
Responding to School Violence

Social Problems, Social Constructions

Joel Best and Scott R. Harris, series editors

Confronting the Columbine Effect

edited by

Glenn W. Muschert, Stuart Henry,
Nicole L. Bracy, and Anthony A. Peguero



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Surveillance and Security Approaches Across Public School Levels

Lynn A. Addington

While researchers have devoted great attention to working to understand the causes of school violence, less is known about the decisions to adopt particular policies to address the problem. One important factor contributing to changes in policy and security practices is likely a response to actual or feared escalation in school violence. The fatal shootings at Columbine High School provide a clear illustration of this reaction. The aftermath of Columbine prompted a variety of policy proposals and changes across the United States to address the perceived epidemic of school violence. One set of responses centered on increasing school security with an emphasis on the use of visible security measures. These “visible security measures” include the presence of surveillance devices (such as metal detectors and security cameras), the use of identification of students and staff (such as IDs or uniforms), and the employment of trained personnel (such as law enforcement officers and private security guards). Although these measures have an unknown effectiveness and a high financial cost, they appeared to be popular methods for school administrators seeking to tangibly demonstrate the safety of their school to worried parents (Addington 2009; Muschert and Peguero 2010). Federal government funding and targeted marketing from private security companies also promoted the use of security officers and cameras (Addington 2009; Casella 2006). Little is known about the long-term changes in school security in the dozen years since Columbine, especially in terms of the use of security across school levels and the characteristics associated with schools opting to employ particular security devices. Addressing this omission can help

inform the policy debate over school security. Critics argue that the overzealous use of security measures in relatively safe schools negatively affects students and their educational environment. In contrast, advocates point to the necessity of these same measures in troubled schools struggling to combat serious violence. This chapter seeks to contribute to this discussion by assessing various factors associated with changes in policy and security practices.

Background

The use of security practices and equipment in US schools is not new, but it has evolved over time. Decades before Columbine, schools utilized a variety of security measures; however, their original purpose largely focused on deterring property crimes (such as the theft of school equipment) and problems arising from graffiti and vandalism of the school building (Lawrence 2007; National Institute of Education 1978). Starting in the 1980s, schools redirected these efforts to preventing school violence and crime against individual victims. Practices such as the use of metal detectors and security guards initially were limited to “problematic” urban schools, such as those in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles (Crews and Counts 1997; Hirschfield 2010; Vera Institute of Justice 1999). In more recent years, what “school violence” entails and the characteristics of schools opting to employ these security practices have broadened. The definition of school violence has expanded from physical assaults and robberies (US National Institute of Education 1978) to include a range of behaviors ranging from lethal assaults to bullying and verbal threats.¹ During this same time, utilization of school security grew from urban schools to those located in suburban and rural areas. Although schools in these areas started adopting measures such as police and surveillance cameras, they did so in a different manner than their urban counterparts. Here schools, especially in the affluent suburban areas, took steps to minimize creating an institutional atmosphere, as frequently occurs in inner-city schools (Hirschfield 2010).

While US schools increased security over time, little attention has been devoted to systematically studying these trends since Columbine or their effects (see Muschert and Peguero 2010, for a discussion). Studies that have examined security changes since Columbine present a similar picture: the greatest increases have occurred

in the monitoring of students by security guards or police and through surveillance by cameras (Addington 2009; Snell et al. 2002). Other popular measures, such as requiring visitors to sign in and using staff supervision in the building, showed little increase as they were commonly used before Columbine. More extreme measures, such as metal detectors, were not frequently used before or after Columbine (Addington 2009).

Concerns about the expanding use of surveillance measures in schools have prompted inquiry into their possible negative repercussions on the schools and their students. A common observation is that security measures, such as police, cameras, and metal detectors, create a prison-like, institutional atmosphere, especially for schools located in low-income or inner-city areas (Hirschfield 2010; Noguera 1995). Although suburban schools might try to create a more positive school security experience (Hirschfield 2010), the employment of police and security cameras cannot help but convey to students an underlying message of accusation or vulnerability since “all students [are being] treated as if they were either sources or targets of potential danger” (Erikson 2001, p. 119). This environment can generate student fear, resentment, and other negative reactions that can interfere with promoting an effective learning environment. Commentators have suggested that the overzealous use of security measures in relatively safe schools is associated with negative repercussions such as increased student fear and a greater threat to student civil liberties (Addington 2009; Bracy 2010; Schreck and Miller 2003).

Given these negative consequences, more work is needed to better understand the use of security in US public schools, particularly with regard to comparisons across school levels and an understanding of the characteristics of schools that opt to utilize particular types of security measures. Studies of school security overall, and since Columbine, focus on middle and high schools. This emphasis is understandable since crime and violence problems occur most frequently among older students. As a result, little is known about the utilization of security in elementary schools (see Fox and Burstein 2010). Obtaining a better understanding of the use of security measures across various grade levels will provide a context for assessing students’ experiences with security and surveillance over the course of their educational careers.

Little attention also has been given to exploring the characteristics of schools that adopt particular security policies (Nickerson and Spears 2007). Descriptive studies suggest that security measures such

as metal detectors and guards are employed most frequently by schools struggling with issues of crime and delinquency, especially those located in inner-city, high-crime areas (Devine 1996; Noguera 1995; Vera Institute of Justice 1999). Few studies, though, have systematically explored factors related to a school's decision to adopt a particular form of security or policy (Pagliocca and Nickerson 2001). Understanding the characteristics associated with the presence of specific types of security measures can help to contextualize post-Columbine changes in security. Of particular interest is whether security measures such as police, surveillance cameras, and metal detectors continue to be present primarily in schools addressing demonstrated problems with violence, or whether these tactics are commonplace in schools located in relatively safe areas.

To address these gaps in the current literature, this chapter explores two primary research questions. The initial question is: what are the trends since Columbine in the use of security in US schools overall and across particular school levels? The second question is: what school characteristics, if any, are associated with the use of particular security measures?

Methodology

Data

To answer these research questions, this study uses data from the School Survey of Crime and Safety (SSOCS) Restricted-Use Data File.² The following description largely relies on information provided by Neiman and DeVoe (2009) and Ruddy and her colleagues (2010). The first SSOCS data collection was conducted in the 1999–2000 school year.³ These data have been collected on a biannual basis since 2003. The SSOCS data are compiled from a nationally representative stratified sample of public schools in the United States. The survey is sent to school principals. The principal (or other knowledgeable school official) answers questions concerning the frequency of crime at the school, nature of the school environment, characteristics of school safety programs, and the school's disciplinary responses. The data collection mode is a mail-based survey with a telephone follow-up to bolster response rates.⁴ The sample is based on the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) Schools and Staffing Survey sampling frame and purposefully oversamples middle and high schools due to the survey's focus on crime-related issues.

The present study uses all years of currently available data: 1999–2000, 2003–2004, 2005–2006, and 2007–2008. Four levels of schools are included in the SSOCS data: elementary, middle, high, and combination schools. Since the present study is interested in comparing schools with traditional grade levels, all combination schools are removed from the sample. The Appendix provides the respective sample sizes for each year of data.

Variables Used

The variables of interest for this study include: school level, types of security, and characteristics of the school. School level and types of security are examined for all four years of SSOCS data. More in-depth analyses are conducted using school characteristics for the most recent year of data (2007–2008). The SSOCS Restricted-Use File includes variables derived from the SSOCS survey instrument as well as variables obtained from the Common Core Data (CCD), which constitutes the NCES's annual census of data from all public schools in the United States. The Appendix provides frequencies for all study variables.

School level is characterized as elementary, middle, or high school. As noted, schools designated as combination schools are removed from the sample. The school level variable is based on information collected by the CCD.

Six types of visible security measures are included in this study. Four of these measures come directly from SSOCS items that ask about characteristics of school policies used during the current school year. These four measures are: (1) requiring visitors to sign or check in (*visitor sign-in*), (2) controlling access to school buildings during school hours (*locked doors*), (3) requiring students to wear badges or picture IDs (*student IDs*), and (4) using one or more security cameras to monitor the school (*security cameras*). The fifth measure combines two of these items (whether the school requires students to pass through metal detectors each day and whether it performs one or more random metal-detector checks on students) into a single "any use of metal detectors" item (*metal detectors*).⁵ The final measure concerns the use of security officers, which include law enforcement or school resource officers as well as other paid security officials.⁶ Several questions are asked about the use of security officers. For purposes of this study, a school is counted as using security officers if these officials are used at any time during school hours (*security officers*).

The four school characteristic variables (school size, urbanicity, neighborhood crime levels, and the school's violent crime rate) all concern school crime. School size, urbanicity, and neighborhood crime levels are attributes identified by previous research as associated with high levels of disorganization or crime and delinquency in schools. Larger schools experience greater disorder and disciplinary problems than smaller schools (Lawrence 2007). *School size* is based on CCD information and is coded into four categories: under 300 students, 300 to 499 students, 500 to 999 students, and over 1,000 students. Urban schools, particularly those in inner-city districts, experience higher levels of crime and delinquency as compared to those in nonurban locations (Gottfredson 2001). *Urbanicity* also is based on CCD data concerning the location of the school. The four categories are city (inside urban area and principal city), suburb (inside urban area but not in principal city), town (inside urban area but outside city), and rural. Schools located in higher-crime neighborhoods tend to experience more crime and violence than those in lower-crime areas (Gottfredson and Gottfredson 1985). *Neighborhood crime* concerns the school principal's perception about the level of crime in the neighborhood where the school is located. Possible response categories to this SSOCS item are low, moderate, and high crime levels. The level of school crime also is measured directly. *Violent crime rate* is a variable created using the number of violent incidents at the school for the current school year as reported by school officials to SSOCS questions. Violent incidents include rape, attempted rape, sexual battery, robbery (with and without a weapon), attacks (with and without a weapon), and threats of attacks (with and without a weapon). This number is divided by the total number of students at the school provided by the CCD. In following the practice in NCES publications, this rate is multiplied by 1,000 and reported as a school violence rate per 1,000 students for the year.

Analyses Conducted

Initial exploratory analyses are conducted using descriptive analyses and contingency tables. To compare predictors of use of school security measures, binary logistic regression models are estimated. Analyzing SSOCS data requires giving special attention to the appropriate weights, imputed data, and complex sample structure. All analyses presented use weighted data. Weighted data allow inferences to be made about the population. In addition, the SSOCS weights minimize

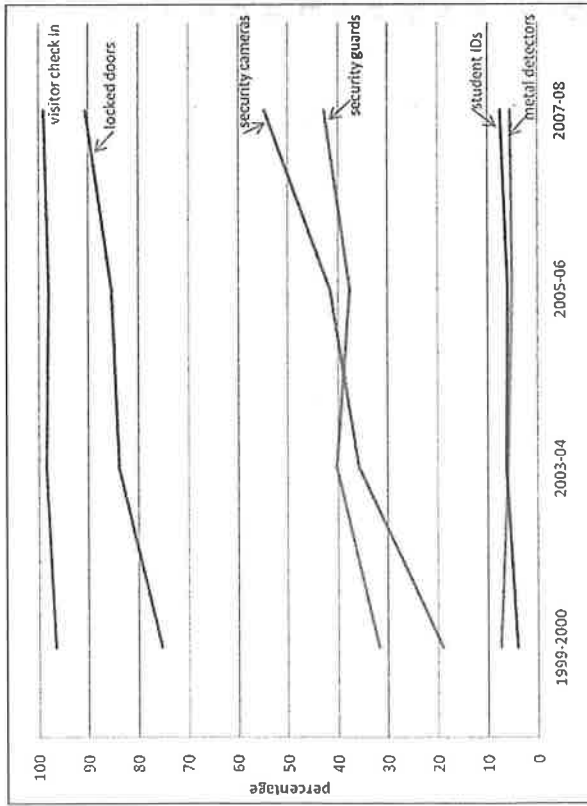
nonresponse bias, reduce sampling error, and adjust for oversampling of middle and high schools (Neiman and DeVoe 2009). Although the vast majority of the individual SSOCS items of interest for this study have high response rates (over 95 percent), NCES provides imputed data in both its public-use and restricted-use files for all years but the initial year of data collection (1999–2000). Details of the imputation process are provided by Ruddy and her colleagues (2010). For the analyses using the 1999–2000 SSOCS data, complete case analysis is used since the variables of interest have less than 1 percent missing data (Allison 2002). Finally, SSOCS data are collected using a stratified random sample. To obtain the correct standard errors and interpretations of the significance tests, this complex sampling design needs to be considered. All analyses presented utilize the jackknife replication method to adjust for the complex sample following the practice by NCES (Ruddy et al. 2010). Readers interested in a detailed discussion about this method are directed to Heeringa, West, and Berglund (2010).

Findings

Figure 5.1 depicts the overall trends in school security since the 1999–2000 school year. For all schools, the use of security cameras increased the most and the most steadily of all six measures. Reports in the use of security cameras rose from 19.1 to 54.7 percent, which represents an almost 300 percent increase from 1999–2000 to 2007–2008. The use of security guards also showed a marked increase, rising from 31.8 to 42.8 percent (or an increase of over a third). Both visitor sign-in and locked doors remained consistently popular measures and used by a large percentage of schools. This pattern is not surprising given that both measures are fairly inexpensive and easy to implement. Reports about the use of metal detectors and student IDs also had a consistent pattern following Columbine, but here only a small percentage of schools utilized these measures. The finding of a small, and unchanged, percentage of schools using student IDs is interesting since anecdotal reports indicated these measures were more widely used after Columbine (Addington 2009).

To explore these trends in more depth, three measures were selected for further study: security cameras, security guards, and metal detectors. These three are selected because all three require

Figure 5.1 Trends in the Use of Particular Security Measures over Time, SSOCS (various years)



some monetary expenditure by the school.⁷ In addition, security cameras and guards are of interest since both increased dramatically since Columbine. Metal detectors, on the other hand, provide a useful comparison as their limited use remained consistent and this measure is typically viewed as one of the more extreme forms of school security.

Table 5.1 disaggregates the use of each measure by school level for all four years of data. Trends are observed similar to the overall trends depicted in Figure 5.1. A few points are noteworthy. For metal detectors, no significant difference is observed across any level over the four years. More metal detectors are used in middle and high schools as opposed to elementary schools for all four years. With regard to security cameras, an increase is observed across all school levels, but this increase is the greatest for elementary and middle schools (both of which saw a threefold increase) as compared to high schools (where the use doubled). The greatest use, however, occurs at the high school level. For school security guards, a similar pattern to the growth in use of cameras is observed. Elementary and middle schools saw the largest increase in use over the time period (about a

Table 5.1 Percentage of Schools Using Particular Security Measures by School Level Across Years, SSOCS (various years)

Type of Security/ School Level	Year			
	1999-2000 (95% CI)	2003-2004 (95% CI)	2005-2006 (95% CI)	2007-2008 (95% CI)
<i>Metal Detectors</i>				
Elementary	3.5 (2.1-4.9)	2.6 (1.4-3.9)	2.3 (1.1-3.4)	2.4 (1.3-3.5)
Middle	13.8 (11.3-16.3)	10.7 (8.7-12.8)	9.2 (7.4-11.1)	10.1 (8.3-11.9)
High	15.1 (12.5-17.8)	13.9 (11.9-15.8)	11.4 (9.3-13.5)	11.7 (9.8-13.7)
<i>Security Cameras</i>				
Elementary	14.1 (11.2-17.0)	28.5 (24.8-32.1)	31.4 (27.6-35.2)	45.9 (41.4-50.3)
Middle	20.5 (17.5-23.5)	41.8 (38.5-45.2)	52.5 (49.4-55.6)	66.0 (62.8-69.1)
High	38.6 (34.9-42.4)	60.3 (56.4-64.3)	69.7 (66.3-73.0)	76.6 (73.1-80.0)
<i>Security Officers</i>				
Elementary	20.8 (17.5-24.2)	27.5 (24.3-30.6)	21.5 (17.9-25.1)	28.4 (24.5-32.2)
Middle	46.7 (42.9-50.5)	61.2 (57.9-64.5)	61.3 (58.6-63.9)	62.4 (59.0-65.8)
High	60.2 (56.1-64.2)	69.3 (65.8-72.8)	73.0 (69.6-76.4)	76.9 (74.3-79.5)

33 percent increase in both cases). The use of security guards in high schools increased by about 25 percent, and these schools had the highest percentage of use.

The remainder of the analyses focuses on the most recently available year of data (2007-2008). Given the exploratory nature of this study, an examination of two sets of contingency tables is useful to better understand the relationship between school level, type of security, and school characteristics. Table 5.2 presents the association between school level, type of security measure and level of crime in the neighborhood where the school is located. For metal detectors, across all school levels, a greater percentage of schools in high-crime neighborhoods use metal detectors as compared to those in low-crime neighborhoods. For security cameras, no statistically significant differences are observed across any of neighborhood crime levels. Fewer schools located in low-crime

Table 5.2 Percentage of Schools Using Particular Security Measures by Level of Crime in School Neighborhood, SSOCS 2007-2008

Type of Security/ School Level	Level of Crime in School Neighborhood		
	High (95% CI)	Moderate (95% CI)	Low (95% CI)
<i>Metal Detectors</i>			
Elementary	12.8 (2.3-23.3)	3.0 (0-6.0)	1.2 (0-2.3)
Middle	29.2 (16.7-41.7)	17.3 (11.3-23.4)	6.8 (4.9-8.6)
High	37.8 (17.3-58.4)	25.7 (19.7-31.8)	6.7 (4.9-6.0)
<i>Security Cameras</i>			
Elementary	57.1 (40.4-73.7)	50.6 (40.7-60.5)	43.6 (38.6-48.6)
Middle	58.5 (43.3-73.7)	73.6 (67.0-80.3)	64.6 (60.7-68.5)
High	72.9 (54.6-91.1)	74.6 (65.9-83.3)	77.3 (73.8-80.8)
<i>Security Officers</i>			
Elementary	50.7 (32.7-68.7)	37.0 (27.9-46.2)	24.0 (20.0-28.1)
Middle	83.6 (70.6-96.5)	71.8 (64.6-79.0)	58.4 (54.4-62.3)
High	89.4 (76.7-100)	86.7 (79.6-93.9)	73.8 (70.4-77.2)

neighborhoods use security officers as compared to ones located in moderate- or high-crime areas, especially for middle and high schools.

Table 5.3 presents the association between school level, type of security measures, and urbanicity of school location. For metal detectors, no differences are observed across elementary schools in the four locations except that schools in cities use metal detectors more than schools in towns. In middle schools, cities and suburbs use metal detectors more than schools in towns or rural areas. In high schools, schools located in cities use metal detectors more than in the other three locations. For security cameras, no statistically significant differences are observed across any of the school levels for any of the four locations. For security officers, more elementary schools located in cities use this measure compared with those located in suburban or rural areas. No statistically significant

Table 5.3 Percentage of Schools Using Particular Security Measures by Urbanicity of School Location, SSOCS 2007-2008

Type of Security/ School Level	Urbanicity of School Location			
	City (95% CI)	Suburb (95% CI)	Town (95% CI)	Rural (95% CI)
<i>Metal Detectors</i>				
Elementary	5.6 (2.4-8.8)	1.1 (0-2.7)	0 (0)	1.6 (0-3.8)
Middle	22.9 (17.0-28.7)	4.9 (2.5-7.3)	7.9 (3.1-12.6)	6.6 (3.0-10.0)
High	30.3 (23.6-37.1)	7.1 (4.1-10.1)	5.0 (1.4-8.5)	5.5 (2.9-8.6)
<i>Security Cameras</i>				
Elementary	45.4 (36.8-54.0)	49.6 (43.5-55.8)	48.8 (35.5-62.0)	40.7 (33.4-48.0)
Middle	63.6 (55.9-71.4)	67.1 (61.7-72.4)	71.2 (62.5-80.0)	62.9 (56.3-69.6)
High	74.4 (67.4-81.4)	78.2 (72.5-84.0)	79.0 (71.4-86.6)	75.4 (69.8-81.1)
<i>Security Officers</i>				
Elementary	40.0 (31.8-48.3)	22.8 (17.1-28.6)	35.7 (24.8-46.5)	19.3 (12.8-25.8)
Middle	82.2 (76.8-87.5)	63.7 (58.0-69.4)	50.1 (40.8-59.5)	51.6 (43.6-59.6)
High	91.4 (86.2-96.6)	85.0 (79.8-90.3)	68.7 (60.1-77.3)	64.0 (58.4-70.0)

difference is observed between cities and towns for elementary schools using security officers. For middle schools, more schools located in cities use security officers than those located in the other three areas. For high schools, more schools located in cities and suburban areas use security officers than schools in towns or rural areas.

Table 5.4 presents the binary logistic regression models predicting use of particular security measures. Each measure is modeled separately. For all three types of security, middle and high schools are more likely to use the measure than elementary schools. For all three measures, school level is also the strongest predictor. With regard to the use of metal detectors, schools located in cities are more likely to use these devices than schools in rural areas. Schools located in areas of high or moderate crime are more likely to use metal detectors than schools located in low-crime areas. With regard

Table 5.4 Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting Use of Particular Security Measures, SSOCS 2007–2008

Predictors	Metal Detectors		Security Cameras		Security Guards	
	Odds ratio	Standard error (p value)	Odds ratio	Standard error (p value)	Odds ratio	Standard error (p value)
<i>School Level</i>						
Middle school ^a	6.2	2.0 (<0.001)*	2.2	0.25 (<0.001)*	3.7	0.52 (<0.001)*
High school ^a	6.8	2.4 (<0.001)*	3.5	0.53 (<0.001)*	5.7	0.85 (<0.001)*
<i>School Size</i>						
300 to 499 students ^b	2.3	1.4 (0.17)	1.4	0.27 (0.10)	1.5	0.39 (0.10)
500 to 999 students ^b	1.3	0.66 (0.65)	1.5	0.25 (0.02)*	2.4	0.50 (<0.001)*
Over 1000 students ^b	2.0	0.92 (0.14)	1.7	0.32 (0.006)*	10.3	2.8 (<0.001)*
<i>Urbanicity</i>						
City ^c	2.8	1.0 (0.006)*	0.87	0.14 (0.40)	1.9	0.40 (0.002)*
Suburb ^c	0.71	0.31 (0.44)	1.1	0.14 (0.30)	0.96	0.17 (0.82)
Town ^c	0.69	0.28 (0.36)	1.3	0.25 (0.24)	1.4	0.30 (0.08)
<i>Neighborhood Crime</i>						
High crime ^d	4.6	1.6 (<0.001)*	1.6	0.43 (0.07)	2.2	0.81 (0.04)*
Moderate crime ^d	2.2	0.51 (0.001)*	1.3	0.24 (0.13)	1.4	0.26 (0.05)*
<i>School Violence Rate</i>						
Number of incidents/1,000	1.0	0.0004 (0.62)	1.0	0.0003 (0.21)	1.0	0.0003 (0.49)

Notes: * p < 0.05

N = 76,388 (weighted cases), 2,451 (unweighted cases)

a. elementary school comparison group

b. under 300 students comparison group

c. rural comparison group

d. low-crime comparison group

to the use of security cameras, however, a different pattern is observed. Here, other than school level, none of the school characteristics that predict the use of metal detectors are significant. Instead, school size is a significant predictor. Schools with larger populations (500–999 students and over 1,000 students) are more likely to use

cameras than schools with fewer than 300 students. The use of security guards shares predictors that are statistically significant for the other two security types. As with security cameras, schools serving larger student populations are more likely to use guards than schools serving student populations under 300. As with metal detectors, schools located in cities are more likely to use these services than those in rural areas. Schools located in areas of high or moderate crime are more likely to use guards than schools located in low-crime areas.

Discussion

The trends in the use of particular visible security measures echo previous studies. For all school levels, the largest increases are observed in the use of security cameras and security guards. Visitor sign-in and locked doors are the most frequently used since Columbine, but these measures also were popular before Columbine, most likely due to their ease of use and minimal cost. Despite media reports to the contrary, schools did not widely adopt additional metal detectors or student IDs.

Beyond merely confirming the trend toward greater deployment of security guards and cameras, this study highlights the dramatic increase in their use. This rapid change, combined with the unknown effectiveness of these measures, reiterates concerns over the negative repercussions raised by previous commentators. To the extent security measures are ineffective, they create a false sense of security (Lawrence 2007, pp. 161–62) and a dangerous environment, directly as well as indirectly, by diverting money and resources from preventative measures that do work. The expanded reliance on surveillance by police and cameras also reiterates the need to better understand the effect these measures have on students' civil liberties (both in the short and long term) as well as assessing the implications for the overall learning environment.

With regard to examining security across school levels, this study confirms that high schools use security more frequently than any other school level. While it is not surprising that elementary schools employ security measures the least, elementary schools do use visible security measures. Almost half (45.9 percent) of all elementary schools use security cameras and over a quarter (28.4 percent) use security guards. Among elementary schools in high-crime neighborhoods, for the 2007–2008 school year, these numbers rise to

57 percent using cameras, 50.7 percent using guards, and almost 13 percent using metal detectors. While the greatest use is seen in high-crime areas and could be interpreted as a reasonable response to a demonstrated danger, the ubiquitous spread of these measures, especially in elementary schools, could be conditioning a generation of students to accept enhanced surveillance as "normal." Given the use of these measures in elementary schools, future studies of school security and its repercussions should consider the possible effect on students who encounter measures like police, cameras, and metal detectors at school throughout their entire educational careers.

The characteristics of schools associated with the use of various types of security provide a new context for assessing post-Columbine trends. Across all three measures examined, high schools are more likely to use security than middle or elementary schools. With regard to particular measures, the use of security cameras is only associated with school level and school size. While larger schools tend to have more problems with crime, the models controlled for school violence rate. This finding suggests that security cameras might be used for other reasons, such as managing crowds or other types of disorder that occur in larger schools (especially those over 500 students). Expanding the use of cameras for purposes beyond prevention of school violence suggests possible "security creep" (Marx and Steeves 2010). Security creep raises privacy concerns in cases where a measure is being used just because it is more convenient but no more effective than a less invasive practice, such as changing hallway traffic patterns or renovating school buildings (Addington 2009; Casella 2006).

Metal detectors, on the other hand, are not associated with school size but rather have characteristics that may be related to an identified problem with crime. The relationship between metal detectors and level of crime in the school's neighborhood as well as urban location suggests that schools might be trying to prevent dangers from coming into the school. Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) identified this phenomenon as the "importation hypothesis," which states that crime and violence are imported into schools by surrounding high-crime neighborhoods.

The use of security guards is predicted by a mix of these factors. This finding suggests that schools may use security guards for a variety of reasons, including addressing concerns about dangers being imported from a dangerous neighborhood, assisting with other types of disorder found in schools with large student populations, and pos-

sibly allaying parental concerns. Unlike technical devices such as metal detectors or cameras, police officers can address a range of internal and external safety concerns and be adapted to meet particular problems facing the school (McDevitt and Panniello 2005). In addition, the hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grant money made hiring police an attractive security option for some schools that might otherwise have preferred an alternate option for addressing a particular problem (Addington 2009).

In interpreting the urban location and its positive relationship with the use of metal detectors and security guards, it may be useful to view urban public schools as "a special case," as noted by Gottfredson (2001). Urban schools struggle with delinquency and student behavior problems and simultaneously are plagued with a lack of resources. These schools tend to be unsuccessful in addressing these problems and in implementing effective prevention programs due to overburdened administrators, understaffing, and the school climate (Gottfredson 2001; Gottfredson et al. 1997). As a result, urban schools may be more likely to rely on security measures as a way of handling these problems. This reliance becomes a vicious cycle that reinforces the ineffectiveness of alternative strategies (that require mutual trust and respect between staff and students) and continues to promote a negative learning environment.

One characteristic that was not associated with the use of any security measure is the actual school violence rate. This result is somewhat surprising and cannot be readily explained. It may be that once other variables related to school crime are controlled for, the violence rate is not associated with use of security. Another reason might be the reliance on the cross-sectional nature of the data. The school violence rate might show a significant relationship before the security measure is adopted. Identifying a change over time would require longitudinal observations for particular schools, and the SSOCS sampling strategy does not purposefully follow schools over time. In addition, how the violence rate is measured might affect the findings. The measure used may undercount school violence for two reasons. First, it relies on reports by school officials of incidents that have come to their attention. Second, the SSOCS data are collected between February and June. School officials report on the incidents that occurred during the current school year. As a result, those who report in February will have a lower amount of crime than those reporting in June.

Conclusion

The trends identified by this study suggest that schools of all levels increased their use of security after the Columbine shootings. Of particular concern is the dramatic increase in the use of security cameras and the fact that these cameras appear to be used by schools not plagued by demonstrated crime problems or located in dangerous areas. This trend is problematic for two reasons.

One reason concerns the long-term negative consequences on student civil liberties, which starts for some students when they enter elementary school. School security measures that focus on the surveillance of students are leading to an erosion of student civil liberties, particularly their privacy rights at school (Addington 2009). Although students cannot expect absolute privacy at school, increasing infringement is occurring with regard to what privacy they do have. Of particular concern is the situation of students attending relatively safe schools. Here surveillance measures can morph from being used for preventing violent school crime to purposes such as preventing graffiti in bathrooms or taking attendance, which are more effectively (and less intrusively) served by other policies (Addington 2009; Marx and Steeves 2010). In addition because students typically have no voice in these policies or how they are implemented, they may be given an underlying message that it is acceptable for those in positions of power to encroach on and fail to protect the privacy interests and civil liberties of the disenfranchised.

A second concern is the danger created if reliance on technology leads schools to ignore more effective ways of addressing violence. As discussed by Henry (2009), school violence has a variety of causes, which cannot be addressed by one easy solution. In fact, the most effective programs are those that recognize that school violence issues arise from a complex set of problems and organizational relationships and are not amenable to simple solutions (Peterson, Larson, and Skiba 2001). These programs incorporate proactive ways to deter conflicts from escalating into violence through anti-bullying programs and conflict resolution classes, create more positive and inclusive communities, and promote a school atmosphere where all have a stake in safety and a responsibility to maintain a secure school (Gagnon and Leone 2001; Greene 2005; Juvonen 2001; Peterson, Larson, and Skiba 2001). These programs, however, are not as immediately visible as a security guard or camera. More work is needed to compare trends in the adoption of visible security measures with these more effective, but more understated, antiviolence programs.

Appendix

Table 5.A Percentages (or Means) of Study Variables, SSOCS Weighted Data

	Year			
	1999-2000	2003-2004	2005-2006	2007-2008
School Level				
Elementary school	64.7	65.8	64.0	64.4
Middle school	20.0	19.6	20.5	20.0
High school	15.4	14.6	15.4	15.6
Security Type				
Visitor sign-in	96.6	98.4	97.9	99.0
Locked doors	75.4	83.8	85.4	90.7
Metal detectors	7.4	5.9	5.1	5.4
Student ID	4.1	6.3	6.0	7.5
Security cameras	19.1	35.7	41.6	54.7
Security officers	31.8	40.2	37.6	42.8
School Characteristics				
<i>Crime in School Neighborhood</i>				
High				6.4
Moderate				19.0
Low				74.6
<i>Urbanicity</i>				
City				26.8
Suburb				30.7
Town				14.4
Rural				28.1
<i>School Size</i>				
Under 300 students				21.4
300 to 499 students				29.7
500 to 999 students				37.4
Over 1,000				11.5
<i>School Violence Rate</i>				34.1*
Weighted n	77,145	74,087	75,800	76,389
(Unweighted n)	2,089	2,670	2,587	2,451

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

*mean of continuous variable

Notes

1. In addition, the definition of bullying itself has expanded over time from only physical incidents to also including psychological forms and social isolation.

2. SSOCS is sponsored by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). To protect the confidentiality of participating schools, the public-use SSOCS data remove identifiable information such as

school size and other characteristics relevant to this study. These characteristics are included in the restricted-use data files. Public-use SSOCS files are freely available on the NCES's website. Accessing the restricted-use SSOCS files requires obtaining a data license from NCES.

3. One motivation prompting the development and collection of SSOCS data were the series of school shootings that occurred in 1997–1998, the school year that preceded the Columbine shootings. These events highlighted the need for the US Department of Education to have a systematic way of collecting school crime data (US Department of Education, 2003).

4. The unweighted unit response rates were: 68.5 percent (1999–2000), 74.7 percent (2003–2004), 77.5 percent (2005–2006), and 74.6 percent (2007–2008).

5. Metal detectors used by schools can include various formats such as walk-through machines and handheld wands. Handheld wands are the version most commonly used by schools (Garcia 2003).

6. A growing number of law enforcement officers are being assigned as “school resource officers” and receiving special training for deployment in a school setting (McDevitt and Panniello 2005).

7. The SSOCS data do not indicate whether funding comes out of the school's existing operating budget or additional funds from a federal, state, or local grant. If additional funding is from a grant, it is possible the decision to employ a particular security measure is based on an attempt to obtain extra funds, which might not reflect a policy priority. Future research should address this issue.

Zero-Tolerance Policies

Aviva M. Rich-Shea and James Alan Fox

Donald Black, in his seminal work *The Behavior of Law*, suggests that not only is law a quantifiable variable within a society that ebbs and wanes, but it is very possible to quantify the amount of “law,” or formal social control, that a given society accepts or utilizes. According to Black, “law” is about government social control that can be measured by the number and scope of prohibitions, obligations, and standards, in addition to the quantity and rate of legislation, litigation, and adjudication. Black also contends that this quantifiable variable of “law,” or formal processing, varies across time and space and throughout societies, regions, and communities. Most importantly, Black asserts that “law varies inversely with other social control” (1976, p. 6).

Black's perspective on law is echoed by Bazemore, Leip, and Stinchcomb (2004) in their argument regarding the nexus between formal and informal social control in the context of the school. They asserted that when informal social controls break down, formal controls and processes will move in and take over. These observations arose from studying a large law-enforcement-led truancy intervention program (Bazemore, Leip, and Stinchcomb 2004) in an unidentified urban county in the southeastern United States as an example of the erosion of the boundary between formal and informal social control.

The authors employ the term “reaching down” to describe the expansion of a disciplinary approach based in the criminal justice system, which they see as increasingly criminalizing normative childhood misbehaviors. They view this trend as a result of the failure of institutions of informal control that were once rooted in families, neighborhoods, and schools to contain youth behavior. Additionally,

their peers and teachers, the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary was committed by an outsider—someone with no apparent ties to the school, the staff, or the students. This particular act could not have been prevented via more harmonious school discipline policies or a more positive school climate, as authors in this volume argue are instrumental to school violence prevention. Indeed, as we argue in the conclusion of this book, what is needed is a synchronous, integrated policy that operates at multiple levels of society. The safest, most peaceful schools, which preempt conflict before it manifests into escalating violence and replace escalating violence with restorative justice practices, do nothing to engage the community. The result is that peaceable schools in fragmented communities are not sustainable. The community and the society each need to also develop integrated peacemaking approaches that would lead to early identification to pinpoint and help community outliers and potential threats.

The editors and authors of this volume share the nation's grief over the tragic loss of lives at Sandy Hook Elementary School and call for balanced, evidence-based responses that repair rather than replicate harm.

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