U.S.) is used as a proxy measure of citizenship status without requiring students to identify their specific citizenship status. Citizenship presents an interesting set of issues for researchers who study juvenile delinquency. Citizenship like race, ethnicity, and gender, is typically conferred at birth and is socially constructed. Usually resulting from lineage or geographic location of birth, citizenship encompasses the rights, responsibilities, burdens, and benefits of the nation-state to which it is associated. Unlike other ascribed characteristics, however, the U.S. legal system has constructed citizenship as a “legal” status or role that is relevant in criminal proceedings. Except for those that naturalize, citizenship in the United States is usually not due to any actions of the individual, yet citizenship can have an important bearing on legal processes.

Results from two of the other self-report student surveys, the FYSAS and YRBS, indicate that gender and academic grade (achievement) are strongly related to delinquency. Although grade level is not typically considered a demographic characteristic, like educational attainment, grades serve as an individual-level characteristic that provides insight into the academic development of a population that is in the process of obtaining educational outcomes. One item on the high school survey asks respondents to describe their grades over the past 12 months as a general measure of current academic achievement. There is a strong relationship between adolescent and young adult alcohol abuse and academic failure, although questions regarding the causal ordering remain unresolved (Crosnoe, 2002, 2006; Bryant et al., 2003). Likewise, prior research has found academic achievement to be associated with disruptive behavior and other forms of delinquency (see Gottfredson, 2001 for a review).

The FSES contains two items (questions) that measure parental household composition. The influence of parents on delinquency is a central question in criminology (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Warr, 2002). This question may be use independently combined with other measures to capture parental characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors and provide an understanding of parental influence.

Questionnaire items that assess parental educational attainment are often used as a proxy measure of household socioeconomic status (SES) (Entwistle and Astone, 1994). Two items on the FSES measure parental education and may be combined with the item regarding parental household composition to provide a crude measure of household SES. It should be noted here, however, that there has been considerable debate on the influence of SES on delinquency and the complexity of the relationship (see Akers, 1964; Stark, 1979, Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1979; Tittle and Meier, 1990; Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller, 1992; Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, Miech, and Silva, 1999).

2.3.5 Delinquency Measures

There are six categories of delinquent behavior measured in the high school FSES: (1) truancy, (2) alcohol use, (3) tobacco use, (4) use of other drugs, (5) bullying, and (6) petty offending. The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools has identified and targeted these behaviors for prevention programming and resources. The underlying belief is that these behaviors are harmful (either directly or indirectly through associated behaviors), commonplace, and modifiable or preventable. Thus, the six behavior categories are amenable to prevention or treatment efforts and affect a large number of youth. Survey items that measure delinquent behavior examine current alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (past 30 days), age of onset, location, access or availability, other people present at the time of offending, and amount and frequency of offending.

Three items on the high school survey provide a general measure of truancy, one of the key variables of interest in this project. The items measure missing school, skipping classes, and arriving late to school. School attendance is a strong predictor of academic success. Likewise, truancy is associated with other forms of delinquency (MTF, 2004).

Many of the items on the high school FSES examine current alcohol consumption patterns, location of drinking, binge drinking, and drinking and driving. Alcohol use is one of the key dependent variables examined in the FSES. According to the FYSAS and YRBS, alcohol is the most common illegal substance used by adolescents and young adults. The 30-day alcohol items on the survey are comparable to the FYSAS and YRBS measures of current alcohol use, thus allowing for comparison across survey instruments.

Smoking and other forms of tobacco use are other primary dependant variables in the FSES. According to Monitoring the Future (MTF) data, overall rates of smoking among youth have dropped over the last 30 years, and they continue to show an overall decline. For example from 1975 to 2005, 12th graders' daily cigarette smoking declined from 26.9 percent to 13.6 percent (MTF, 2005). The rate of the overall decline of smoking has decelerated over the past several years, while efforts to reduce adolescent smoking remain a priority to many prevention practitioners (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, and Schulenberg, 2005). Items regarding current tobacco use examine patterns of smoking and smokeless tobacco use, availability, and whether it is companionate in usage. Tobacco items are comparable to the measures of current use on the FYSAS and YRBS.

Other independent variables that are central to this study are measures of adolescent and young adult marijuana use as well as other drugs. Along with a number of other forms of delinquency, marijuana use by young adults has decreased over the last 30 years (MTF, 2005). However, this decline has not occurred as sharply and steadily as the decline in tobacco use. In fact, the FYSAS found that among 12th grade students the current rates of marijuana use and tobacco use are roughly equivalent to one another. Current use of other drugs is also measured in the FSES including ecstasy, inhalants, steroids, cocaine, methamphetamines, LSD, and heroin.

There are several items on the high school survey that measure physical assault, bullying, and victimization. In recent years, greater attention has been given to school bullying and

victimization. As discussed in the beginning of the chapter, school bullying is a concern not only in its “traditional” form of physical violence and intimidation, but also in psychological and relational aggressive forms. For example, cyber-bullying, social ostracism, status and reputation degradation seem to have similar psychological impacts as physical aggression (Espelage and Swearer, 2004). There are six items on the survey that examine victimization of bullying and six items that examine offending. These items are combined to create bullying victimization and offending scores. Additionally, there are specific items for both cyber-bullying victimization and offending.

There are two survey items (questions) that measure students’ participation in illegally downloading copyrighted music, a common form of petty offending. These items may have a socioeconomic bias toward youth or offenders who have greater access to computers with Internet connections; however, it is often the case that measures of petty offending on school self-report surveys are focused on crimes of the poor. Technology has changed the crime of theft and the high school FSES attempts to account for changes in these behaviors over time, including the use of computers. Additionally, these items correspond to a series of questions about peer, parents, and one’s own attitudes toward illegally downloading copyrighted music.

2.3.6 Attitudinal Items

The relationship between attitudes and behaviors can be deceptively complex. At one time, many researchers thought that attitudes were a stable and predictable cause of behavior. For example, public opinion polls were often predicated on the assumption that political attitudes predict voting behavior. However, social psychologists have called into question the causal relationship between attitudes and behavior (Bandura, 1969). Indeed, behaviors may be the result of imitation, habit, bounded rationality, or social pressure. Still, attitudes favorable to delinquency are strong determinants of offending and attitudinal measures on the FSES seek to triangulate the influences of parents’ attitudes, peers’ attitudes, and individuals’ attitudes as interrelated causes of delinquency.

Items on the FSES provide a general measure of attitudes toward six common forms of delinquency: (1) underage drinking, (2) smoking cigarettes, (3) smoking marijuana, (4) cheating at school, (5) skipping school, and (6) illegally downloading music. More importantly, the attitudinal measures of delinquency correspond to items that measure behavior, peers’ attitudes and behaviors, and parents’ attitudes. Parents’ behaviors were intentionally excluded from the survey to avoid the ethical concerns of youth reporting on parents’ negative behavior. Additionally, building from research on the fear of crime, perceptions of both victimization and offending are included. These questions reverse the traditional causal ordering issues by examining how offending and victimization affects perceptions of the future.

2.3.7 Social Influence

Peer influence is one of the strongest correlates of delinquent behavior and as discussed earlier in this chapter, association with delinquent peers is a stronger predictor of drug use than an individual’s attitudes favorable towards drug use (Stafford and Warr, 1991). Yet little is known about why peers have such a strong influence on delinquent behavior

(Warr, 2002). The items on the FSES seek to provide some insight into these processes. The tug-of-war between parents' and peers' influence on youth has been largely under-examined in delinquency research. Peers may have a strong influence on delinquent behavior but may lack influence in other realms of the life course, such as long-term goals, occupational choices, mate selection, or educational achievement. Identifying the range, scope, and sources of social influences would significantly advance prevention efforts.

Taken together, these items provide a more comprehensive picture of parental and peer influence on a variety of common delinquent behaviors. Specifically, survey respondents are asked to assess their attitudes toward delinquent behaviors (and the perceived attitudes of parents and close peers). Additionally, respondents are asked about their peers' and their own commission of delinquent acts. All of these attitudinal and behavioral measures can be statistically analyzed to identify social influences on delinquency. However, given the limits of the survey design, this may be viewed as only a first step in understanding the cause of delinquency and provides preliminary data for directing prevention efforts to better target the antecedents of delinquent behavior.

2.3.8 Self-control

Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory of self-control argues that individuals that have "low self-control" are more likely to engage in delinquency as well as other risk taking behaviors. Items on the FSES provide a means of exploring *self-control theory*. Several of the items that measure self-control will be combined to create a "self-control scale." The items on the self-control scale come from the research of Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev (1993). The first set of items measure self-control and the second set of items examine parental discipline, which is theorized to cause variation in self-control.

2.3.9 Routine Activities/Micro-life Course Measures

In recent years, the life course perspective has been influential in the study of delinquency (Elder, 1985; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Thornberry, 1997). The life course perspective examines the sequence of phases that are socially constructed and recognized as distinct phases (e.g. high school graduation, cohabitation, marriage, parenthood) (Benson, 2002). The *routine activities* approach to studying crime and delinquency focuses on individuals' day-to-day lives and exposure to victimization, as well as opportunity to offend. Generally, the routine activities approach has studied lifestyle patterns but not specific events, whereas the life course perspective examines the influence of specific events on long-term life circumstances.

Many students live rather hectic lives with multiple activities of school, work, extracurricular activities, sports, homework, family time, and time spent with peers. Combining the life course and routine activities perspectives may lead to a *micro-life course* approach to studying delinquency (Warr, 2002). This approach can examine specific day-to-day activities of youth to assess influences of activities on delinquent behavior. This micro-level approach has the advantage of examining the multiple roles that youth play throughout daily routines and has the potential to examine the relationship between delinquency and social roles. Several items on the FSES ask participants about

time spent participating in various activities. These measures will be examined to identify specific activities that are related to offending and victimization.

Time after school has often been identified as a time of peak juvenile offending (Snyder and Sickmun, 2006). Thus, we would theorize that youth who spend time with their peers after school and away from adult supervision may be more likely to engage in criminal offending (Warr, 2005). Another survey item examines youths' mode of transportation from school. Increased access to resources, such as cars or computers may increase overall propensity of delinquent behavior. Interestingly, these resources are also strongly associated with socioeconomic status and may explain some of the influence of SES on delinquency (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, Miech, and Silva, 1999).

2.3.10 Miscellaneous Items

A group of questions were included on the pilot test of the FSES to serve a specific or limited function. Some of these items were included for comparison with other surveys or to meet Federal UMIRS reporting requirements. There are two items on the high school FSES that measure attitudes favorable to school and perceptions of positive relationships with teachers. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Hirschi's (1969) social control theory posits that bonds to conventional society are central to decreasing the likelihood of delinquency. Particularly, Hirschi theorized that bonds to adult figures that hold conventional social views, such as teachers and parents, would decrease the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

There are also four items that measure depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal attempts. The Federal UMIRS requirements include data regarding suicide and the FYSAS and YRBS contain similar questions. The relationship between suicide and delinquency remains unclear. For example, in cross-sectional school self-report data, the common finding that suicide ideation is correlated with drug use does not indicate the causal ordering of the relationship. In other words, it is not possible to say if drug use causes suicidal ideation or if students with suicidal thoughts "self-medicate" with illegal drugs.

Finally, there are two survey items on the FSES that correspond to questions about weight and body image contained on the YRBS. There has been increased concern about both childhood obesity and low self body image among females. These questions seek to provide general insight into young adults' self body image.

2.4 Results

This section presents results from the FSES administered in the 2006-07 school year. Figure 2.4.1 presents the gender distribution of the participants. Females comprised roughly 51 percent of the sample. The grade distribution of participants in the FSES is presented in Table 2.4.1. The low percentage of students in the higher grades and the low number of males within the student body may indicate school absenteeism and/or school drop-out among older high-school males.

Figure 2.4.1: Gender Distribution

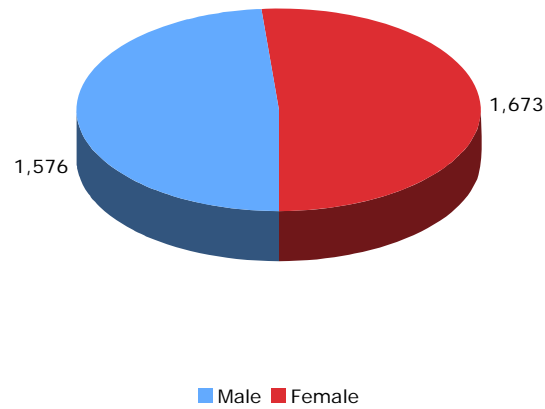


Table 2.4.1: Grade Distribution

GRADE	STUDENTS	PERCENT
6 th	542	16.7%
7 th	520	16.0%
8 th	524	16.2%
9 th	452	13.9%
10 th	467	14.4%
11 th	399	12.3%
12 th	337	10.4%
Total	3,241	100%

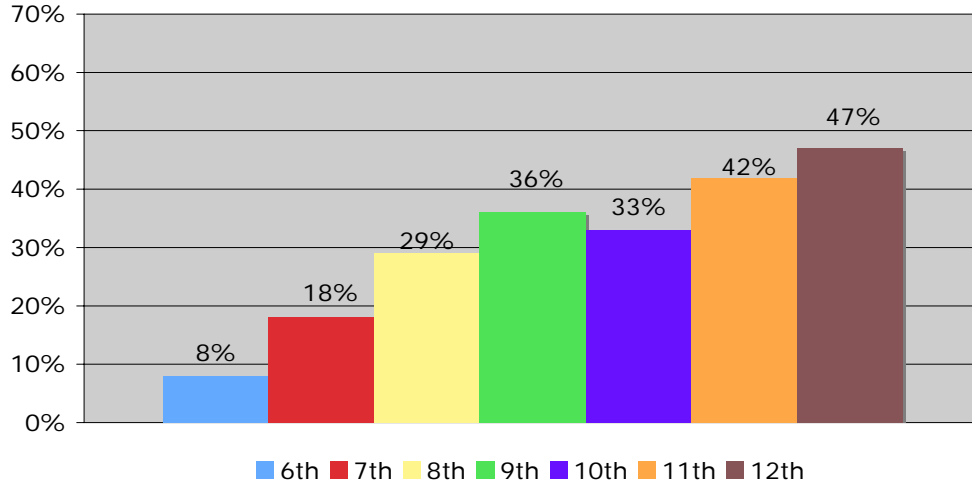
Table 2.4.2 indicates that roughly half of the students in the sample (51.3 percent) reside in “traditional” two parent households. This is consistent with national data that indicates that roughly half of all children will live apart from at least one of their biological parents before they reach adulthood.

Table 2.4.2: Family Structure

FAMILY	STUDENTS	PERCENT
Mother & Father	1,661	51.3%
Mother only	759	23.4%
Father only	176	5.4%
Mother & Stepfather	311	9.6%
Father & Stepmother	81	2.5%
Grandparents	132	4.1%
Other Arrangement	118	3.6%
TOTAL	3,238	100%

Underage alcohol use continues to be a concern among prevention practitioners and law enforcement agencies in Florida. Not surprisingly, the bar chart above indicates that the percentage of students that had at least one drink in the last 30 days tends to increase with grade level. Roughly 8 percent of 6th grade students had at least one drink in the last year, whereas 47 percent of 12th grade students reported drinking over the same time period. As a relative comparison, the 2006 FYSAS reported that 11 percent of 6th graders and 52 percent of 12th graders in Florida used alcohol in the last 30 days.

Figure 2.4.2: Alcohol Use by Grade



Figures 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 show the percentage of students that report drinking alcohol and driving a car in the past 30 days by grade level and gender respectively. As would be expected, drinking and driving increases across grade levels and is higher among males (8 percent) compared to females (6 percent).

Figure 2.4.3: Drinking and Driving (Last 30 Days) by Grade

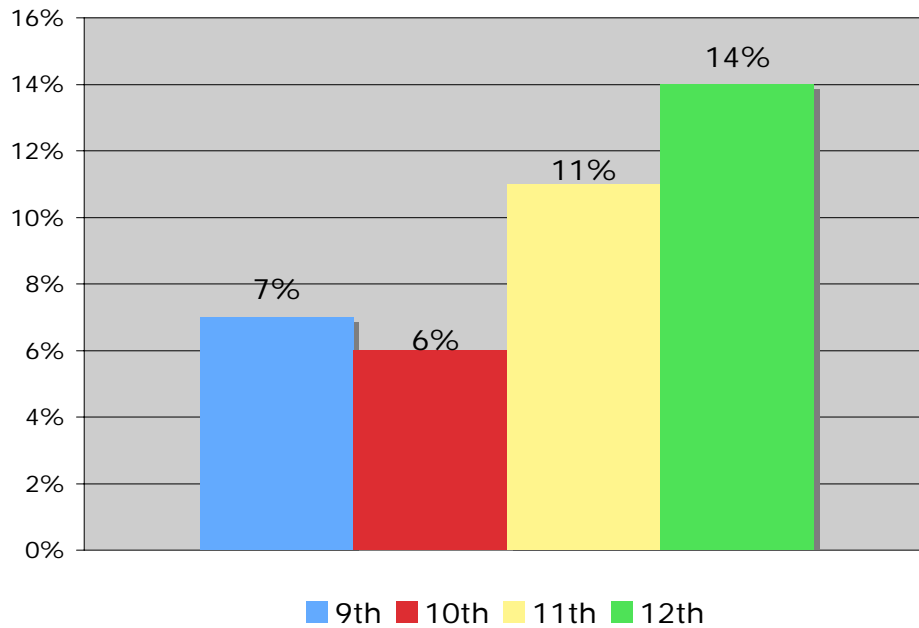
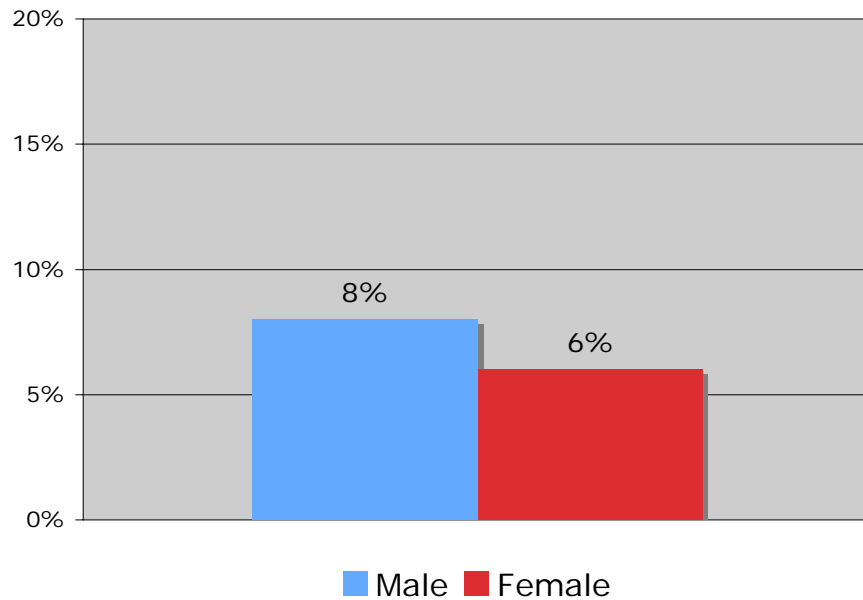


Figure 2.4.4: Drinking and Driving (Last 30 Days) by Gender

Although there has been substantial attention given to the prevention of drinking and driving among adolescents and young adults, there has been less attention given to the risks associated with riding in a car with someone who has been drinking. Figures 2.4.5 and 2.4.6 show the rates of riding in a car with someone who has been drinking over the last 30 days. Interestingly, females' rates of riding in a car driven by someone who has been drinking are roughly equivalent to males' rates.

Figure 2.4.5: Riding in a Car with a Driver Who Has Been Drinking (Last 30 Days) by Grade

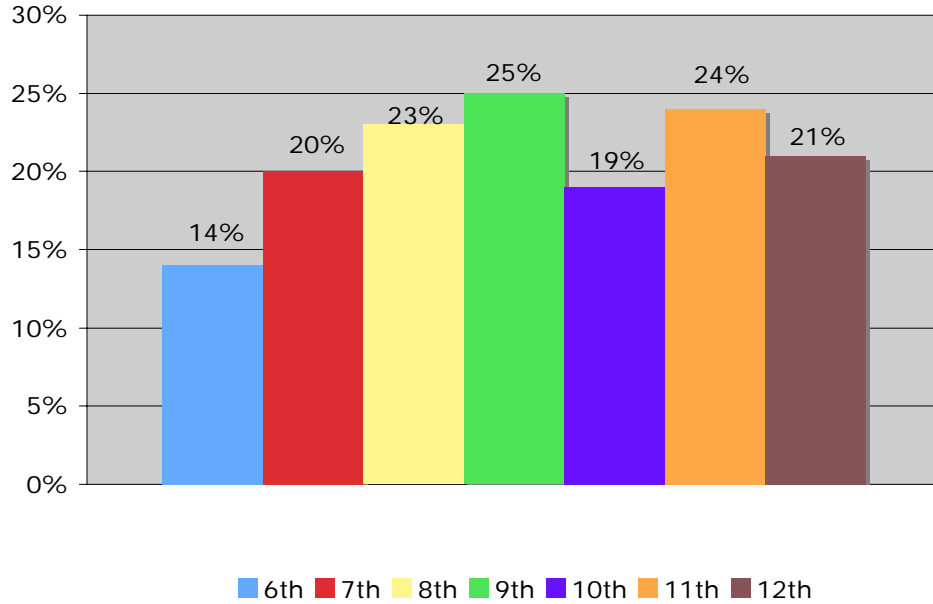
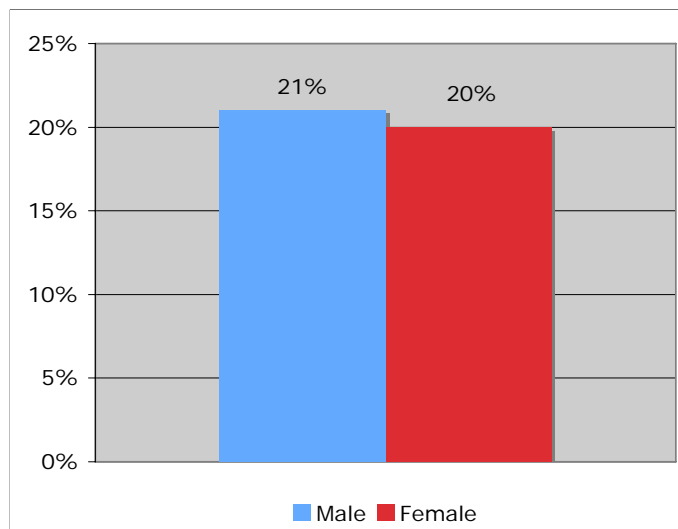


Figure 2.4.6: Riding in a Car with a Driver Who Has Been Drinking (Last 30 Days) by Gender



Nationally, the rate of tobacco use among adolescents has declined over the past decade. The bar charts, figures 2.4.7 and 2.4.8, present data from the FSES on rates of smoking tobacco in the last 30 days by gender and grade. Males tend to smoke tobacco slightly more than their female peers, and rates of smoking tend to be high among high school students relative to middle school students.

Figure 2.4.7: Smoked Tobacco in the Last 30 Days by Gender

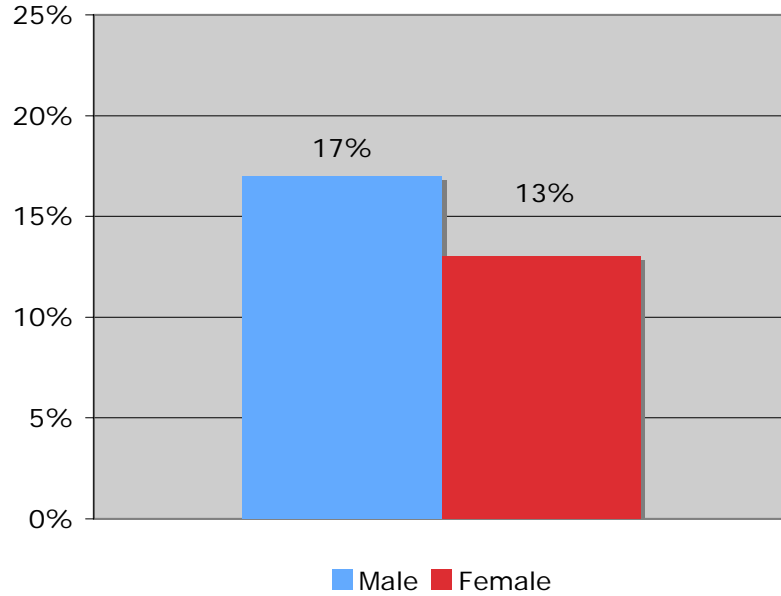
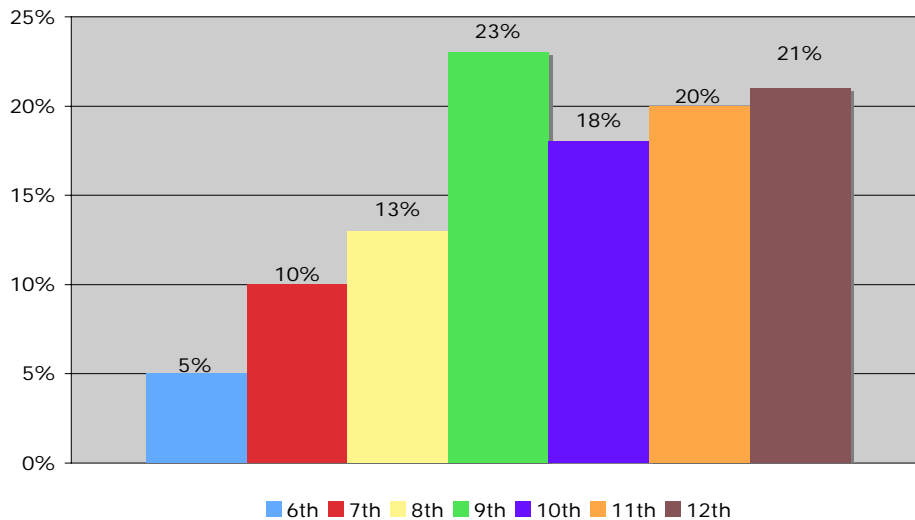


Figure 2.4.8: Smoked Tobacco in the Last 30 Days by Grade



Figures 2.4.9 and 2.4.10 presents data from the FSES on rates of using smokeless tobacco in the last 30 days. Males are substantially more likely to use smokeless tobacco relative to females and high school students report greater use of smokeless tobacco relative to middle school students.

Figure 2.4.9: Used Chewing Tobacco in the Last 30 Days by Gender

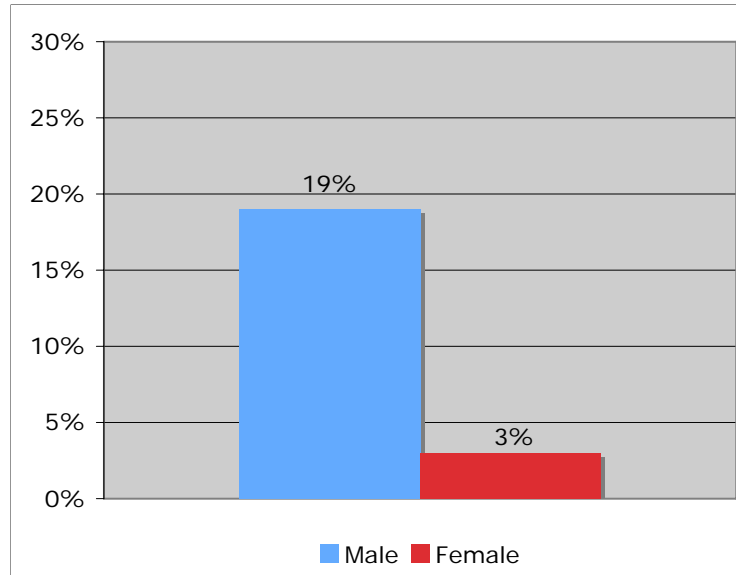
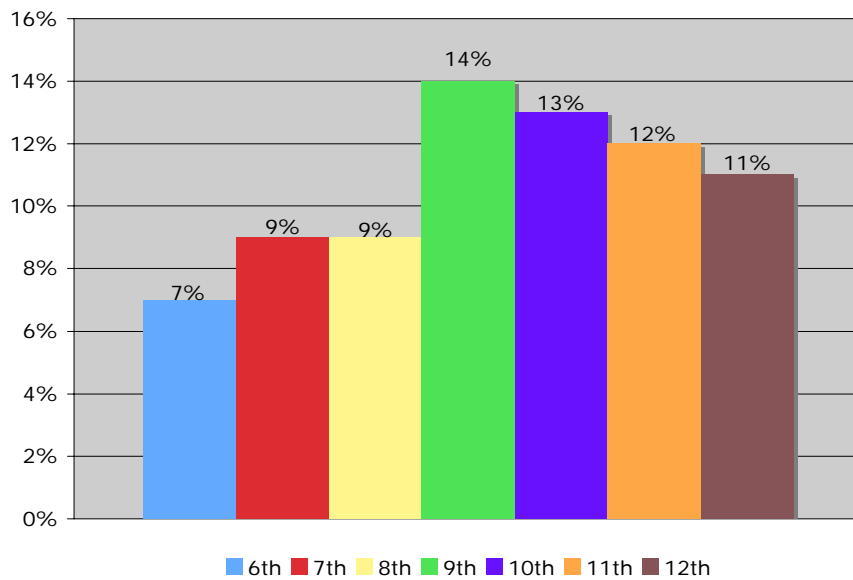


Figure 2.4.10: Used Chewing Tobacco in the Last 30 Days by Grade



Although national data indicates a decrease in cigarette use among adolescents over the past decade, the use of marijuana has remained relatively stable over time. The bar charts in this section report rates of marijuana use in the last 30 days partitioned by gender and grade. Indeed, among high school seniors, rates of marijuana use are equivalent to rates of smoking tobacco.

Figure 2.4.11: Used Marijuana in the Last 30 Days by Gender

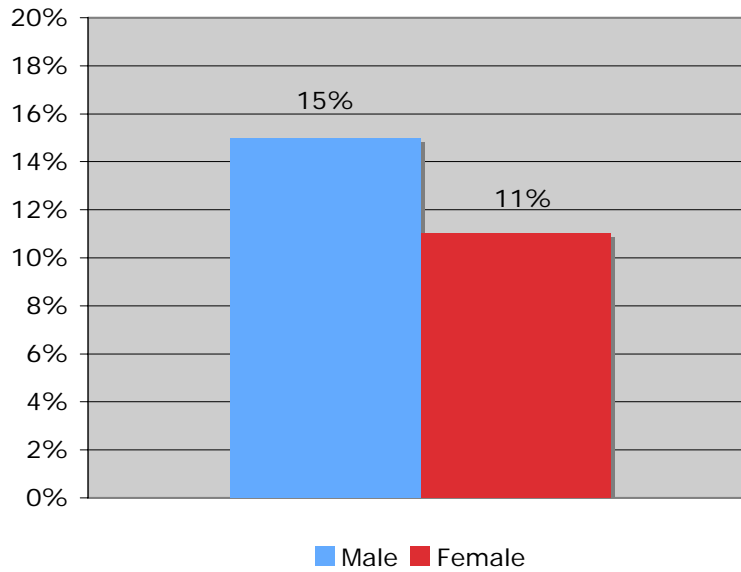
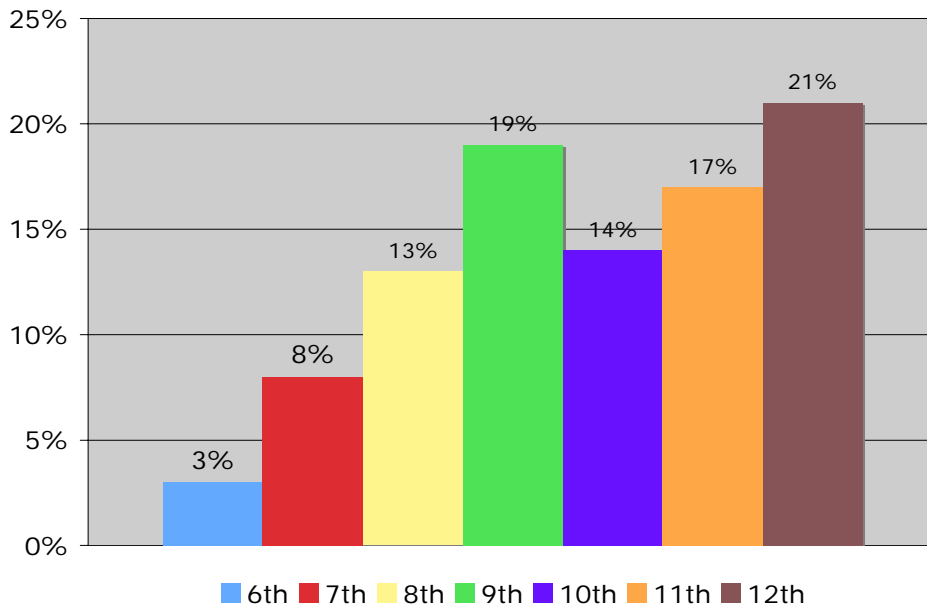


Figure 2.4.12: Used Marijuana in the Last 30 Days by Grade



The final four figures, 2.4.13 through 2.4.17, present rates of gang membership, involvement in physical fights, and perceptions of school safety. The first pie chart reports the percentage of students who report being a gang member. The next two figures report students' responses on survey questions about feelings of safety at school and traveling to and from school. The final figure indicates students' reports of participating in a fight in the last 30 days.

Figure 2.4.13: Gang Membership

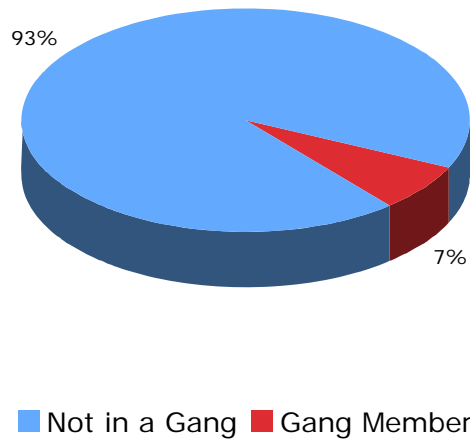


Figure 2.4.14: Feel Unsafe at School?

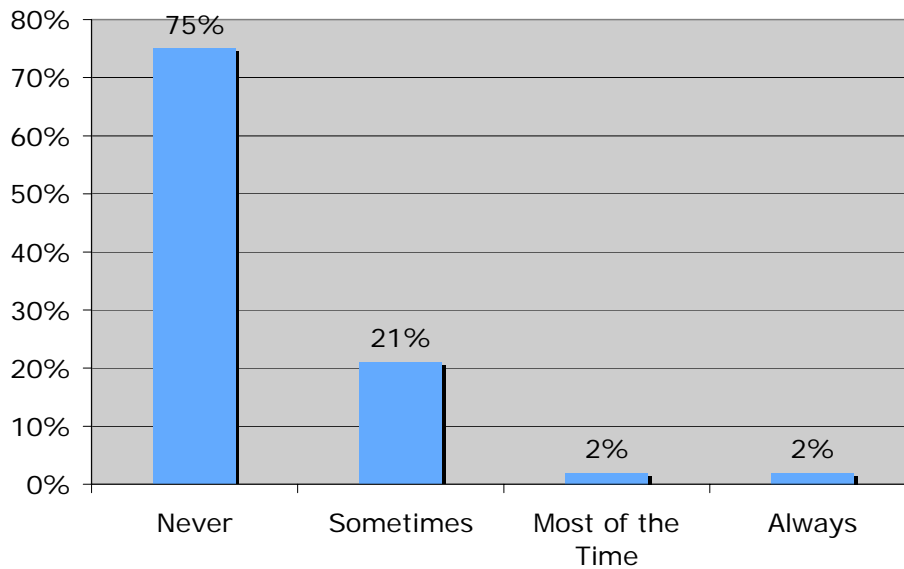


Figure 2.4.15: Feel Unsafe Going to or from School

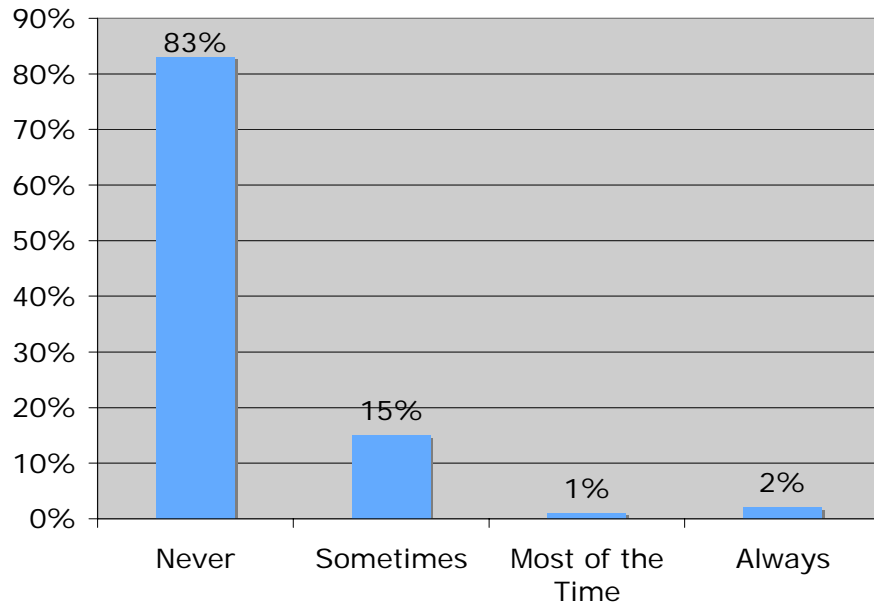
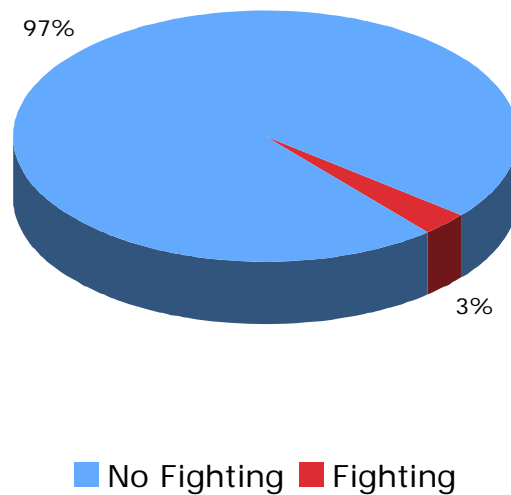


Figure 2.4.16: Involved in a Serious Fight in the Last 30 Days



2.5 Summary Discussion

This chapter has provided a general overview of the design and pilot testing of the FSES including discussion of the goals for data improvement, a review of the pilot test procedures, validity issues, and a summary of the key topics. In summary, the five main goals of the FSES are presented below:

1. Provide school-level data to meet the needs of specific communities
2. Maintain the ability to integrate survey items with other state self-report and official data sources such as SESIR, UMIRS, YRBS, and FYSAS
3. Focus particular attention on bullying offending and victimization
4. Provide a cost efficient, school-level survey as a tool for school administrators to identify prevention resources
5. Provide an instrument that will facilitate an examination of trends and patterns from year to year of data collection

Additionally, there are two key findings from this chapter that shape the future development of the FSES:

1. LEAs will likely need continued technical support to implement the survey after the completion of this project, particularly in data analysis and summarizing results.
2. Web-based school self-report surveys are currently not feasible given schools' computer infrastructure and resources.

The FSES has the potential to be an effective means of expanding and integrating data and, as a result, guiding empirically targeted prevention efforts to more effectively match programs with appropriate populations. Over the next year, the FSES survey will continue to be administered and results will be analyzed to augment and improve school environment and climate data for middle and high schools.

CHAPTER 3

SCHOOL DATA AND THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY INCIDENT REPORTING (SESIR) SYSTEM

3.1 Introduction

The Florida DOE has collected data on the most serious incidents of crime, violence, and disruptive behavior since the 1995-96 school year through its *School Environmental Safety Incident Report* (SESIR) system. The SESIR system collects data on incidents that occur on school grounds, school transportation, and at off-campus, school-sponsored events during any 24-hour period, 365 days per year. In the 12 years since its inception, the SESIR system has remained relatively stable.

The primary goal of the SESIR system is to standardize the collection and reporting of incidents to assess the levels of safety in Florida's schools and make the information accessible to the educational community and the public. The primary goal of the SDFS-QDM Project and its predecessor, the Florida Safe Learning Environment Data (FSLED) Project, was and is to improve the quality and maximize the utility of SESIR and other school climate data for decision-making by education leaders.

SESIR data and data on the disciplinary actions administered by the schools are examined and reported annually. Education professionals and related organizations utilize the data to inform resource allocation and program planning processes. School district SDFS coordinators and other school personnel and community-based organizations use this data for intervention and prevention planning, as well as to measure program progress and evaluation. In addition, SESIR data meet the federal reporting requirements outlined in Title IV and Title IX of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Currently, SESIR system data are reported statewide and by district in the annual *Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data*⁴, which summarizes the most recent three years of incident and discipline data that were reported through the Automated Student Information System (ASIS) Database to Florida DOE by the 67 county school districts in Florida⁵. These data are also used to produce an *Incidents and Resultant Disciplinary Actions Report*, which presents the frequency of incidents by type and the associated disciplinary actions (by action type) for each of the districts by school, and a *Persistently Dangerous Schools Report* to meet the Title IX requirements for the Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) Policy.

The initial goal of assessing the status of school environment data quality in Florida has been conducted and the project continues to address data quality issues through further

⁴ This report can be accessed via the Florida DOE website (fldoe.org) or the SDFS-QDM Project website, hosted by the FSU Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research (www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu/sdfs).

⁵ Florida's public education system is actually comprised of 75 separate districts. However, historically, the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind and the four university lab schools have not been included in the SESIR system or annual statewide report.

analysis and district data reviews, and by providing on-going training and technical assistance activities. The SDFS-QDM Project staff analyze the SESIR data at the state, district, and school level and examine the rates for different incident types and disciplinary actions. Unusual trends and outliers detected through this analysis are subjected to further examination in an effort to identify and address possible sources of error.

This chapter details the elements of SESIR incident and discipline data files and presents a descriptive analysis of SESIR data. The data analysis addresses the following issues related to SESIR incidents and resultant disciplinary actions in Florida schools during the 2005-06 school year:

1. Statewide rates for SESIR incidents
2. Frequencies of the various types of disciplinary actions that were administered
3. Resultant disciplinary actions administered specifically for SESIR incidents
4. Percentage of matches between SESIR incidents and corresponding resulting disciplinary actions
5. Variation in SESIR incidents rates by districts and school types

To address these issues, this chapter is divided into four subsequent sections. Section 3.2 lists and describes the various data elements related to incidents and disciplinary actions that are collected and reported by the school districts as well as the changes to the SESIR data definitions and reporting requirements. Section 3.3 provides an analysis of the incident rates and discipline data at the state level. Section 3.4 presents a comparative assessment of SESIR incidents and discipline rates by school district. Finally, Section 3.5 concludes the chapter with a summary discussion of the SESIR data.

3.2 Data Elements and Changes

The SESIR system was designed to collect information about serious incidents of crime, violence, and disruption in Florida's public schools. Minor violations of local codes of conduct were not to be included, and the data were to be reported at the incident-level – not individual student-level. The advisory group responsible for designing the initial SESIR system identified and defined twenty-one incidents for schools to report (there are currently 22 offense categories). These incident types and definitions were based on Florida's criminal code and were adapted to make them appropriate for school-aged youth in a school setting. The SESIR reporting system is composed of two areas of interest: incident data and disciplinary data. The following sub-sections detail the data elements included in these two reporting areas.

3.2.1 Incident Data

Each incident reported through the SESIR system is automatically assigned an incident number that is unique to the district, school, and incident. The incident number links the incident to one or more disciplinary actions. In addition to an incident number, several data elements describing the incident are included in the data file. Table 3.2.1 presents a list of these incident-related data elements and a definition or description of each.

The 22 incident categories in the SESIR system were designed to be a mutually exclusive and exhaustive array of serious crime, violence, and disruption incident types that may occur in a school setting. The complexity of some incidents created the need to develop a seriousness level ranking (1 through 4) for each incident type. This seriousness level ranking is used to distinguish the main “offense” from the other offenses that may accompany a single incident. The incident data includes six “related elements” that capture any associated factors of relevancy. These related elements allow SESIR incidents to be described more comprehensively. For example, during a *battery* incident in which a knife was used and the student was also under the *influence of alcohol*, the incident would be reported as *battery*, *weapon-related*, and *alcohol-related*. Effective in the 2005-06 school year, “bullying/harassment” and “bullying/harassment related” were added as new SESIR incident type elements.

The *weapons possession* or *weapon-related* incidents also require a description of the weapon; therefore, weapon description is also part of the incident file. In addition, starting with the 2006-07 school year, the *weapon-related incidents* element has been modified to capture the number of weapons involved in an incident (the new categories for this field are: no, yes and one weapon, yes and two or more weapons). It is particularly important for guns or other firearms to be accurately coded and reported because this information is used to substantiate violations of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (Section 4141 of the Improving America’s Schools Act). Weapon-involved incidents described as *firearm other*, *handgun*, *rifle* or *shotgun* are required to be reported under the Gun-Free Schools Act, while incidents described as *knife*, *other weapon*, and *unknown weapon* are non-firearm categories required by Florida’s SESIR system, but are not included in the relevant federal reporting. Based on these and other incident data involving frequency of battery, sexual battery, homicide, and weapon possession, it was determined that there were no persistently dangerous schools in Florida in the last two years. Finally, in accordance with the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (U.S. Department of Education, The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools) (UMIRS) requirements, a new data element requires the description of the drug when a drug-related incident occurs. Schools are now required to specify whether marijuana/hashish/other cannabinoids are involved in drug-related incidents.

Table 3.2.1: Incident Data Elements Reported to Florida DOE

DATA ELEMENTS	
LEVEL I	LEVEL III
Arson* Battery* Homicide* Kidnapping* Sexual Battery*	Drug Use/Possession-Excluding Alcohol* Disruption On Campus-Major* Fighting** Larceny/Theft* Other Major Incidents* [†] Sexual Harassment** Sexual Offenses (Other)* Threat/Intimidation* Trespassing* Vandalism*
LEVEL II	LEVEL IV
Breaking & Entering/Burglary* Drug Sale/Distribution-Excluding Alcohol* Robbery* Weapon Possession*	Alcohol* Bullying/Harassment** [†] Tobacco**
RELATED ELEMENTS	
Gang Related Alcohol Related Bullying/Harassment Related [†]	Drug Related Hate-crime Related Weapon Related
WEAPON DESCRIPTION (weapon- related)	DRUG DESCRIPTION[†] (drug related)
Handgun Knife Rifle or Shotgun Other Weapon Firearm, Other Unknown Weapon	Marijuana/Hashish/Other Cannibinoids Other
OTHER DATA ELEMENTS	
Location Type of Offender	Time of Day Reported to Law Enforcement

* Incident types required to be reported to law enforcement

** Incident types not required to be reported to law enforcement

[†] New element

Additional details about incidents are also collected and reported through the SESIR system. These include the location where the incident occurred (on school grounds, school related activities off-school grounds, school transportation) the type of offender involved (student, non-student, or both), and the time of day when the incident occurred. Finally, a data element is included to indicate whether or not law enforcement was notified of the incident. By law, incidents involving criminal behaviors *must* be reported to law enforcement; however, non-criminal SESIR incidents (tobacco possession/use/sale, sexual harassment, fighting, or bullying) may be reported as well. Collectively, these descriptive elements provide an inclusive and comprehensive picture of the various types of serious incidents that occur in schools, on school grounds, and at school-sponsored events.

3.2.2 Discipline Data

In Florida, codes of conduct and criteria for disciplinary actions are policies based on district-level decision-making and, thus, vary across school districts. However, the Florida DOE has established a standardized reporting format that requires reporting serious disciplinary actions recorded by school administrators. In the context of the SESIR system, these discipline data elements are used, primarily, in their association with recorded incidents of crime and violence in the school context. In addition, the Florida DOE reports the total numbers and rates of these disciplinary actions, regardless of their association with a reportable incident of SESIR crime or violence. Table 3.2.2 shows the disciplinary actions.

Table 3.2.2: Disciplinary Actions: Discipline Data File, 2005/2006

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	
Corporal Punishment	Change in Placement*
In-School Suspension	Expelled w/ Educational Services
Out-of-School Suspension	Expelled w/o Educational Services
Extended Suspension	Other SESIR Defined
Placement in Alternative Educational Setting	

*Only for students with disabilities who are involved in drug or weapon offenses

The disciplinary actions that schools report to Florida DOE as a result of SESIR requirements include corporal punishment, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, alternative placement, expulsion, and other SESIR-defined⁶. Each recorded action includes the date of the precipitating incident, an incident number (if the incident was one of the 22 SESIR incidents), and the ID number of the student being disciplined. This student ID number enables Florida DOE to link the student being disciplined to his or her demographic information, which is stored in a separate data file. For the annual statewide report, this demographic information is used to calculate race, age, and gender-specific discipline data. Some of the demographic information like gender are now included in the discipline file. The incident number enables Florida DOE to link the disciplinary action – or actions – to the precipitating SESIR incident. This linkage is used in the creation of an “Incidents and Resultant Disciplinary Actions” report, which can be used by Florida DOE and the school districts to detect inappropriate applications of disciplinary actions for specific incident types, inappropriate frequencies of incident types, and/or potential problems in the process by which incidents and actions are recorded in their data systems at the school and district levels. Moreover, these data provide a wealth of information on the trends, characteristics and promising practices related to school crime, violence, and related behavior.

3.3 Statewide SESIR Incident and Discipline Data

In addition to preparing statewide reports and providing data to FDOE for federal reporting purposes, the SDFS-QDM Project staff closely examines incident and discipline data to detect possible reporting errors, data definition issues, and other errors. This process helps focus technical assistance and training activities; provides insight for revising the training documents; and facilitates the application of data for prevention and planning purposes. The following analysis provides a summary of statewide SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions. A detailed analysis of weapons possession is reported in the subsequent sections.

3.3.1 Incident Rates

The analysis presented in this subsection provides a summary of SESIR incidents for school districts. A breakdown of state rates by gender and school type is provided where appropriate. Table 3.3.1 presents the summary data for SESIR incidents for the 2005-06 school year.

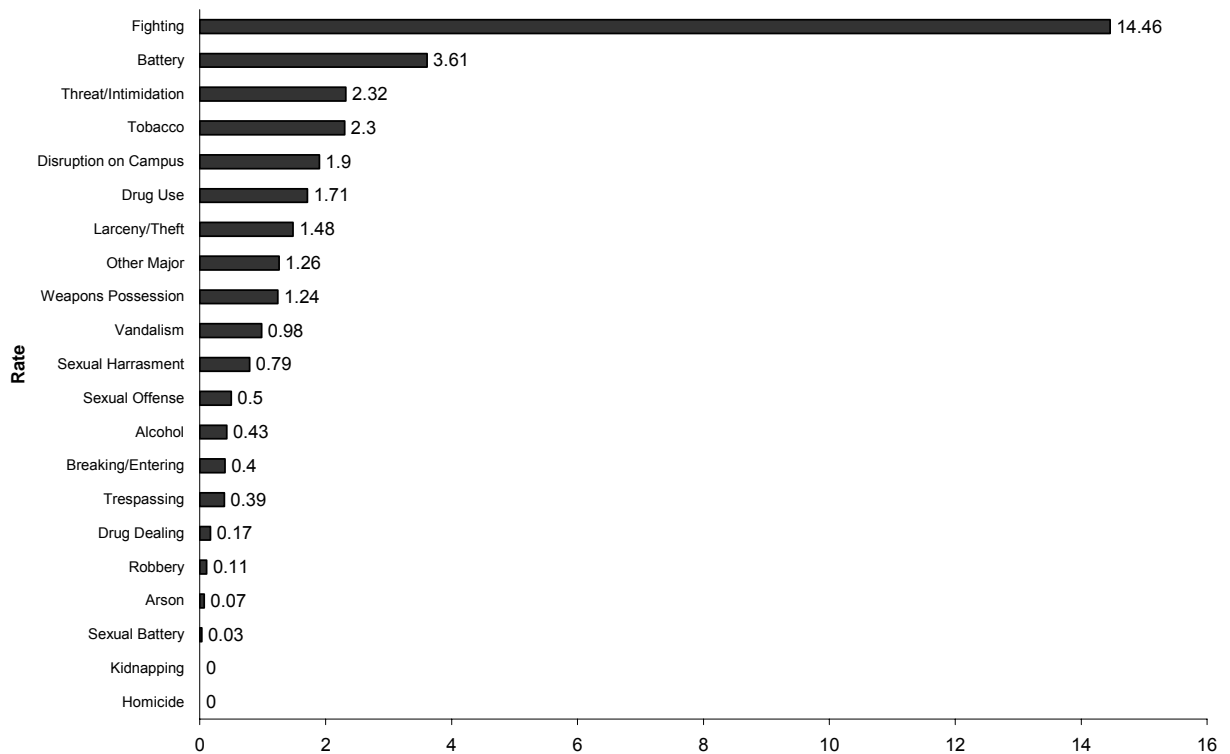
⁶ Includes any disciplinary action administered for a SESIR-defined incident that does not fall within one of the other reportable categories.

Table 3.3.1: Statewide SESIR Incident Summaries in 2005-2006

Time of Incidents	Number	Percent
During School Hours	92,447	96.04
Not During School Hours	2,954	3.07
Unknown	857	0.89
Location of Incidents		
School Grounds	93,390	97.02
School Sponsored Activities	367	0.37
School Transportation	2,508	2.61
Student Involvement		
Student Only	89,621	93.10
Non-student	1,439	1.49
Both	1,165	1.21
Unknown	4,033	4.19
Total	96,258	100%

During the 2005-06 school year, a total of 96,258 SESIR incidents were reported in Florida's elementary, middle, high, and combination schools. About 96 percent (92,447) of these incidents occurred during school hours and more than 3 percent (2,954) took place outside school hours. A vast majority of SESIR incidents (97 percent) were reported to occur on school grounds and 2.61 percent occurred on or during school transportation. Ninety-three percent (89,621 incidents out of 96,258) of these incidents were caused by students only. Although 1.49 percent of these incidents involved non-students, only 1.21 percent involved both students and non students. Overall, the majority of SESIR incidents involved only students and they occurred on school grounds during school hours. A breakdown of these figures by incident type is provided in Figure 3.3.1.

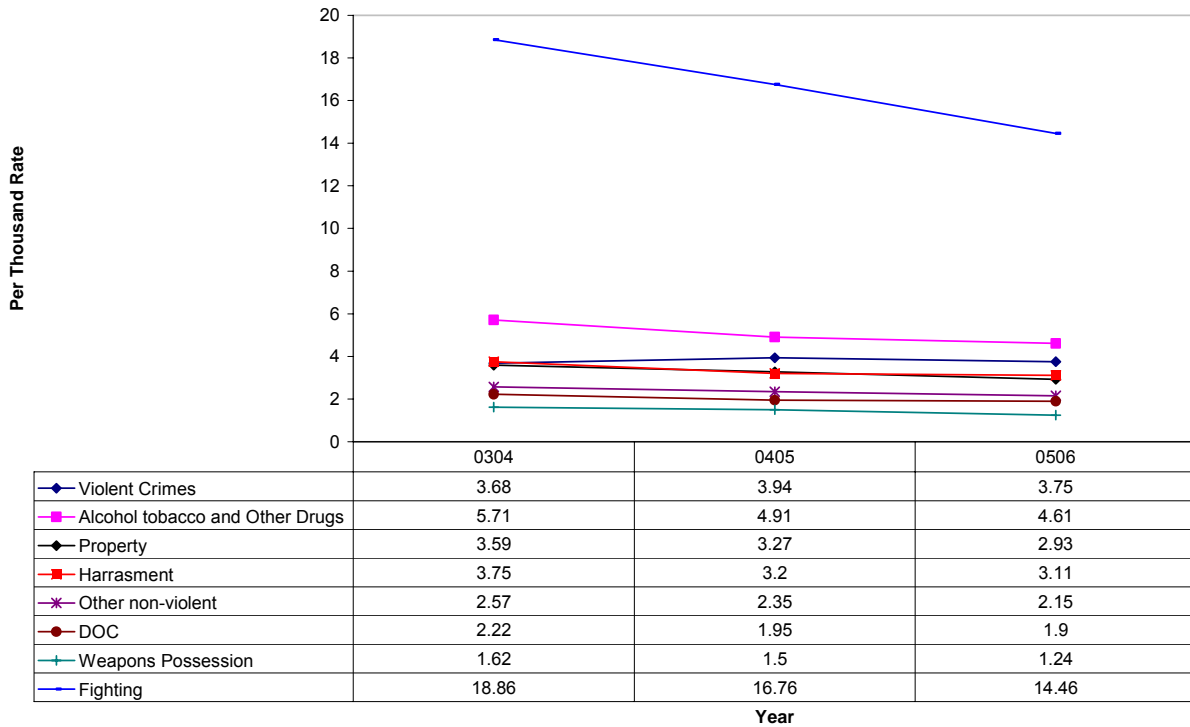
Figure 3.3.1: 2005/2006 SESIR Incident Rates



As Figure 3.3.1 demonstrates, fighting has the highest per-thousand-rate (14.46) followed by battery incidents (3.61), threat/intimidation (2.32), and tobacco (2.30). For 12 incident types, the per-thousand-rate is reported to be less than one and the rates are particularly small for incident types classified at a higher seriousness level including arson, sexual battery, kidnapping, and homicide. The high fighting rates *may* be due to a liberal interpretation or misinterpretation of this incident type. A SESIR-defined fighting incident occurs “when two or more persons mutually participate in use of force or physical violence that requires physical restraint or results in injury.” In the last three years, the per thousand rate of fighting has dropped from 18.86 in the 2003-04 school year to 16.76 in 2004-05, and to 14.46 in 2005-06. This may be an indication of a better understanding of the SESIR definition resulting in an improvement in data quality as a result of training and technical assistance as well as a possible decline in the behavior.

An examination of incident trends over a three-year period demonstrates that there is an overall drop in the total SESIR incident rates in Florida schools. Overall, Florida schools reported 42 SESIR incidents for every one thousand students in a given day during the 2003-04 school year. This figure dropped to 34.15 per thousand in the 2005-06 school year. This drop may indicate that Florida schools are becoming safer environments or that the districts identify and report SESIR incidents more accurately, or both. Figure 3.3.2 presents the state rates for various groups of incident types over a three-year period.

Figure 3.3.2: SESIR Totals by Incident Categories

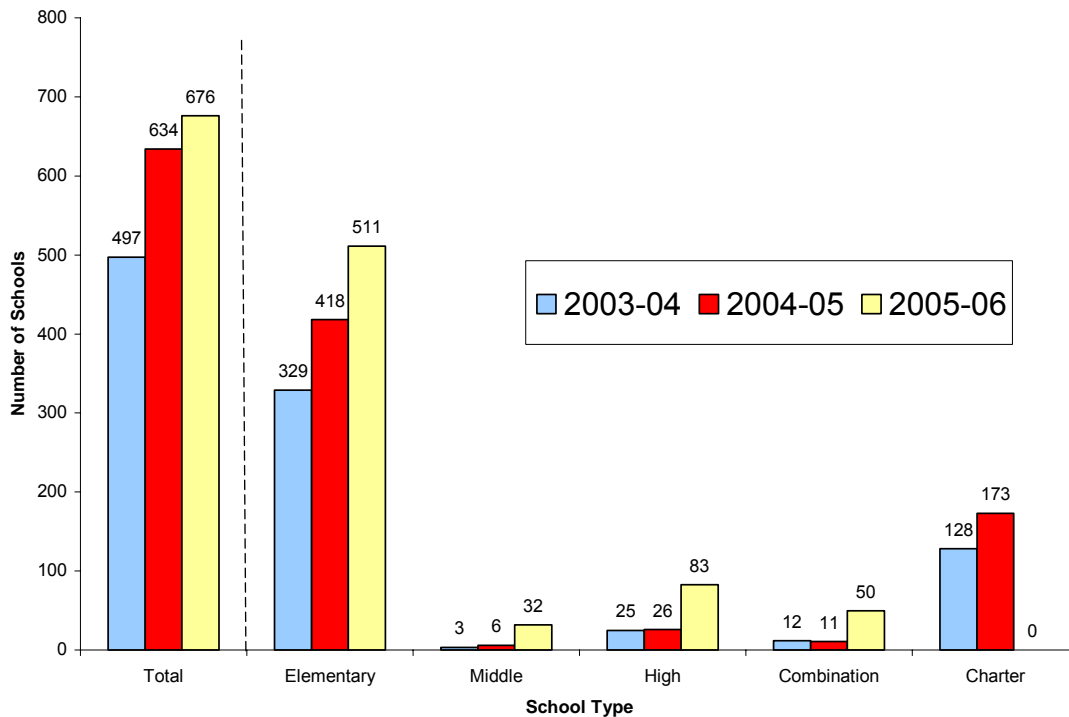


*Violent crimes include homicide, sexual battery, robbery, battery, and kidnapping; property crimes include breaking/entering, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and vandalism; harassment includes threat/intimidation and sexual harassment; other non-violent incidents include sexual offenses, trespassing, and other major incidents.

As Figure 3.3.2 shows, the fighting category experienced the largest reduction in the last three years (4.4 decrease in per thousand rate from 2003-04 to 2005-06). Thus, the decline in the overall SESIR rate in the last three years is largely accounted for by the drop in the rate of fighting. With the exception of violent incidents, state rates declined slightly in all major SESIR incident categories. Although violent acts against persons increased from 3.68 in the 2003-04 school year to 3.94 in 2004-05, a decline was observed (3.75) over the past year.

In addition to the *decline* in the overall SESIR incident rates, the number of schools reporting no SESIR incidents has *increased* from 497 to 676 schools in the last three years. Figure 3.3.3 shows the number of schools with zero SESIR incidents by school type over time.

Figure 3.3.3: Schools Reporting No SESIR Incidents



During 2005-06 school year, charter schools were not classified as a separate school type. Charter schools with no SESIR incidents are distributed among the remaining school types based on grade level.

As seen in Figure 3.3.3, the number of schools reporting no SESIR incidents in 2003-04 was 497. This number increased to 634 the following year and to 676 in 2005-06. A large proportion of schools with no SESIR incidents are elementary schools (across all years) followed by charter schools. For instance, in 2004-05, of the 634 schools that did not report any SESIR incidents, 418 were elementary and 128 were charter schools. During the same year, only 6 middle, 26 high, and 11 combination schools reported no SESIR incidents. The increase in the number of schools that did not report any SESIR incidents for middle, high, and combination schools in the 2005-06 school year is, in part, due to the inclusion of charter schools in those categories. Overall, the number of schools without an occurrence of a SESIR incident in the last two years has increased significantly.

3.3.2 Disciplinary Actions

An aggregated report of SESIR incidents provides a summary of school safety, drug use, and delinquent behavior across Florida schools. However, the institutional response to these incidents is reflected in the reporting of the corresponding disciplinary actions. Ideally, all SESIR incidents should have a corresponding disciplinary action; however, this is not always the case. The reported data do not show a close match between reported SESIR incidents and corresponding disciplinary actions. The number of non-

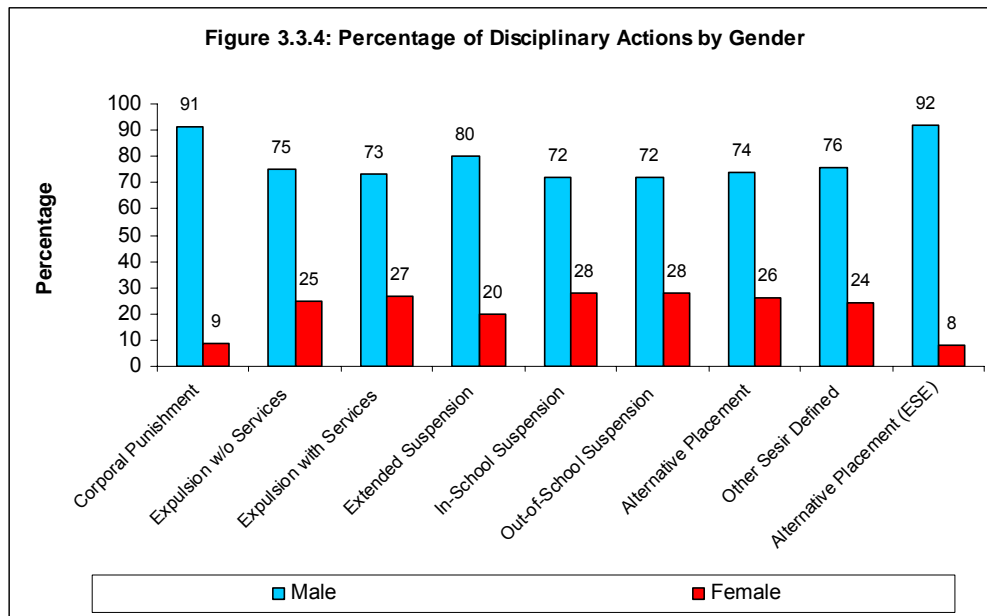
matches between the SESIR incidents and related disciplinary actions is sometimes high across districts. The non-match percentages at the district level will be presented in subsequent sections. A brief summary of state level disciplinary actions is presented in Table 3.3.2.

Table 3.3.2: Statewide Disciplinary Actions*

	All Disciplinary Actions		SESIR Related Disciplinary Actions	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Corporal Punishment	9675	0.89	34	0.04
Expulsion w/o Services	615	0.06	483	0.62
Expulsion With Services	280	0.03	314	0.41
Extended Suspension	671	0.06	361	0.47
In-School suspension	587,354	54.28	11,134	14.36
Out-of-School Suspension	418,936	38.72	55,786	71.97
Alternative Placement	6,473	0.60	2,547	3.29
Other SESIR Defined	57,617	5.33	6,825	8.81
Alternative Placement (ESE)	378	0.03	25	0.03
Subtotal	1,081,999	100%	77,482	100%
No match	NA	NA	13,303	17.16
Total	NA	NA	90,786	100%

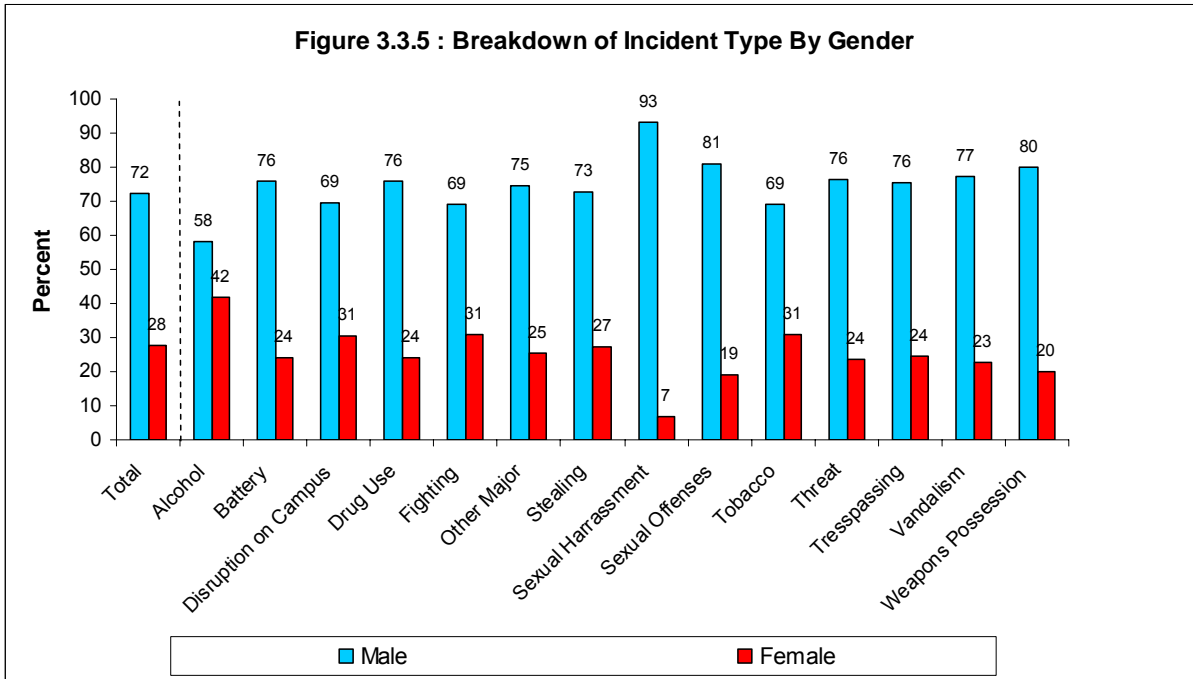
*The total number of SESIR-related disciplinary actions reflects the count of actions that are matched with unduplicated SESIR incidents. The percentages reflect the ratio of the total number of each disciplinary action type to the total number of actions. The total number of suspensions and expulsions are slightly different than those reported in Annual SESIR statewide report due to the selection (exclusion) of certain school types.

The majority of SESIR-related disciplinary actions are out-of-school suspensions (about 72 percent). Contrast this figure with 39 percent, which is the percentage of out-of-school suspensions out of *all* disciplinary actions (statewide) across all incident types (SESIR and non-SESIR). There were 11,134 in-school suspensions, which constitutes 14 percent of the SESIR-related disciplinary actions compared to 54 percent for all disciplinary actions. Of the 90,786 SESIR incidents, 13,303 (15 percent) did not have a corresponding disciplinary action reported. Alternative placements account for about 3 percent of SESIR-related disciplinary actions and about 1 percent of *all* disciplinary actions (SESIR and non-SESIR). Figure 3.3.4 displays the distribution of the SESIR-related disciplinary actions by gender.



As previously referenced, in the 2005-06 school year there were 13,303 SESIR incidents that *did not* have corresponding (matching) disciplinary actions. Therefore, the percentages in Figure 3.3.4 are calculated based on the remaining 77,482 disciplinary actions that correspond with a SESIR incident. Across all categories, a significantly larger percentage of male students received disciplinary actions compared to female students. The largest gaps between males and females occurred in the areas of corporal punishment and alternative placement for ESE. In these two areas, males accounted for 91 percent and 92 percent (respectively). For both in-school and out-of-school suspensions, 28 percent of the students were female and 72 percent were male. When examining aggregate disciplinary actions throughout the state, a similar trend is present—74 percent of disciplinary actions are administered to males and 26 percent are administered to females.

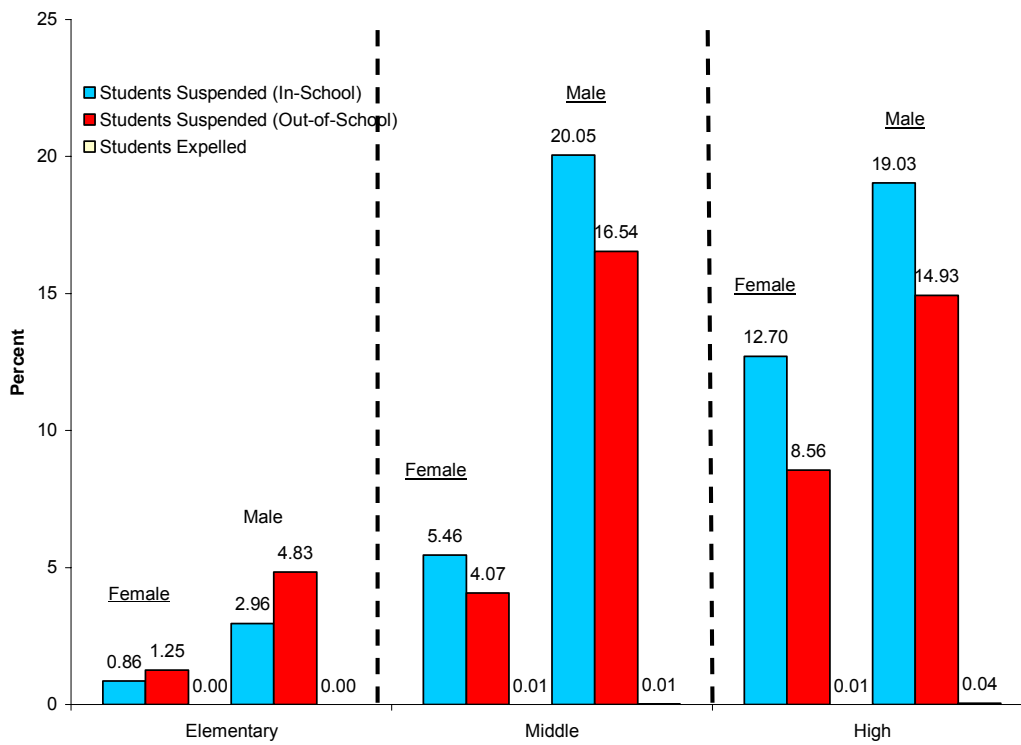
The distribution of disciplinary actions by gender may be reflective of the distribution of SESIR incidents across gender. Incident data do not include student identification numbers and demographic information; therefore an analysis of SESIR incidents by demographics is not possible using incident data alone. However, the discipline file includes this information and can be linked to the incident file by a common incident identifier number. Utilizing this technique, the distribution of incident types by gender can be provided for SESIR incidents with a corresponding disciplinary action. In the 2005-06 school year, about 17 percent (13,303) of the SESIR incidents did not have a discipline match. Figure 3.3.5 displays the percentage of each incident type by gender.



As Figure 3.3.5 indicates, males tend to have a higher percentage of involvement in SESIR incidents across all incident types. However, it is noteworthy that female students accounted for 42 percent of alcohol incidents and 31 percent of fighting, tobacco, and disruption on campus incidents. Sexual harassment is predominantly a male-perpetrated act with a 93 percent involvement rate for males. Both sexual offenses and weapons possession incidents contain a rate of male involvement at 80 percent or higher. Overall, 28 percent of the 75,509 SESIR incidents involved females compared to 72 percent involving males. To summarize, male students have a higher rate of SESIR incident involvement compared to female students, but for some incident types, females demonstrate levels of involvement that approach that of males.

The federal UMIRS data reporting requirements mandates states to collect information on incidents that lead to expulsions and suspensions. To assist the Florida DOE in addressing this reporting requirement, the SDFS-QDM Project provides additional analysis of suspensions and expulsions. Figure 3.3.6 presents the percentage of students (male and female) receiving disciplinary actions in 2005-06 by school type for three major disciplinary actions: in-school suspension, out-of-school-suspension, and expulsion.

Figure 3.3.6: Disciplinary Actions By Gender



As presented in Figure 3.3.6, a higher percentage of male students were subject to suspension and expulsion in the past year compared to female students. Although the gap between females and males remained substantial at the middle school level, a smaller gap occurred in high and elementary school. For example, in middle school grades, slightly more than 4 percent of the females received out-of school suspension compared to almost 17 percent of the males (a gap of 13 percent). At the high school level, the levels are 8.56 percent and nearly 15 percent respectively (a gap of 6 percent). A lower percentage of elementary school students received suspensions and expulsions compared to middle and high school students.

The suspension and expulsion data are especially important for meeting the Federal UMIRS reporting requirements. Further analysis is required for identifying the suspensions and expulsions connected to SESIR incidents. SDFS-QDM Project staff prepares an Incident and Resultant Disciplinary Action Report (IRDAR) each year to provide this information at the school level. This report is available on the Project's website: <http://www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu/sdfs/reports-incidents-actions-05-06.php>.

3.3.3 Weapons Possession

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) mandates that each state receiving federal funds under ESEA must statutorily require local education agencies to expel (for at least one year) any student determined to have brought or possess a firearm on school grounds. Florida DOE reports the expulsions and alternative placements for this offense to the U.S. Department of Education through the Gun-Free Schools Report (data are collected with a survey). The SESIR incident file contains weapons possession (WPO) as an incident type and a weapon-related field that describes whether a weapon was involved in the incident. In the 2005-06 school year, there were 6,295 weapon-related incidents and 3,503 weapons possession incidents. Table 3.3.3 presents a breakdown of these incidents by involvement type.

Table 3.3.3: Weapons Possession and Weapon-related Incidents by the Location of Occurrence and Involvement Type

		Students	Both Students and Non-students	Non-students	Unknown
Weapon Related	School Grounds	5,041	625	168	309
	School Sponsored Activity (off campus)	27	4	1	1
	School Sponsored Transportation	113	3	3	0
Weapons Possession	School Grounds	3,309	12	40	25
	School Sponsored Activity (off campus)	20	1	0	0
	School Sponsored Transportation	94	0	2	0

As Table 3.3.3 shows, the majority of weapon-related and weapons possession incidents involve students and occur on school grounds. Of the 6,295 weapon-related incidents involving only students, 5,041 occurred on school grounds, 27 occurred during school-sponsored activities, and 113 occurred during school transportation. Similarly, for weapons possession incidents involving students, the figures are 3,309 incidents occurring on school grounds, 20 incidents occurring during school-sponsored activities, and 94 incidents on school transportation (total of 3,503 weapons possession incidents). It is notable that for a portion of weapon-related incidents (309) that occurred on school grounds, the involvement type was not identified.

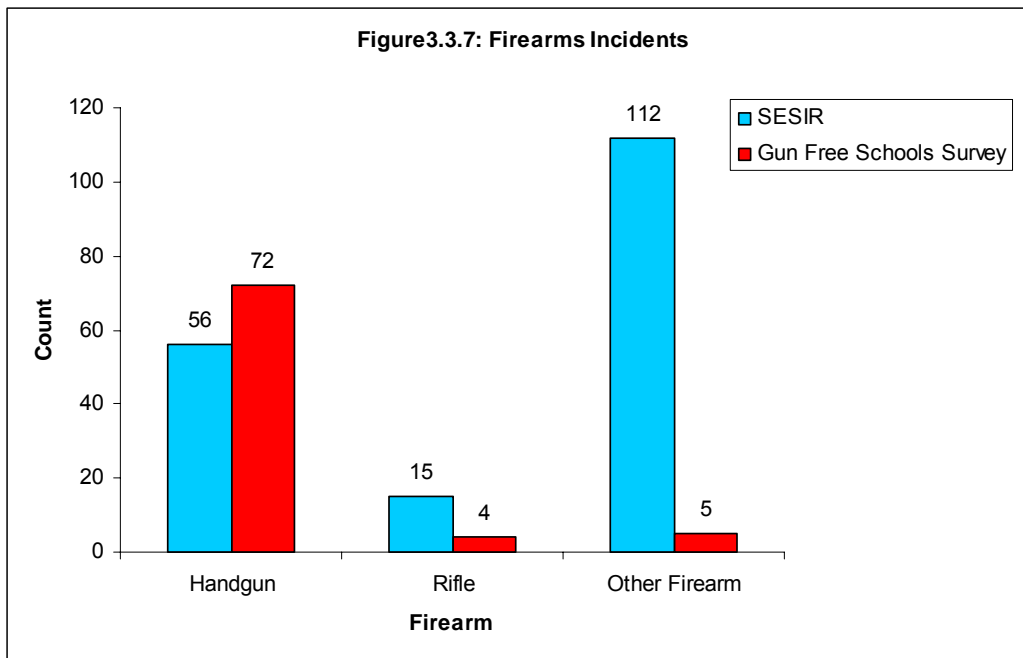
While the breakdown of weapon-related incidents by location and involvement type is informative, the matching of these incidents to corresponding disciplinary actions is also important due to the aforementioned federal reporting requirements. Matching disciplinary actions for weapon incidents is presented in Table 3.3.4. Figure 3.3.7 displays a summary of firearms incidents as reported for SESIR and the Gun-Free School Survey. There are slight disparities between the data reported through SESIR and the Gun-Free School Survey for firearms incidents due to the different methodologies for data collection (Figure 3.3.7). SESIR data is reported directly from school districts and data for the Gun-Free School Report is collected by the Florida DOE through a survey.

Table 3.3.4: Weapon Related and Weapon Possession Incidents

	<u>Weapons Possession</u>		<u>Weapon-Related</u>	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Corporal Punishment	0	0%	0	0%
Expulsion w/o Services	98	3%	107	2%
Expulsion w/ Services	75	2%	84	1%
Extended Suspension	71	2%	80	1%
In-school Suspension	140	4%	176	3%
Out-of-School Suspension	2,088	61%	3,025	52%
Alternative Placement	393	11%	434	7%
Other SESIR Defined	150	4%	185	3%
Alternative Placement (ESE)	11	0%	11	0%
No Match	410	12%	1,711	29%
Total	3,436	100%	5,813	100%

As Table 3.3.4 indicates, there were a total of 5,813 weapons-related incidents (involving students as well as both students and non-students). Of this total, 3,436 were reported as weapons possession incidents. A vast majority of weapons possession incidents were matched with out-of-school suspension disciplinary actions (2,088 out of 3,436 or 61 percent) followed by alternative placement (11 percent). About 5 percent of the weapons possessions were matched with the disciplinary action of expulsion (with and without educational services) and 12 percent (410 out of 3,436) of these incidents did not have a corresponding disciplinary action based on 2005-06 SESIR data. A similar picture emerges for weapon-related incidents where 52 percent of incidents (3,025 out of 5,813 student-involved) were matched by out-of-school suspensions and another 7 percent were matched to alternative placements. Expulsions correspond with 3 percent of the weapons possession incidents and the non-match rate for weapon-related incidents is 29 percent, compared to the non-match for weapons possession (12 percent).

As previously mentioned, the federal Gun-Free Schools Act requires that any student found to have brought or possess a firearm be expelled from school for at least one year. The SESIR incident file includes a “weapon description” field that specifies the type of weapon involved in the incident. This field includes categories such as knife, handgun, rifle, other firearm, and other weapon. Of these categories, handgun, rifle and other firearm are classified as firearms and “other firearm” category includes a variety of weapons ranging from firearm mufflers to bombs, and from explosive devices to rockets. Florida DOE also collects information about the firearms incidents via a district survey. Figure 3.3.7 compares the firearms incidents from this survey and the SESIR system.



As Figure 3.3.7 shows, a greater number of incidents (183) were reported in the SESIR data compared to incidents reporting in the Gun-Free Schools Survey (81). Only 56 handgun incidents were reported through SESIR system while the survey reported 72 handgun incidents. In the 2005-06 school year, 15 rifle incidents were reported through SESIR data; however, there were only four rifle incidents reported in the Gun-Free Schools Survey. The largest gap between the two surveys occurs in the reporting of the “other firearm” category where 112 incidents were reported in the SESIR incident file and only 5 incidents were reported in the Gun-Free Schools report. The definition of this category includes very specific weapon types such as bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles of a certain size, weapons that could be converted to expel a projectile, firearm mufflers, and firearm silencers. The definition of the “other firearm” category does not include such items as toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, and pellet guns.

Table 3.3.5 presents the resulting disciplinary actions that match to firearms incidents as reported in SESIR system.

Table 3.3.5: Firearms Incidents and Disciplinary Actions

	Other Firearm	Handgun	Rifle or Shotgun	Total
Corporal Punishment	0	0	0	0
Expulsion w/o Services	8	5	0	13
Expulsion w Services	3	0	0	3
Extended Suspension	1	0	0	1
In-School Suspension	1	2	0	3
Out-of-School Suspension	54	28	11	93
Alternative Placement	8	16	1	25
Other SESIR defined	2	0	2	4
Alternative Placement(ESE)	0	0	0	0
No Match	35	5	1	41
Total	112	56	15	183

A majority of incidents within each firearm category resulted in out-of-school suspensions. This is demonstrated in the frequencies for SESIR incidents that resulted in out-of-school suspensions: 54 out of 112 for “other firearm”, 28 of 56 for “handgun”, and 11 of 15 for “rifle or shotgun.” Eleven expulsions and 8 alternative placements were reported as a result of “bringing other firearms to school” or “possessing firearms on school grounds.” Similarly, the figures are 5 and 16, respectively, for “handgun” incidents. “Rifle or shotgun” incidents are matched with 1 alternative placement in total. However, across three incident types, 41 incidents did not have a resulting disciplinary action. As discussed in Chapter 4 of this report, this percentage of matches between SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions may indicate the need to more closely examine the process for updating initial disciplinary actions (to expulsion) subsequent to the school board making an official determination. It is possible, that this may be one of the factors affecting the low percentage of matches of firearms incidents to expulsions. Further investigation of these data is required in order to identify explanations and solutions that address the lack of resulting disciplinary actions following the occurrence of weapon-related incidents.

Section 3.4 SESIR Rates by District

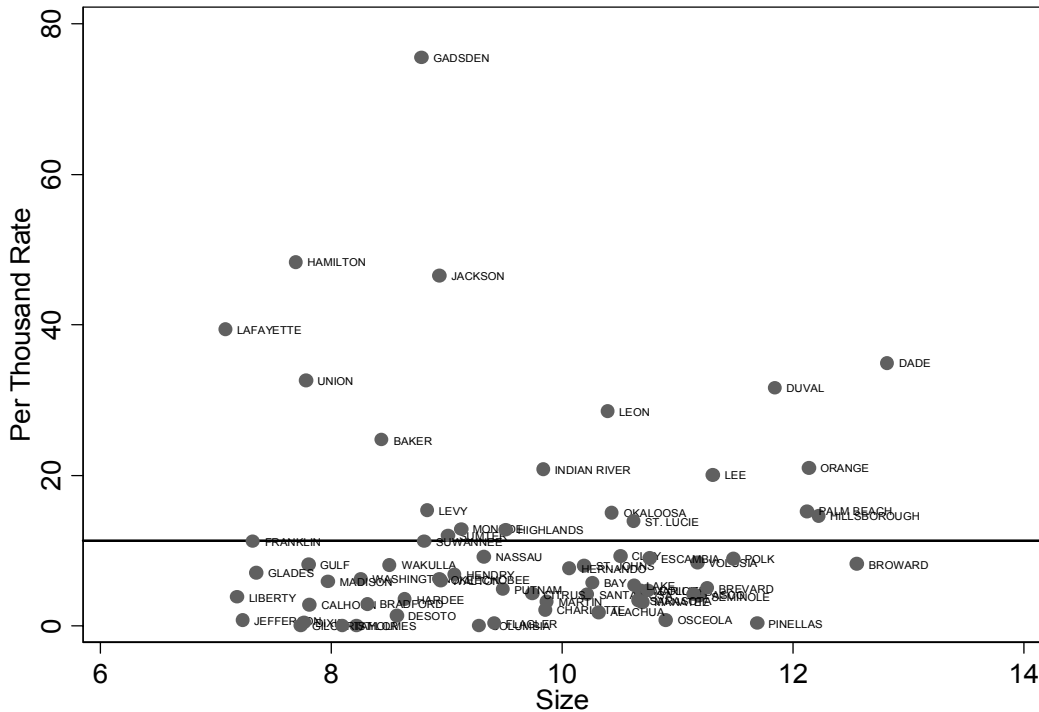
The SESIR Statewide Annual Report provides incident and disciplinary action rates for the State of Florida as well as for the 67 school districts. While the information in this report summarizes the overall SESIR trends, it does not provide a comparative assessment of school districts. Florida districts differ greatly by population, demographics, economic activities, and the number of schools. A comparative analysis of school district SESIR rates would expand the assessment of school safety throughout Florida.

incidents⁷. Monroe and Flagler school districts have a non-match percentage higher than 20 percent; while Lafayette, Union, Charlotte, Leon, Citrus, Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Broward school districts have a non-match percentage between 10 percent and 20 percent. Most school districts (43 out of 67) reported that less than 1 percent of SESIR incidents did not match to a disciplinary action (lacked a resultant disciplinary action).

The match between SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions is used to identify technical assistance and training areas. Further analysis of SESIR incident rates is required for identifying possible sources of reporting errors. School districts differ greatly in regards to the SESIR incident rates. The following analysis provides a comparative assessment of school districts by incident type. Only certain incident types are included in this analysis, namely fighting, battery, alcohol, tobacco, drug use, and harassment.

The fighting category is the most frequently reported incident type across Florida’s 67 school districts. Figure 3.4.2 presents the distribution of fighting rates for all school districts.

Figure 3.4.2: Rates for Fighting by District



Note: X axis represents the log of student population. The natural logarithm is used to enhance the visual representation.

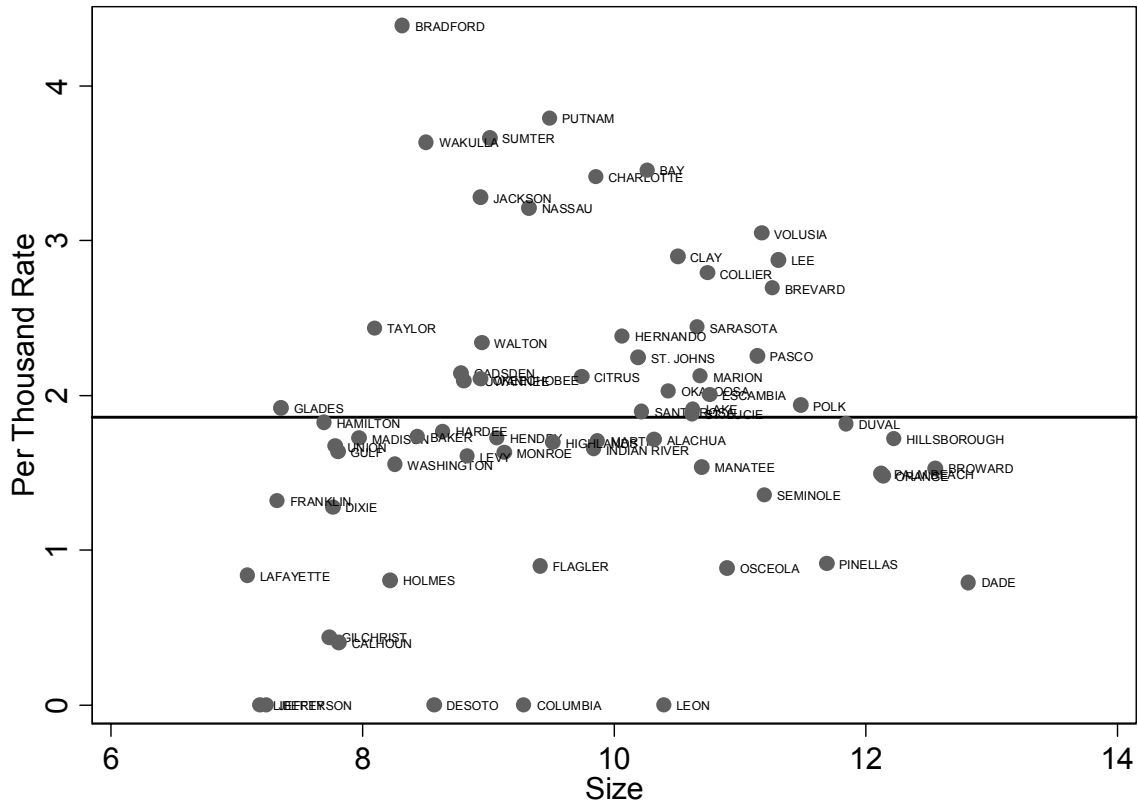
⁷ Results from a system review conducted with these three districts is discussed in Chapter 4.

The horizontal line in Figure 3.4.2 represents the mean fighting rate (11.32) for the State of Florida. As Figure 3.4.2 shows, some smaller school districts report somewhat higher rates of fighting incidents compared to larger districts. For example, Hamilton, Jackson, and Gadsden school districts reported more than 40 fights per thousand students. Other smaller districts such as Lafayette, Union, Levy, and Baker report fighting rates above the mean rate. Of the larger school districts, Dade, Duval, Orange, Lee, Palm Beach and Hillsborough reported fighting rates above the mean rate. Broward reported less than 11 fighting incidents and Pinellas reported approximately one incident per thousand students. Among the mid-sized school districts, Leon has the highest fighting rate followed by Indian River. A majority of the school districts (47 districts) reported fighting rates that remain below the mean fighting rate and 9 of these districts reported less than one fighting incident per thousand students (these school districts are Taylor, Holmes, Gilchrist, Columbia, Pinellas, Flagler, Dixie, Jefferson, and Osceola).

Historically, the incident type of “fighting” has been identified as having consistency and accuracy issues regarding data reporting. For instance, some districts did not have a fight classification and code that ranks lower (less serious) than a SESIR-level “fight;” therefore, all fighting incidents get reported as SESIR fighting incidents. Additionally, training and technical assistance efforts have revealed some inconsistencies with interpreting situations as SESIR fights (e.g., altercations where a punch is thrown can easily be miscoded as a SESIR fight).

Another incident type with relatively higher incident rates is “battery.” The SESIR system defines battery as the “physical use of force or violence by an individual against another.” This differs from “fighting,” because an incident qualifies as battery only when the force or violence is carried out against a person who is *not* fighting back (*to review the definitions for incident reporting, see Florida DOE Information Data Base Requirements Volume I: Automated Student Information System*). Figure 3.4.3 is a scatter plot illustrating the reported battery rates for all school districts. Again, the horizontal line represents the state mean (2.62) for this incident type.

Figure 3.4.6: Rates for Drug Use by District



Note: X axis represents the log of student population. The natural logarithm is used to enhance the visual representation.

In Figure 3.4.6, the horizontal line represents the mean rate for drug use incidents (1.86) across all Florida school districts. Similar to the distribution of alcohol incidents (Figure 3.4.5), the largest districts are located below the state mean. However, some larger districts including Volusia, Lee, Brevard, and Pasco have more than two students involved in drug use per one thousand students. Bradford, Putnam, Wakulla, Sumter, Charlotte, Jackson, Nassau, and Bay school districts reported drug use rates above three (per thousand students). Florida’s largest school district, Dade, has reported that less than one student (in one thousand) was involved in a SESIR-related drug use incident in the 2005-06 school year. Other school districts with low levels of drug use incidents are Jefferson, Desoto, Columbia, Gilchrist, Calhoun, and Leon.

This section provided a comparative assessment of districts with respect to the SESIR incident rates. Overall, large school districts have a higher percentage of non-matches between SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions, however no single pattern emerges to differentiate the districts by SESIR rates. Nonetheless, the scatter plots presented in this section provide a useful tool for targeting districts for technical assistance and training.

3.5 Summary Discussion

This chapter presented a detailed description of the system of data collection developed by Florida DOE to measure and report on the incidence of crime, violence, and disruption in Florida’s public schools. The chapter also introduced the changes to the SESIR data collection system such as the addition of bullying and bullying-related elements. In addition, the chapter provided a descriptive analysis of SESIR incident and discipline data at the state and district levels.

Three important questions were addressed in this chapter. The first question, “What were the statewide rates for SESIR incidents in the 2005-06 school year?” Fighting was the most frequently reported incident type (14.46 per thousand rate), followed by battery (3.61), threat/intimidation (2.32), and tobacco (2.3). Twelve out of 21 incident types were reported to have less than one occurrence per thousand students. Not surprisingly, incidents classified at higher seriousness levels including homicide, kidnapping, sexual battery, and arson had very low incident rates. Overall, an eight-point drop was observed in the total rates of SESIR incidents in Florida from 2003-04 to 2005-06; however, a significant portion of this drop is associated with the decline in the reported SESIR fights. Nonetheless, it appears that the three-year trend in the state rate is indicative of both improved data quality and accuracy, and increasing safety across schools. In fact, the number of schools reporting no SESIR incidents increased from 467 in the 2003-04 school year to 634 in 2004-05, and to 676 in 2005-06. Improved data quality and accuracy is essential for planning and prevention efforts targeted to create safer schools and this pattern appears to be emerging throughout Florida’s schools.

The second area of inquiry addressed includes: “Which disciplinary actions were administered more frequently in Florida schools? What were the percentages for resultant disciplinary actions for SESIR incidents? Did all SESIR incidents result in disciplinary actions?” The analysis presented in this chapter showed that “in-school suspension” was the most frequently administered discipline action when all discipline actions are considered (54 percent of all actions). However, when only disciplinary actions for SESIR related incidents are considered, “out-of-school suspension” accounted for the vast majority of disciplinary actions (71 percent of all SESIR related disciplinary actions).

Similarly, “expulsions” constituted a higher percentage of SESIR-related disciplinary actions compared to all disciplinary actions administered in 2005-06. Since male students have a higher percentage of involvement in SESIR incidents, disciplinary actions are reflective of this fact and more actions were administered for males. When only “suspensions” and “expulsions” are considered, the gap between male and female students increases at the high school level compared to elementary and middle schools. Finally, the analysis also demonstrated that 17 percent of all SESIR incidents did not have matching disciplinary actions. Further, the larger school districts have higher non-match percentages compared to small districts.

The third area of inquiry addressed the question: “How did SESIR incidents rates differ by districts?” The analysis demonstrated that no single pattern emerges across districts with regards to SESIR incident rates. Small school districts have more outliers for fighting, alcohol, and drug use; while an even distribution of SESIR rates across districts emerges for battery and fighting. Overall, the district rates for various incident categories proved to be a useful tool for assessing the seriousness of incidents, detecting possible data errors and identifying areas for technical assistance or system reviews.

A detailed analysis of weapons possession was also provided. Federal legislation requires that each state entitled to federal funds under the ESEA have a law mandating all local education agencies expel any student found bringing or possessing firearms on school grounds. The project’s analysis showed that not all firearms were disciplined by expulsion. In part, this may be due to the mitigation of circumstances surrounding firearm incidents as well as the process for updating the system with the expulsion disciplinary action code. In addition, the “other firearm” incidents reported may be reported at unusually elevated levels given the definition of weapons classified under this category. Additional assessment is necessary to address this issue, but it may suggest the need for additional training with regards to this definition and federal requirements.

SDFS-QDM project staff will continue working toward the ultimate goal of improving data quality at the district level and providing accurate, reliable, and useful data to decision-makers in Florida’s school districts. The project staff is currently developing a user-friendly web-interface system with which Florida DOE and districts will be able to generate reports on SESIR incident and discipline data.

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY INCIDENT REPORTING (SESIR) TRAINING AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

4.1 Introduction

Results from the statewide survey of the district Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators conducted in the fall of 2005 provided the basis for prioritizing activities in 2005-06 and 2006-07. Activities conducted in 2006-07 that address the identified objectives are presented in this chapter. Section 4.2 of this chapter discusses training objective 1 relating to the development of training delivery strategies for Florida's school districts. The primary training delivery strategy discussed is the development and implementation of a web-based training module. Section 4.3 presents progress in meeting training objective 2 through software system reviews. This section presents an overview of each software system review conducted over the year. Section 4.4 relates to efforts targeting the review and improvement of district reporting system processes (training objective 3). Finally, section 4.5 provides a summary and discussion of the training and system improvements.

4.1.1 Project Objectives and Activities

The aforementioned survey solicited the information about the type of data that is most useful to districts. Responses included: (1) data to utilize in developing school-level needs assessments relating to school violence, drugs, alcohol, and other criminal activity, (2) data to inform the decision-making processes related to prioritizing programming and resources to address the identified needs, and (3) data to measure some aspects of the impact of implemented interventions. In addition, the survey responses identified possible process issues related to SESIR data collection and reporting in order to identify strategies for improvements. Finally, survey responses identified effective SESIR system training delivery approaches for school administrators that can be utilized by districts on an ongoing basis.

Overall, the survey results indicated strong support reported for face-to-face, interactive training on a regular basis. Additional findings from the survey were useful in the planning process for the project and, largely, corroborated previous anecdotal findings from interactions with school administrators and management of information systems (MIS) personnel in the field. These key findings are discussed below, in the context of the primary objectives for this component of the SDFS-QDM Project and their associated activities.

4.2 Develop Training Delivery Strategies for Districts (Training Objective 1)

Table 4.2.1 displays Objective 1 which was developed to guide the project activities that address SESIR system training and technical assistance activities implemented by the project during the past year.

Table 4.2.1: Training Objective 1

<p>Objective 1: Develop training delivery strategies for districts that will increase school administrators' knowledge of SESIR definitions and guidelines, and refine the practice of applying these definitions and guidelines to improve the quality of data collection and reporting.</p>	
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive web-based SESIR training module for school administrators • Develop a Train-the-Trainer workshop based on the web-based training module with the purpose of increasing the number of informed district personnel who can deliver training to school administrators and other personnel responsible for SESIR data reporting • Deliver the Train-the-Trainer workshop regionally • Provide technical assistance to school district personnel as needed • Disseminate revised (2006) SESIR incident and definition information posters to all school districts

4.2.1 Develop a Comprehensive Web-based SESIR Training Module

The primary focus for training activities for 2005-06 was the delivery of on-site training delivered by SDFS-QDM staff. Site visit locations were identified by responding to individual district requests for SESIR training. While on-site training activities continued into 2006-07, the primary focus shifted to the design and development of a comprehensive web-based SESIR training module that could be utilized by any district or school staff member. The training module is accessible online and assists in the standardization of the interpretation of SESIR incident definitions across schools and districts in the state. The long-term impact of the training module will be to improve the quality of data upon which needs assessments for intervention programming decisions are based. During training meetings, district coordinators were guided through the online training and provided additional information about process issues that affect data accuracy.

The training module includes an introduction containing motivational animation, graphics, and narration emphasizing the critical nature of accurate data reporting, reporting requirements, and tips for incident coding. The introduction is followed by comprehensive practice exercises that prompt users to interpret video and text scenarios

and determine if they are SESIR incidents or not. Over 50 text and video scenarios are included for users to classify. Users complete required reporting elements online by checking required fields on an Event and Discipline form.

Incident scenarios are presented in varying difficulty levels from easy to moderately difficult to hard. The various difficulty levels represent the degree of difficulty or complexity of the particular incident type. Fewer scenarios are presented for the straight forward, less complex incident types such as tobacco; and a greater number of scenarios are presented that emphasize incident types that are more complex and difficult to code. The training module developers created scenarios with the assistance of a development review team that included four district specialists to adequately address problems and issues the team identified as problematic. Training participants are given detailed positive or corrective feedback for each required SESIR reporting field and must provide the correct response before they can continue in the training module.

Design features of the training module include single-step entry, industry standard programming (HTML and Cold Fusion) for future updates, a user-friendly navigational interface, the ability of returning to the stopping point in the program if an interruption is required, and a stand alone interface (users are not required to download additional “players” or internet add-ons). A final component of the web-based training module is the inclusion of a *tracking database* where users register and district coordinators may monitor the training progress of their school personnel.

The training development consisted of a rigorous design and development process to ensure quality. The main objectives of the design were: (1) to address the needs of school personnel, (2) to present content that was comprehensive and instructive, and (3) to increase standardization of SESIR definition interpretations. The following steps were conducted by the development team (SDFS-QDM Project staff, an instructional designer, and a web designer/programmer). Development of:

1. A *needs analysis* to identify objectives and needs
2. The *program design and presentation strategies*
3. *Programming specifics* (video and narration, specific scenarios, feedback, key points, forms, and user database fields)
4. A *preliminary evaluation* utilizing a small sample of selected school district coordinators
5. A *post training evaluation* to be administered at the conclusion of each train-the-trainer workshop

4.2.2 Develop a Train-the-Trainer Workshop

A train-the-trainer workshop was developed that would introduce the training module and enhance the capabilities of district level coordinators/specialists who are responsible for administering SESIR training at the district level. The design and development process for the workshop also involved SDFS-QDM Project staff and the instructional designer. The workshop development process is described in this section.

The initial step of the workshop development involved conducting a training needs assessment which was completed by a select sample of district coordinators. The results of the training needs assessment guided the development of the workshop objectives presented below.

1. Provide hands-on interactivity for district coordinators with the new SESIR training module.
2. Increase consistency in the interpretation of SESIR incident definitions across districts.
3. Prepare district coordinators to use the SESIR training management database to track their district administrators' progress in completing the training.
4. Provide a training tool to empower district coordinators to conduct subsequent SESIR training in their districts.
5. Facilitate information sharing among district coordinators relating to SESIR software and system strategies to improve data accuracy.
6. Identify and encourage the use of effective practices for verifying SESIR data using school, district, and statewide reports.
7. Identify strategies for district coordinators to utilize SESIR data to improve reporting to school boards and parent advisory councils, and to use the data to enhance grant development.

Finally, workshop session agendas were developed detailing the critical topics. The workshops were designed to be responsive to the needs assessment while making the instruction interactive and engaging. Instructional features were included to support the retention and application of the skills and information presented.

Support materials for the Train-the-Trainer workshop included:

1. A Participant Guide,
2. A Leader Guide for the Department of Education staff, and
3. A CD containing the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

4.2.3 Delivery of Regional Train-the-Trainer Workshops

Two 2-day training workshops were delivered regionally in southern and northern areas of the state. The first workshop was administered July 18th-19th, in Boca Raton at the Safe Schools Institute with 23 attendees representing 14 districts. The second workshop was held in Tallahassee, September 6th-7th, with 25 attendees representing 17 districts. Forty-six percent of the school districts participated in the first two workshops.

Workshop evaluations were conducted to gauge instruction effectiveness and to identify improvements for future administrations. Prior to the training, participants' perceptions of their own SESIR data accuracy were ascertained and, at the conclusion of the training, perceptions of improvements to data accuracy were solicited. Also, a written workshop evaluation was completed by participants at the conclusion of the training. Participants were asked to rate the various features of the training using a five-point scale ("strongly disagree" [1] to "strongly agree" [5]). Anecdotal comments were also collected. Overall,

the evaluations were very positive and provided essential feedback for future improvements. Evaluation results are included in Appendix C.

4.2.4 District-Requested Training and Technical Assistance

Both technical assistance and on-site training was conducted based on requests by districts. Technical assistance provided by telephone and electronic mail was requested with the greatest frequency in the following areas:

1. Questions related to new federal reporting requirements for multiple firearms,
2. Questions related to federally-required drug involvement type “marijuana” or “other”,
3. Coding related to weapons and toy guns,
4. Coding related to drug paraphernalia,
5. Coding related to multiple student involvement in a single incident,
6. Coding relating to “disruption on campus”,
7. Questions related to disciplinary actions for mitigating circumstances (e.g., age, developmentally challenged students), and
8. Review of Student Code of Conduct items (Polk County).

Jefferson County was the only district requesting training for their administrators during 2006-07. To address the county’s request, a three-hour training session was conducted by SDFS-QDM staff in March, 2007. On a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being “very satisfied”, Jefferson County school district participants rated their overall satisfaction with the training at 3.8. In addition, SDFS-QDM Project staff conducted site visits to three districts: Polk, Dade and Orange Counties. Summaries of their system reviews are presented later in this section.

4.2.5 Print Media Dissemination

As a supplement to face-to-face training, posters that display SESIR definitions and key reporting guidelines were updated to include revisions for the 2006-07 school year and disseminated to each district in November 2007. A sufficient number of posters were disseminated to districts to ensure that each school would have access to at least one poster. This poster serves as a job-aid for the administrators when interpreting student behaviors and make determinations as to the degree to which incidents meet SESIR definitions. In addition, this job-aid provides guidance in making determinations as to the need for incidents to be reported to law enforcement. Dissemination of SESIR posters (as requested by districts) has been ongoing throughout 2006-07 and will continue throughout the project duration.

4.3 Software System Reviews

Training Objective 2

The SDFS-QDM project staff addressed the need for quality assurance reviews across the multiple software systems that are utilized by districts to collect SESIR and discipline data. Table 4.3.1 presents this objective and the associated activities.

Table 4.3.1: Training Objective 2

<p>Objective 2: Provide districts with quality assurance strategies to help reduce data entry error with district software systems for SESIR and discipline data collection and reporting.</p>	
<p>Activities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct quality assurance reviews of selected districts' software programs to identify opportunities for data quality improvement • Conduct software system improvement workshops with district personnel at the annual DOE Database Information Workshop (participants organized by the software system used by their district (user groups))

The results of the 2006 SESIR data needs assessment survey indicated that 30 percent of respondents reported that certain data reporting software systems generate opportunities for user error with data entry and allow for incomplete information. This finding supports, but likely underestimates, anecdotal findings from software system reviews and the structured interviews conducted with MIS personnel. The existence of multiple software systems throughout the state to collect and report incident and discipline data contributes to issues of accuracy due to periodic revisions and updates. Because districts utilize a number of different software systems, SESIR system updates must take into consideration the limitations of these systems and must be developed specific to individual systems rather than statewide.

When SESIR reporting was initially mandated during the mid-1990s, districts could select the software system of their choice to interface with the Florida DOE Student Automated Database System. Because of that option, there is considerable variation across the state with the functionality and system screen designs of the programs that collect SESIR and discipline data. Some individual districts within user groups have customized their programs to increase their effectiveness and make them more user-friendly. In addition, programming modifications have been initiated to eliminate missing or incorrect information and make the input process less vulnerable to user error. However, some districts have made no modifications to their system. The 2005-06 SDFS-QDM Project Annual Report provides descriptions of the various software systems in use throughout the state.

4.3.1 Software System Review Activities

Relying upon information provided from the surveys administered to school districts, the results of the user-group training at the 2006 Annual MIS Database Conference, and data provided in the 2005-06 SESIR Annual Statewide Report, several school districts were identified as having potential software system issues due to the presence of higher than average percentages of non-matches of SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions. A percentage higher than 30 percent (non-match of SESIR incidents with appropriate disciplinary actions) was used as an initial indicator for review. To address these needs, SDFS-QDM Project staff conducted three site visits to Polk, Orange, and Dade County School Districts during the past project year. Each of the site visits are described below.

System Review: Polk County

In January 2007, project staff conducted a SESIR training and software system review in the Polk County School District with the Information Systems Director, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinator, and other key administrators. During the system review, it was determined that the higher percentage of non-matches between SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions may be attributed to the fact that the system included local disciplinary action codes, such as detention or parent call, and allowed these codes to be entered for SESIR incidents rather than appropriate state disciplinary codes.

Polk County currently uses the GENESIS software program. This program is utilized by several other school districts as well, but a distinguishing feature in Polk County is that the district has bought the complete programmatic design of the software, allowing programmers within the district to reprogram the software as needed to match the specifications needed by district personnel. This capability allowed the district to make system changes to prevent local disciplinary action codes to be entered for SESIR incidents. This is a significant advantage over other districts that utilize GENESIS (without the rights to alter the program) because Polk County can revise the software without seeking approval of GENESIS, something that other school districts using GENESIS must coordinate before having their software updated.

Other system issues were discussed during this site review. It became apparent that data reporting protocols had not been updated or modified for SESIR incidents that involve the expulsion process. Discussions with the district personnel suggested that a miscommunication between administrators in Polk County had resulted in an undercount of reported expulsions due to the fact that records were not being updated to reflect an expulsion following a school board expulsion hearing. It was agreed that to avoid this problem in the future, it was important to designate the responsibility to update the records as school board decisions were communicated.

The recording of SESIR bullying incidents was also discussed during the software system review. Discussion with those present revealed that Polk County was not currently recording bullying incidents because they were not aware that the new incident category had been created. Administrators indicated that they would make every effort to have the

incident category added to their software system and to begin reporting it as soon as possible.

System Review: Orange County

In February 2007, project staff members met with the Orange County School District Information Systems Director, the coordinator of discipline, and other administrators for a review of their software system for data reporting. Orange County School District currently uses a locally-developed software system that is independently maintained by district personnel. The major impetus for the visit was the finding that 36 percent of SESIR incidents did not have matching (corresponding) disciplinary actions for the 2005-06 school year. A discussion of this issue with district personnel and an analysis of the district's school data revealed the fact that no disciplinary actions were reported for the middle schools. All of the middle schools within the county had recently switched to a new data reporting system, causing a programmatic error that resulted in a situation where disciplinary actions were not being linked to SESIR incidents. The Information Systems Director indicated that steps would be taken for the 2006-07 school year to ensure that the problem would not continue.

The system review also included an examination of Orange County's fighting and battery SESIR data. This aspect of the review was triggered by the finding that the reported rates of offending for these incidents were more than twice the state average. District personnel participating in the review suggested that a lack of training with regards to the appropriate interpretation of student behavior related to fighting and battery was a possible cause for the high rates. Also, the site visit included a discussion of disciplinary action codes. Orange County's disciplinary actions codes did not completely match with the district action codes, possibly contributing to inconsistent and inaccurate (over-reporting and under-reporting) reporting of SESIR disciplinary actions. The district planned for appropriate coding changes to be made.

System Review: Dade County

In March 2007, a SDFS-QDM staff member met with Miami-Dade County School District's Information Systems Director, senior school resource officer, and other district administrators. Dade County was selected for a software system review based partly upon the percentage of SESIR incidents not having matching disciplinary actions (35 percent nonmatches) and partly due to the high rates of offending reported for SESIR incident categories such as fighting and vandalism.

Dade County currently utilizes a locally-developed software system to record SESIR incidents that *do not have to be reported to law enforcement*. For incidents that *must be reported to law enforcement*, the school district relies on information provided through the law enforcement database to link disciplinary actions to SESIR incident information. During the site visit, district personnel agreed that one possible reason for the seemingly high percentage of SESIR incidents that do not have corresponding disciplinary actions may be attributed to the fact that the information being received from the law enforcement database may not be correctly matching the disciplinary data provided by the schools (for incidents reported to law enforcement).

Also discussed during the site visit was the fact that that bomb threats were currently being reported under weapon possession, rather than the correct category of “disruption on campus.” Additionally, the high rate of fighting reported in Dade County appears to have resulted from the fact that Dade County did not have a local code for fighting. As such, all fights were reported as SESIR fights. The Information Systems Director indicated that inserting a local code for fighting to the software system needed to be a priority.

Another data quality issue specific to Dade County is that school level personnel have little working knowledge of SESIR because a majority of the data collection and coding operates behind the scenes through the police database—invisible to school personnel. As such, the quality of the data reported by Dade County relies heavily upon the correct linking of information and data in the law enforcement system as opposed to school level personnel correctly interpreting and entering information on SESIR incidents.

Follow-Up Review with Gateway (Jefferson County School District)

In addition to system review site visits, a follow-up system review was conducted with the Gateway user group as a result of a finding during the Jefferson County School District review and training visit. All districts that utilized the Gateway software system for data reporting have the same incident and discipline menus; therefore, accuracy issues identified in Jefferson County apply to the other thirteen Gateway districts. The main issue with Gateway was that the local disciplinary codes were redundant with SESIR incident definitions which created confusion for the user and resulted in reporting incidents under the local codes (implying less serious incidents) rather than using state codes to indicate the more serious nature of SESIR incidents. The Gateway coordinator/programmer was contacted and the list of incorrect disciplinary codes that needed to be changed or clarified was provided. Subsequent to the site visit, the district SDFS coordinator reported that the software system changes had been completed.

4.3.2 Software System User Groups Shared Critical Improvements

In June 2007, the SDFS-QDM staff conducted a training session at the DOE Information Database Workshop, an annual statewide meeting of district MIS administrators and key staff who are responsible for districts’ Automated Student Information System database. This database includes the SESIR data and discipline data reporting by all districts to the Florida DOE. During this session, district participants were divided into their user groups (based on the particular software system used by their district for data reporting) and shared software system improvements that had been made over the past year to improve the accuracy in data reporting. During this session, participants addressed a variety of improvements: using the “notes” function of the software program to document discipline history and details relating to the investigation process; visually separating the local incident codes from the SESIR incident codes to reduce confusion; ensuring that a single point of contact be designated for inputting such disciplinary updates as alternative placements and expulsions; and increasing the use of data verification reports by schools.

4.4 District Reporting System Processes

Training Objective 3

The third objective relating to the SDFS-QDM project training activities relates to the district and school *processes* that guide SESIR and discipline data reporting. Table 4.4.1 presents Objective 3 and the training activities associated with it.

Table 4.4.1: Training Objective 3

Objective 3: Assist districts in improving SESIR and discipline reporting system processes.	
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement or communicate solutions within process areas which contribute to accuracy

During 2006-07, SDFS-QDM Project staff continued to work with the key process areas that impact data quality. Priority was given to developing activities designed to increase school administrators' knowledge of SESIR definitions through the use of an online training module. In addition, the following processes and possible improvements were communicated at district trainings, site visit reviews, and the statewide DOE Database Information Workshop in June 2007.

- Design and use of the student discipline referral form
- Data entry process for incident reporting
- School-level data review checks to increase accuracy
- Subsequently updating the initial disciplinary actions with resulting alternative placement or expulsion actions

4.4.1 Training Objective 3: Student Discipline Referral Form

Another factor that contributes to the possibility of data error is the design of the district student discipline referral form. The form may not include all of the information that a data entry clerk requires for accurate SESIR reporting. Findings from reviews of student referral forms during system reviews and district training opportunities indicated that inadequate discipline referral forms, in and of themselves, may account for much of the error in data reporting. The following problems were identified:

- Forms omitted the “related elements” field that is required for reporting SESIR incidents
- Forms did not provide a field to record a weapon description when appropriate
- Forms lacked a complete list of SESIR incidents with correct descriptions and sometimes contained duplications of SESIR and local incident codes
- Forms were different across schools of the same level (elementary, middle, high) within some districts

To address this critical training need, the SESIR online training module incorporated a one-page “Event and Discipline Referral form” which includes all of the required fields for SESIR incident and discipline reporting. Accuracy on this form became an integral part of the coding practice for each scenario within the online training module. During each Train-the-Trainer workshop, participants were encouraged to use the form or at least ensure that all of the required reporting fields were included in their district’s form. Some districts requested that an electronic copy of the Student Discipline Referral Form in order for it to be incorporated into their process. Other districts expressed an interest in combining the features into their own referral form.

4.4.2 Data-Entry Component of SESIR Incident Reporting

Another process factor found to impact the data quality for SESIR and discipline reporting relates to the data entry process utilized by districts. A school administrator (rather than a data entry clerk or other personnel) may enter incident and discipline data; however, the majority of schools use a data entry clerk to enter discipline referral information in the district system. An additional problem identified throughout the training efforts is an over-reporting in instances that involve multiple students for a single incident. As described by several district personnel, data entry clerks enter one referral at a time. If four students were involved in a drug possession incident, for example, there would be a referral for each student. Unless there was a process of stapling or in some way bundling the forms together for an incident involving multiple students, a new incident number would be created for each student as each referral form was processed. Thus, multiple incidents could be reported when only one should be reported.

To address this situation, the online training module for school administrators or deans of discipline was designed to include feedback in the “key points” section for each scenario where multiple students were involved. Participants are reminded to staple, group, or somehow identify that the individual discipline forms for these students belong to only one incident. The online form itself contains a field for the user to report the number of students involved in the incident. This field alerts the data entry person to the number of students that should be entered under the same incident identifier number which should help to avoid over-reporting.

4.4.3 School-Level Data Checks for Accuracy

An identified need was the implementation of a process to ensure regular and ongoing data checks to ensure accurate reporting. Implementing a school-level data check procedure should increase data accuracy as well as completeness of reporting. In turn, this should lead to better match rates between SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions. Project staff provided assistance to districts in developing and institutionalizing data accuracy checks at frequent intervals. In addition, at the various training sessions and workshops conducted by the project staff, participants were asked to share the data review process utilized by their district.

4.4.4 Updating Initial Disciplinary Actions

An additional finding from district interviews and trainings indicates that districts that have a single point of data entry have fewer update errors. About one-half of the respondents to the data needs survey in 2005–06 indicated that individual schools are responsible for these subsequent updates to the discipline codes. The train-the-trainer workshops, which reached 31 of 67 school districts as of September 2007, include a training module which emphasizes the expulsion updating problem. Often times, there is a time lapse between the incident and initial data reporting and the subsequent decision for expulsion or alternative placement. In many instances, the system is not updated with the resulting expulsion or alternative placement disciplinary action.

4.5 Summary and Discussion

Impediments to improving data quality for SESIR data include the level of knowledge and understanding of definitions at the local level, the design of referral forms used to record incident information, the degree to which design and functionality of the software program ensures the correctness and completeness of the data and prevents unintended omission or error, the process for updating initial disciplinary actions with final actions, and the frequency and extent of school data check reviews for accuracy prior to the district forwarding data to Florida DOE.

The SDFS-QDM Project has made significant progress in addressing these issues and improving district-level data quality.

- Providing districts with training delivery solutions that offer school administrators current knowledge of the SESIR System definitions and guidelines
- Providing districts with quality assurance strategies to reduce user error within district software designs for SESIR and discipline data collection and reporting
- Assisting districts in improving SESIR and discipline reporting system processes

Activities over the past year focused on increasing statewide knowledge of standardized definitions of the most serious incidents of crime, violence, and disruption within schools and at school-sponsored activities. The development of the SESIR online training module was developed with input from district personnel and addresses the data quality needs identified through surveys and training site visits. Over time, as more district personnel complete the training, the positive impact of this tool will become more apparent. The train-the-trainer workshops provide coordinators with skills to answer questions from school administrators and to augment local software training considerations. The online training module and the train-the-trainer workshops have been well received and at the time of printing, 1,000 statewide users were registered in the SESIR online training database.

Over the last year of this project, staff will continue to deliver train-the-trainer workshops and conduct site visits.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are frequently enlisted by Florida's local education agencies to provide in-school prevention programming. Unlike local education agencies (LEAs), however, CBOs do not have a state or federal mandate to collect and report quantitative in-school incident and performance data at the student level. While data collection and reporting appears to be less comprehensive for CBOs, UMIRS does address the responsibilities of these entities.

“The interventions subject to data collection are those funded with federal SDFS dollars, including programs and other activities implemented by the offices of the chief executive officer within states and territories, SEAs, and LEAs. Although public reporting is still expected, UMIRS does not require reporting data at the local level in this category.”

(“The Uniform Data Set: A Review Draft of Data Elements for the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System,” US Department of Education, The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, prepared by WESTAT and EMT, December 5, 2005, p.53)

The UMIRS report also includes the programs and services offered by most CBOs in the typology of program types required to collect and report data elements. The Florida Governor's Office of Drug Control (ODC) has developed a funding solicitation process to provide assistance to CBOs who provide a broad range of prevention services. ODC utilizes a portion of Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding to award subgrants to CBOs who propose to deliver quality prevention services that address identified needs.

In 2006, the SDFS-QDM Project worked closely with the ODC to develop data reporting protocols for CBOs to report quantitative information relating to program goals, objectives, baseline data, and outcome data. SDFS-QDM Project staff worked with ODC to develop data reporting fields that could be amended into an existing electronic grant application system. The existing electronic grant application system was amended to accommodate these changes. Thereafter, when CBOs apply for prevention services grants, information must be included to address self-evaluation measures for the duration of the grant. Approximately six months into the grant cycle, CBOs must go back into the software program and enter progress measures (outcomes). These changes made it possible for the project to provide ODC with a statistical analysis of CBO program data to facilitate their efforts to improve the evaluation of program effectiveness.

It is important to distinguish between collecting data on target populations and activities that are proposed in applications (planned) versus collecting “outcome” data on activities

that have been implemented and delivered. The latter is the type of information that is required by UMIRS. In addition to facilitating federal governmental reporting requirements, these changes also provide increased accountability to funders (state and federal), stakeholders, and clients.

This chapter summarizes the projects' efforts to develop a new system of data reporting for CBOs and provides analysis of the performance measures of 44 programs after the first six-month period of the grant cycle. Section 5.2 summarizes the new data collection system. Section 5.3 presents the statistical analysis of the performance and evaluation measures for the first six months. Section 5.4 provides a summary discussion of the increased capabilities of the new data collection system.

5.2 Data Reporting System for CBOs

Annually, a percentage of the NCLB Act (2001) Title IV funds distributed by U.S. DOE to the states for Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) programming is directed to each state's office of the chief executive. The invitation from the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) to apply for these funds includes a requirement that community-based entities providing drug and violence prevention programming be held to the same UMIRS data collection and reporting requirements as SEAs and LEAs. Therefore, Florida's governor entrusts a portion of these Federal funds to ODC, which awards sub-grants (hereafter referred to as grants) to qualifying community-based organizations.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is responsible for receiving grant proposals from prospective and continuing CBOs. Grant proposals are submitted electronically using FDLE's Subgrant Information Management Online System (SIMON), from which FDLE produces a PDF file of each application and forwards it to ODC for review and funding consideration.

The CBOs also submit a mid-year progress report called a "Self-Monitoring Tool." As a data collection instrument, the Self-Monitoring Tool provides program implementation information and the methods by which CBOs self-evaluate their progress. Specifically, the Self-Monitoring Tool is designed to:

- Ensure that the (1999 No Child Left Behind Act) Principles of Effectiveness are being addressed in the most effective ways,
- Assist Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program staff in providing the most effective technical assistance possible, and
- Assist grantees in continuing to monitor program effectiveness and redirect efforts as necessary to ensure the highest levels of program success.

However, until last year, the data was collected in narrative form and there was not a systematic process to code responses for statistical analysis, or to be aggregated or summarized. Moreover, the Self-Monitoring Tool did not require CBOs to report precisely when and where programming was provided, precluding the funding agency from assessing program efficacy by comparing specific CBO programming to

neighborhood- or school-level School Environment Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System data.

The ODC receives grant applications and Self-Monitoring Tool progress reports in non-electronic formats that do not lend themselves to the systematic analysis of data; therefore, a methodology for systematically comparing CBOs application goals and objectives (proposed) with actual implementation progress and outcome measures was developed in collaboration with the Office of Drug Control. The new system will be able to track CBO outcome measure updates against original application goals and objectives.

The Self-Monitoring Tool component of the SIMON online system is divided into five sections: 1) Program Overview, 2) Implementation, 3) Goals and Objectives, 4) Evaluation, and 5) Collaboration. Within each section are three to six items to which grantees respond in narrative format.

In order to streamline the Self-Monitoring Report process, allow for efficient quantitative coding of responses, and to expand the data elements to be collected, SDFS-QDM Project staff worked with ODC staff to develop performance measures.

Data elements that are included in the online system are described in the following section.

Program Overview

- The name of the program or programs being implemented. All of the programs on the list of evidence-based programs will be provided as options.
- A list of activities (past and current) associated with the program.
- A list of activities (past and current) that involve parents and families.

Implementation Schedule

- Program module/component length must be selected using one of these options: 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 9 weeks, 12 weeks, or more than 12 weeks.
- The number of days per week that the program's services are offered must be indicated (1 to 7 days).
- The session length is selected using 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, or more than 3 hours.
- The various topic(s) of sessions is indicated from a list that includes alcohol, tobacco, bullying, parenting skills classes, marijuana, violence, and other.
- Programs indicate whether "special events" are planned.

Program Goals and Objectives

- Goals and objectives are selected from a list of goals and objectives associated with exemplary and promising programs. This function standardizes goals and objectives for across program comparisons and facilitates the process of associating funded programs' goals and objectives with identified prevention needs in the schools and communities.

- Programs also identify any obstacles that have impeded their ability to meet stated goals and objectives. Options include: no obstacles, insufficient funding, lack of resources, lack of community support, and other.

Evaluation

- The evaluation methodology must be specified by indicating one or more of the following measures:
 - program level evaluation using program-specific data and measures,
 - community level evaluation using community-impact data and measures, or
 - both program and community levels.
- Programs must identify the data sources that will be used for evaluation.
- Programs must indicate their current status as: developing, progressing, in transition, in revision, established, or successfully completed.
- Applicants may also report any changes or improvements that their program has experienced.

Demographic Information

The following demographic information is collected:

- Total number of youth served
- Distribution of youth across race/ethnicity categories
- Distribution of youth across sex/gender categories
- Distribution of youth across age-group categories
- School enrollment status of the school-age youth served
- Additional individuals served by the program

5.3 Performance Assessment Results

The SDFS-QDM project staff has analyzed the performance and evaluation measures for 44 programs from the mid-year report (for 2007). Table 5.3.1 presents a list of the programs that submitted mid-year progress data and reports. Table 5.3.2 presents the distribution of the 44 CBOs across counties.

Table 5.3.1: CBOs Submitting Mid-Year Progress Reports

- Boys and Girls Club of Indian River County
- Boys and Girls Club of Manatee
- Boys and Girls Club of Perry/Taylor County
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Volusia/Flagler Counties
- Brownsville Community Development Corporation
- C.E. Mendez Foundation
- Center for Drug-Free Living, Inc.
- Center for Prevention Research
- Charlotte Alliance for a Safe and Drug-Free Community
- Community Crusade Against Drugs
- COPE Center, Inc
- Council of Church Based Health Programs
- Drug-Free Youth in Town
- Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating Office
- Drug Abuse Treatment Association, Inc.
- EPIC Community Services, Inc.
- EPIC Community Services, Inc.
- Family Resources, Inc.
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention
- Florida State University/Project Kick
- Hernando County School Board
- Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance
- Hiway Park Black Businessmen Association
- Housing Authority of Key West
- Informed Families/ The Florida Family Partnership
- Lake County Board of Commissioners
- Lakeview Center, Inc.
- Manatee County Girls Club
- Operation PAR, Inc.
- Orange County Coalition for a Drug-Free Community
- PACE Center for Girls - Broward
- Pace Center for Girls, Incorporated
- Putnam County Sheriff's Office
- Redeemed, Inc.
- Rivendell Academy
- Safe Climate Coalition
- Shands Healthcare-Vista
- Starting Place, Inc.-Youth Opportunities
- Sutton Place Behavioral Health Inc.
- The Miami Coalition
- The School District of Manatee County
- Turn About, Inc.
- Youth Crime Watch of Florida

Table 5.3.2 Programs by County

County	Number of Programs	County	Number of Programs
Dade	7	Hernando	1
Leon	5	Highlands	1
Hillsborough	3	Indian River	1
Lake	3	Monroe	1
Manatee	3	Nassau	1
Broward	2	Orange	1
Pinellas	2	Palm Beach	1
St. Johns	2	Putnam	1
Alachua	1	Seminole	1
Charlotte	1	Taylor	1
Duval	1	Volusia	1
Escambia	1	Walton	1
Gadsden	1	Total	44

As Tables 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 indicate, 44 programs in 25 counties submitted six-month updates for quantitative performance measures. Dade County had the highest frequency of CBOs with seven, while five programs were implemented in Leon County.

The CBOs are diverse in the type of prevention services offered. Table 5.3.3 provides a summary of the various program types.

Table 5.3.3 Program Characteristics

Program Type	Number of Programs	Percent
Afterschool	6	14
Afterschool and Faith-based	1	2
Community-Based	1	2
Day Treatment	1	2
Media Outreach Campaign	1	2
Multiple	6	14
School	13	30
School/Afterschool	3	7
Summer Program	1	2
Other	1	2
Not Available	10	23
Total	44	100%

During the last reporting period, the sub-grantees defined themselves as a school, a faith-based organization, an afterschool program, or as a combination. As Table 5.3.3 shows, 30 percent (13 out of 44) of the CBO programs classified themselves as school programs, while 14 percent (6 out of 44) were classified as afterschool programs. Table 5.3.4 reports the program status of the CBO programs.

Table 5.3.4 Program Status

Status	Number	Percent
Developing	1	2
Progressing	18	42
In Transition	1	2
In Revision	2	5
Established	21	49
Total	43	100%

About half of the programs indicated their status to be “established” (21 out of 43 programs (49 percent)). Eighteen programs (42 percent) reported their status to be “progressing” and 2 programs (5 percent) were experiencing “revisions.” Overall, the majority of these programs were either “well-established” or reported to be “in-progress.”

The analysis of the performance measures are presented in four categories: **implementation activities, program and module implementation, target groups, and demographics**. The tables on the following pages present the results of the data analysis for each of these four categories.

Implementation Activities

The sub-grantees are required to report the main impediments related to their program’s implementation and activities when submitting the quantitative performance measures. More specifically, the funded programs are required to report the greatest single obstacle, if any, in meeting the goals and objectives of their grant. Table 5.3.5 reports the most significant obstacles faced by programs during the initial six month reporting period.

Table 5.3.5 Obstacles to Program Implementation

Obstacles	Number of Programs	Percent
Insufficient Funds	3	7
Lack of Resources	5	11
Lack of Community Support	4	9
Difficulty Coordinating with Schools	15	34
None	17	39
Total	44	100%

As Table 5.3.5 indicates, 39 percent (17 out of 44) of the programs reported having no obstacles during implementation. Thirty-four percent (34 percent) of the programs reported “coordination with schools” as the most important obstacle in meeting their goals. Lack of resources was the main obstacle for five programs (11 percent), followed by the lack of community support (four out of 44 programs or 9 percent). Finally, three programs reported that they considered insufficient funds as a significant impediment to meeting the program goals.

As a part of their implementation performance, the CBOs reported how many hours (in a week) of service is provided on various prevention efforts including underage drinking, bullying, tobacco, violence, suicide, and illegal drugs. Table 5.3.6 shows the number of weekly program hours that are provided for each type of prevention strategy. The cell entries are the number of programs spending a specified amount of time for each strategy and the percentages are provided in parentheses. The median hours spent in a week by a program for each activity is also presented.

Table 5.3.6 Program Implementation: Weekly Hours Spent in Prevention Activities

	Underage Drinking	Bullying	Tobacco	Violence	Suicide	Illegal Drugs
None	4 (9)	13 (30)	6 (14)	12 (27)	22 (50)	5 (11)
0–9 hour	12 (27)	9 (20)	11 (25)	10 (23)	6 (14)	11 (25)
1–4.9 hours	10 (23)	10 (23)	17 (39)	5 (11)	11 (25)	12 (27)
5–9.9 hours	5 (11)	3 (7)	2 (5)	7 (16)	2 (5)	4 (9)
10–19.9 hours	7 (16)	3 (7)	6 (14)	4 (9)	1 (2)	5 (11)
20–39.9 hours	4 (9)	5 (11)	2 (5)	2 (5)	1 (2)	5 (11)
Over 40	2 (5)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (2)	2 (5)
Total	44 (100%)	44 (100%)	44 (100%)	44 (100%)	44 (100%)	44 (100%)
MEDIAN Hours	3	1.25	2	2	0.125	3

Note: The first number in each cell is the number of programs that spent a particular range of weekly hours (noted in left column) on a specific prevention strategy and the second number (in parentheses) is the percentage. The categories in the left column are not mutually exclusive.

The median hours spent in each prevention strategy ranges from 0.125 hours for suicide prevention to 3 hours per week for underage drinking and illegal drugs. The median hours for tobacco and violence prevention are 2 hours per week for 44 programs. The median for bullying is somewhat lower at 1.25 hours per week. These figures are indicative of the concentration of prevention efforts that are implemented by CBOs. Overall, Table 5.3.6 indicates that underage drinking, illegal drugs, tobacco, and violence prevention strategies appear to be areas on which most programs focus. For example, for underage drinking, ten programs (23 percent) reported that they spend between 1-5 hours in this activity in a week and another 12 programs (27) reported 1 hour or less. In addition, 16 percent of the programs reported weekly hours ranging between 10 to 20 hours (for underage drinking prevention). Ten programs reported that they spend between 10 hours and 40 hours in drug prevention efforts and 12 programs indicated their weekly hours to be between 1 and 5. Suicide prevention and bullying prevention are two areas with a lower level of resources and efforts. Half of the programs reported that they do not spend any time for suicide prevention and 13 out of 44 (30 percent) of the programs do not undertake bullying prevention activities.

In addition to prevention efforts, CBOs are also involved in training and education of parents and peers. Table 5.3.7 reports the weekly hours spent in improvement of parenting, and mentoring and peer education activities.

Table 5.3.7 Program Implementation: Training and Mentoring

Hours Spent	Improving Parenting	Mentoring & Peer Education
None	16 (36)	16 (36)
0 .9 hour	11 (25)	4 (9)
1 – 4.9 hours	11 (25)	11 (25)
5 – 9.9 hours	4 (9)	3 (7)
10 – 19.9 hours	1 (2)	5 (11)
20 – 39.9 hours	1 (2)	4 (9)
Over 40	0 (0)	1 (2)
Total	44 (100%)	44 (100%)
MEDIAN Hours	1	2

Note: Categories in the left column are not mutually exclusive.

As shown in Table 5.3.7, the CBOs devote a moderate amount of time on improving parental skills, mentoring, and peer training. Although 16 out of 44 programs were not involved in any of these activities, 25 percent of the programs spent up to one hour and another 25 percent between one to five hours per week on parenting improvement. While four programs allocated between five and 10 hours on parenting activities, the remaining programs allocated 10 to 40 hours in a week on parenting skills. The amount of time

spent for mentoring and peer education by these programs is slightly different—more programs devote a greater amount of time on this strategy. For example, 5 programs reported that they allocated 10 to 20 hours per week and four programs allocated 20 to 40 hours per week on peer education and mentoring. Overall, the funded CBOs concentrated significant efforts in prevention programming, as well as on parent and peer education.

Program and Model Implementation

The quantitative measures of the performance reports include information about program implementation and time spent applying the program module. In particular, CBOs are asked to provide the number of months that the program was operational during the reporting periods. Table 5.3.8 summarizes the responses of the programs.

Table 5.3.8 Number of Months a Program was Operational

Months	Number	Percent
0 Months	1	2
Less than 4 months	9	20
4 Months	7	16
6 Months	21	48
Over 6 Months	6	14
Total	44	100%
MEDIAN Months	6 Months	

As reported in Table 5.3.8, the median number of months a program was operational is 6 months. Twenty-one out of 44 programs (48 percent) reported that their program remained operational for six months. Nine programs reported that they were operational for less than four months and seven programs were operational for four months. Six programs reported that they remained operational over six months in the last reporting period. While the time a program remains operational is an important indicator of program implementation, a more direct performance measure is the implementation of program module/component. Table 5.3.9 provides an overview of the number of weeks that the program module or component was implemented during the reporting period.

Table 5.3.9 Number of weeks a program module/component was implemented

Weeks Spent	Number	Percent
0 Weeks	4	9
1 week to 7.9 weeks	15	34
8 weeks to 15.9 weeks	13	30
Over 16 weeks	12	27
Total	44	1
MEDIAN Weeks	2.00	

Note: Categories in the left column are not mutually exclusive.

As shown in Table 5.3.9, 34 percent (15 out of 44) of the programs reported that they implemented their program module between one to eight weeks in the reporting period. Thirteen programs (30 percent) had an implementation time ranging between eight to 16 weeks, while another 12 programs implemented their modules over a 16-week period. The median for the program responses is two weeks, a relatively low number indicating fewer weeks of program module implementation.

Program Evaluation and Target Groups

The performance report also includes a section on quantitative objectives related to the evaluation of program performance in relation to their target populations. Pre- and post-test assessments constitute one method for assessing the program performance. During the reporting period, the CBOs reported the impact of the programs on participants based on pre and post information gathering. However, many programs did not implement an assessment during the reporting period and is reflected in the findings presented in Table 5.3.10. Table 5.3.10 provides the summary of the programs' responses regarding their assessment results relating to a change in behavior and an increase in the participants' level of knowledge.

Table 5.3.10 Percentage of Participants Demonstrating a Change

Percentage (of participants)	Change in Behavior (# of programs)	Increase in Knowledge (# of programs)
No change or NA	21	20
Less than 50%	5	1
50–75%	4	6
Over 75%	12	17
Total	44	44

As previously mentioned and reported in Table 5.3.10, many programs did not report the results of the assessment mainly due to the fact that an assessment (pre and post) was not being administered during the reporting period. Twelve programs reported that a change in the behavior was observed for more than 75 percent of the participants based on the results of an assessment. In addition, 17 out of 44 programs reported an increase in knowledge for more than 75 percent of the participants. While six programs reported an increase in knowledge for 50 percent to 75 percent of their participants, only one program reported less than 50 percent of the participants increased their knowledge based on the assessment. Four programs reported a change in behavior for 50 percent to 75 percent of their participants (based on pre- and post-assessment) and five programs observed a change in less than 50 percent of the participants.

The assessment of program success based on pre- and post-tests or information gathering before and after program implementation is a direct and quantifiable measure of program effectiveness. The number of participants and the target population served by the program are also important factors to consider. During the reporting period, the mean number of participants served was 887 people. The range in the number of participants served by the CBO programs ranged from a few participants (10 participants by the Council of Church-based Health Programs) to as many as 7,296 (Youth Crime Watch of Florida) and 13,699 (Safe Climate Coalition). The range for the number of groups served by the CBOs started at one (Informed Families/The Florida Family Partnership) up to 192 (Youth Crime Watch of Florida); while the mean (average) number of groups served by the CBOs was 27. Not all participants completed the program. During the reporting period, the mean number of completers for the 44 programs was 286 and the range was between seven (Rivendell Academy) and 5900 (Shands Healthcare-Vista) completers. The data reported here (for the range of the participants, the groups served, and the number of participants who completed the program) exclude the programs that did not report any numbers.

Demographics and Target Population

The recipients (CBOs) of grants are required to report information about the characteristics of the target client groups as well the demographic information for the participants when the quantitative performance measures are reported online. Target groups and participants include such groups as school-aged youth attending or not attending school, parents, law enforcement officers, teachers, and community members. The summary statistics for the types of participants are presented in Table 5.3.11.

Table 5.3.11 Descriptive Information about the Participants in CBO Programs

	Total # of programs	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Number of school-aged youth served who attend public school	44	793.61	111	0	10,054
Number of school-aged youth served who attend private school	43	34.91	0	0	950
Number of school-aged youth who do not attend school	43	4.26	0	0	90
Number of parents or guardians participated	44	184.68	20	0	4000
Number of law enforcement officials participated	43	7.05	2	0	115
Number of teachers or school personnel participated	44	38.00	7	0	384
Number of community members participated	43	80.69	4	0	1627

Table 5.3.11 reports the mean, median, and the range for the number of participants and types of participants as reported by the programs. While the mean value for each group represents the average number of participants for each group, the median is useful to indicate which group has a concentrated population. As Table 5.3.11 presents, the average number of school-aged youths who attend public schools and served by these programs is almost 794 for the 44 programs. The median value is 111, indicating that 50 percent of the programs served 111 or less of this group of students. During the reporting period, the funded programs served about 35 students attending private schools, and only four school-aged youths who do not attend to school. Reviewing the reports from individual programs provides insight into some of the larger numbers. For example, the Safe Climate Coalition served 10,054 school-aged youth who attend public schools and 950 school-aged youth who attend private schools. Overall, the programs served an average of 185 parents. Again, looking at individual programs, the Safe Climate Coalition reported serving 2,509 parents and the Charlotte Alliance for a Safe and Drug-Free Community reported serving 4,000 parents during the reporting period. An average of 38 teachers and/or school personnel participated in the activities of the 44 funded programs; however, half of the programs reported a range of seven or less teachers/school personnel participated in their programs. The Charlotte Alliance for a Safe and Drug-Free Community reported 320 teachers and school personnel were served while the same figure was 384 for the Youth Crime Watch of Florida. Community members were another group that participated in the services offered by CBOs. An average of 81 community members participated in the activities of the 44 programs. The Safe Climate Coalition had the highest number of participants (1,627) from community members followed by 540 community participants reported by the Miami Coalition.

In addition to the program participant information, the grant recipients report quantitative measures related to the race and gender of the youth served during the reporting period. Table 5.3.12 provides a summary of the racial breakdown of the participants.

Table 5.3.12 Number of Youth Served by Race

Number of Participants (youth)	White	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Other
0 or NA	9	7	28	12	31	25
Less than 50	20	22	13	22	13	13
50–99	5	6	1	5	0	2
100–499	5	5	2	2	0	4
500 or more	5	4	0	3	0	0
Total	44	44	44	44	44	44

Note: Categories in the left column are not mutually exclusive.

In Table 5.3.12, the entries represent the number of programs that reported the number of youth served in the categories (left column). For example, “50–100” means that between 50 and 100 youth were served in the programs. As expected, most programs served more white youth and African-American youth than Asian, Hispanic, or Native American. This table also illustrates that most programs served less than 50 youth as a whole. For example, 20 programs reported serving less than 50 white youth, 22 programs stated serving less than 50 African-American youth, the same with Hispanic youth. Fifteen programs served more than 50 white youth, 15 programs reported serving more than 50 African-American youth, and 10 programs reported serving more than 50 Hispanic participants. Asian and Native American youth were served by a smaller number of programs.

The performance reports also include the gender of the program participants. Table 5.3.13 summarizes the information presented by programs about the gender of participants.

Table 5.3.13 Number of Youth Served by Gender

Number of Participants	Male	Female
0 or NA	9	7
Less than 50	16	17
50–99	9	8
100–499	4	7
500 or more	6	5
Total	44	44

Note: Categories in the left column are not mutually exclusive.

Table 5.3.13 indicates that nine programs either did not serve any male participants or they did not report the relevant data. Seven programs reported no female participants (or neglected to report the data). Sixteen of the 44 programs reported serving less than 50 male participants and 17 programs reported serving less than 50 females. Nine programs served between 50 and 100 male participants and eight programs served between 50 and 100 female participants. Finally, a total of 10 programs reported serving over 100 male participants and 12 programs reported serving more than 100 female participants. Overall, the CBOs served approximately equal numbers of males and females.

In this section, a summary analysis of self-reported performance measures was provided for 44 CBOs who received grants through the ODC. The summary statistics related to the performance and objectives of these programs help identify the target participants, the characteristics of participants served, and the obstacles experienced by the programs. The new data collection system also included a substantial amount of narrative information about these programs. Therefore, the analysis provided in this chapter should assist the ODC by complimenting the more detailed descriptive information submitted by the programs.

5.4 Summary Discussion

Community-based organizations play an important role in providing drug, alcohol and violence prevention programming throughout Florida's communities. The infrastructure for monitoring and evaluating these programs has improved over the past year through the efforts of the ODC and this project. In its first year, the SDFS-QDM project examined the processes involved in grant proposal submission and in CBO grantee reporting of program implementation and efficacy. In year 2, the project assisted ODC in identifying and developing performance measures that should be incorporated into the online grant application process developed by and housed under FDLE. ODC incorporated these performance measures in the online grant application system (SIMON). Project staff provided assistance to ODC in the aggregation and analysis of these measures and indicators. The analysis of goals, objectives, and performance measures for community-based organizations who receive grant funding provides the ODC with additional data to inform their decision-making processes. The ODC can rely on this information to (1) inform new funding decisions, (2) to inform continuation funding decisions, and (3) to identify the extent to which CBOs address school and community needs relating to violence, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, and other high risk behaviors.