

Compendium of Resources on School Safety

Compiled by the WestEd Justice and Prevention Research Center • September 18, 2019

School Shootings and Other School Violence

[Five Misconceptions About School Shootings](#)

JPRC researchers Anthony Petrosino and Hannah Persson collaborated with one of the nation's leading authorities on school shootings, Dr. Peter Langman, to produce this brief. The brief identifies five commonly held myths about school shootings and about the perpetrators. It also highlights one evidence-based strategy, threat assessment, that can be used by schools and law enforcement authorities to potentially thwart school safety threats.

[Handbook of School Violence and School Safety](#)

Several WestEd researchers co-authored chapters in the Handbook of School Violence and School Safety on how school climate measures, interventions, and large-scale initiatives relate to the safety and well-being of students.

Law Enforcement Presence in Schools

[Effects of School-Based Law Enforcement](#)

This JPRC brief presents a definition of school-based law enforcement and summarizes some of the relevant research about its effects on students and schools. The authors found little rigorous evaluative research on the effects of having a police presence in schools, but they see promise in future studies to inform school and district leaders, as well as policymakers.

[Are Metal Detectors Effective at Making Schools Safer?](#)

One popular response to the tragedies of school violence is to propose using metal detectors in schools. Expert Jaclyn Schildkraut of the State University of New York, Oswego, and WestEd's Kathryn Grogan authored a JPRC research brief that summarizes what is known about metal detectors in schools, including addressing questions about what impact such devices may have on day-to-day safety and about what happens during school violence events.

Addressing Trauma in Schools

[Trauma Informed Education](#)

WestEd published a report, *Trauma-Informed Practices from Prenatal to Young Adulthood: Voices From the Field*, that includes interviews with leading authorities about current practice and research. The report's lead author, Natalie Walrond, Director of the WestEd Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety, was recently interviewed for a [two-part series](#) about how child-serving professionals notice and attend to the effects of trauma on children. Drawing on interviews with dozens of researchers and practitioners, she shares key takeaways about trauma-informed practices, including some unexpected insights.

[Understanding the Impacts of Trauma](#)

Understanding the impacts of trauma on students' mindsets and success is crucial for supporting youth in schools. A webinar series from the Regional Educational Laboratory West elucidates the effects of trauma on brain development, describes approaches and frameworks for fostering positive youth engagement, and addresses the importance of supporting youth-serving adults to sustain this crucial work. This three-part webinar series targets county office of education administrators and staff, school district administrators, school site leaders, teachers, counselors, parent leaders, and community members.

[Creating Trauma-Informed Learning Environments](#)

Many children in the United States experience at least one adverse childhood experience (e.g., parental divorce, death, or incarceration; being a victim of violence or witnessing violence in their community; or experiencing economic hardship). The trauma of such experiences can negatively affect learning at school by decreasing students' ability to pay attention, regulate emotion and behavior, or develop positive relationships with adults and peers. A [brief](#) produced by the [Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd](#) offers five important actions that teachers can take to design trauma-sensitive learning environments that support students who have trauma in their history.

Restorative Justice and Discipline

[Restorative Justice as a Non-Punitive Approach to School Discipline](#)

To minimize the potential for harm from exclusionary punishments like out-of-school suspension, many educators are embracing restorative justice as a solution. What do we know about it? A [report](#) from the JPRC summarizes information on restorative justice in U.S. schools from a comprehensive review of relevant literature. The review captures key issues, describes models of restorative justice, and summarizes results from studies conducted in the field. Other JPRC reports on restorative justice in schools [are available online](#), and WestEd's *R&D Alert* newsletter ran an [article](#) on restorative justice in schools, based on an interview with JPRC Senior Researcher, Sarah Guckenbug.

[How States Can Collect and Use School Discipline Data to Support Equity](#)

Many states lack consistent and useful data about school discipline, making it difficult to effectively monitor school discipline practices and related student outcomes. A policy brief by the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd presents five key steps that state education agencies can take to improve how they collect, publicly report, and use school discipline data.

Bullying

[Victimization of Students With Disabilities](#)

To examine risk rates for different student populations, JPRC researchers and WestEd colleagues analyzed data from Maine's statewide Integrated Youth Survey. Analyses indicated that students with disabilities are at a heightened risk for victimization and that risk is compounded for certain minority groups. The findings are published in [an article](#) in the *Journal of Knowledge and Best Practices in Juvenile Justice and Psychology*, and the study is further described in a [blog post](#).

[What Are the Characteristics of Bullying in Schools?](#)

Researchers from WestEd and the American Institutes of Research collaborated on a study that examined the characteristics associated with bullying victims' reporting the bullying to school officials. The Institute of Education Sciences funded the study through the Regional Educational Laboratory for the Northeast and Islands. The study's report highlights that substantial proportions of bullying are not reported to school officials, even in more serious cases involving injury or daily victimization. For the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences newsletter, *ACJS Today*, JPRC researchers also contributed an [article](#) on the "culture of silence" around bullying.

School Climate

[A Climate for Academic Success](#)

A growing body of research suggests that school climate may be an important variable in explaining why some schools are more successful than others. Adding to the research base, a report by Cleveland State University's Adam Voight (also formerly of WestEd), [Gregory Austin](#), and [Thomas Hanson](#) explores the climate of a handful of secondary schools with extraordinary success compared to that of other schools. The [full report](#) and an updated list of [California Beating-The-Odds Schools](#) are available.

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[The Racial School Climate Gap](#)

Even within the same school, not all students experience climate the same way. An individual's experience of the school climate may be influenced by race, ethnicity, and other student characteristics. WestEd researchers co-authored a paper with Adam Voight of Cleveland State University examining within-school racial disparities in student experiences of their school climate. Using data from 400 California middle schools, the analysis indicates that in an average middle school, Black and Hispanic students have less favorable experiences of safety, connectedness, relationships with adults, and opportunities for participation, as compared to White students. The *American Journal of Community Psychology* published the article. The full abstract and access to the journal are available [online](#).



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