

YOUTH VIOLENCE

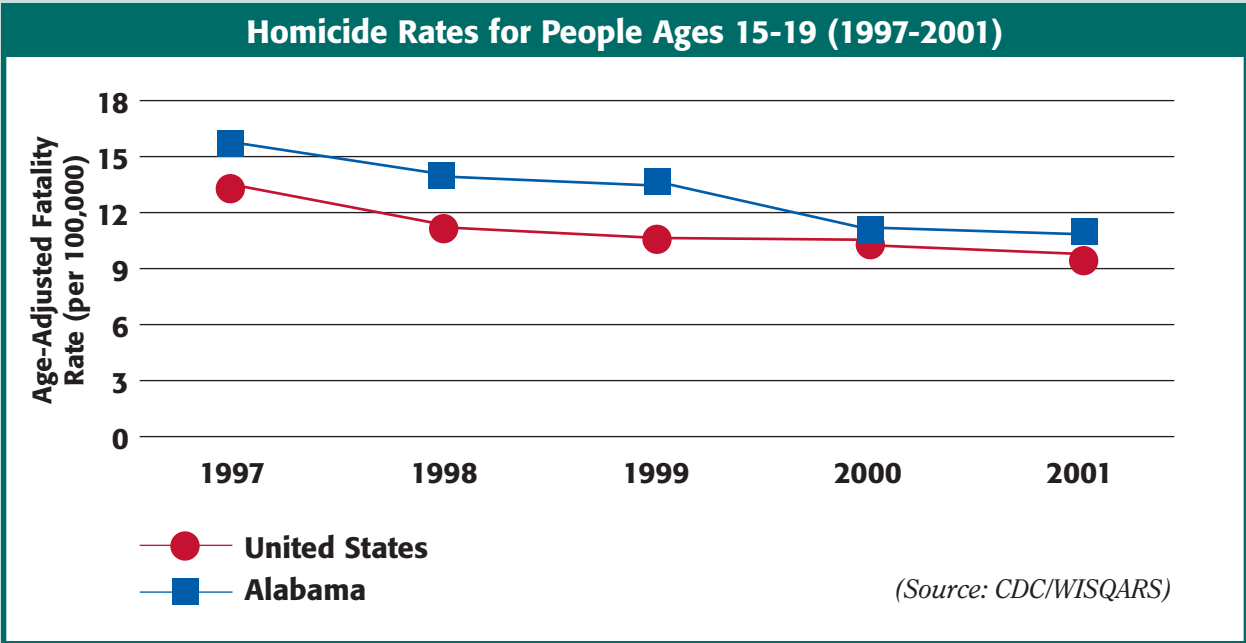
YOUTH VIOLENCE

THE PROBLEM:

- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24.
- In 1999, 4,998 youths ages 15 to 24 were murdered - an average of 14 per day.

Violent injury and death disproportionately affect children, adolescents and young adults in the United

States. Some 1,899 youth ages 15-19 were killed by homicide and more than 300,000 youth ages 15-19 were injured as a result of violence in the year 2001. Approximately 1 in 28 of these injuries required hospitalization. In Alabama, 36 youth ages 15-19 were killed by homicide with an age-adjusted rate of 11.31 deaths per 100,000 compared to 9.37 deaths per 100,000 nationally.



- In 1999, 82% of homicide victims 15 to 19 years old were killed with firearms.
- 28% of the fatal injuries happened inside the school building; 36% occurred outdoors on school property; and 35% occurred off campus.

In a survey of 9th through 12th grade students across the United States, more than one-third of respondents in 2001 reported being in a physical fight in the past 12 months; 4% were injured seriously enough in a physical fight to require medical treatment by a doctor or nurse and 6.4% of high school students surveyed

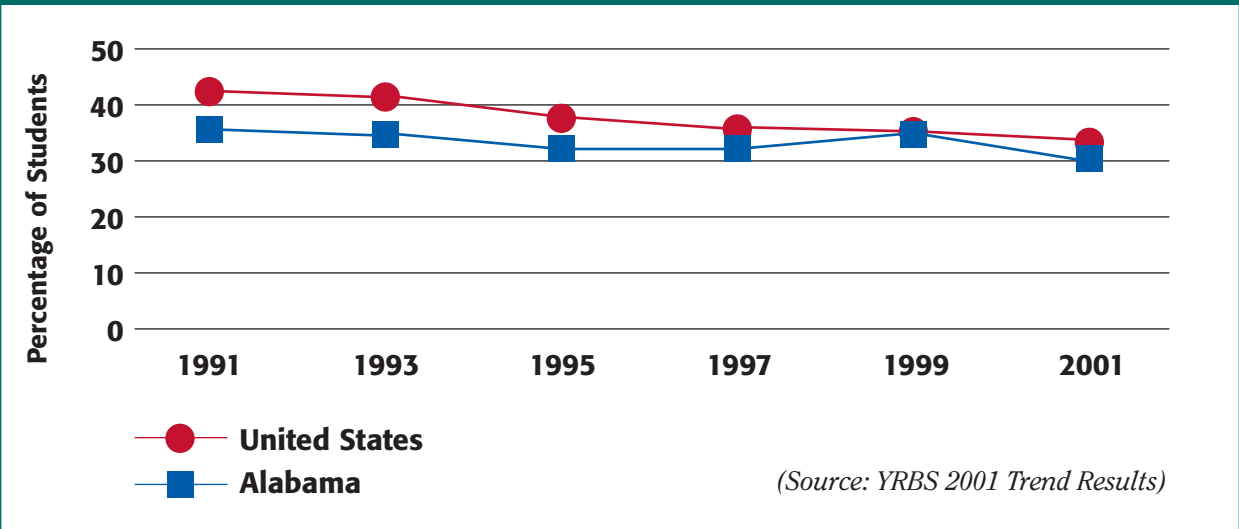
Continued next page.

YOUTH VIOLENCE *continued*

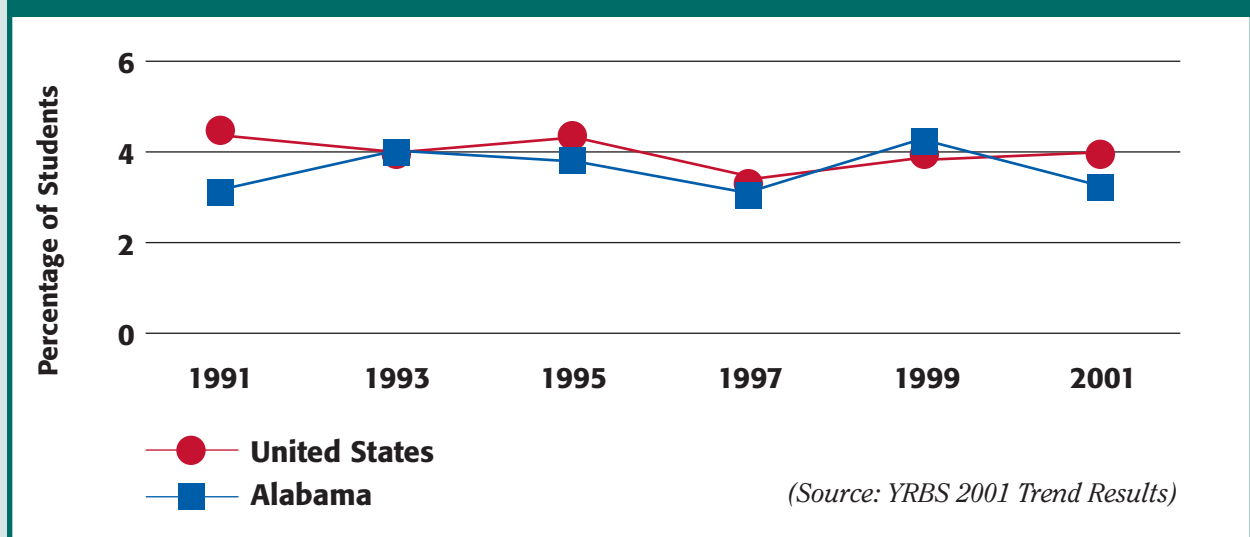
had carried a weapon during the preceding 30 days. These percentages are close to how Alabama students responded to the survey. Thirty percent of Alabama high school students reported being in a physical fight in the past 12 months,

3.6% were injured seriously enough in a physical fight to require medical treatment by a doctor or nurse and 7.4% of Alabama high school students surveyed had carried a weapon during the preceding 30 days.

Students in a Physical Fight One or More Times in the Past 12 Months (1991-2001)

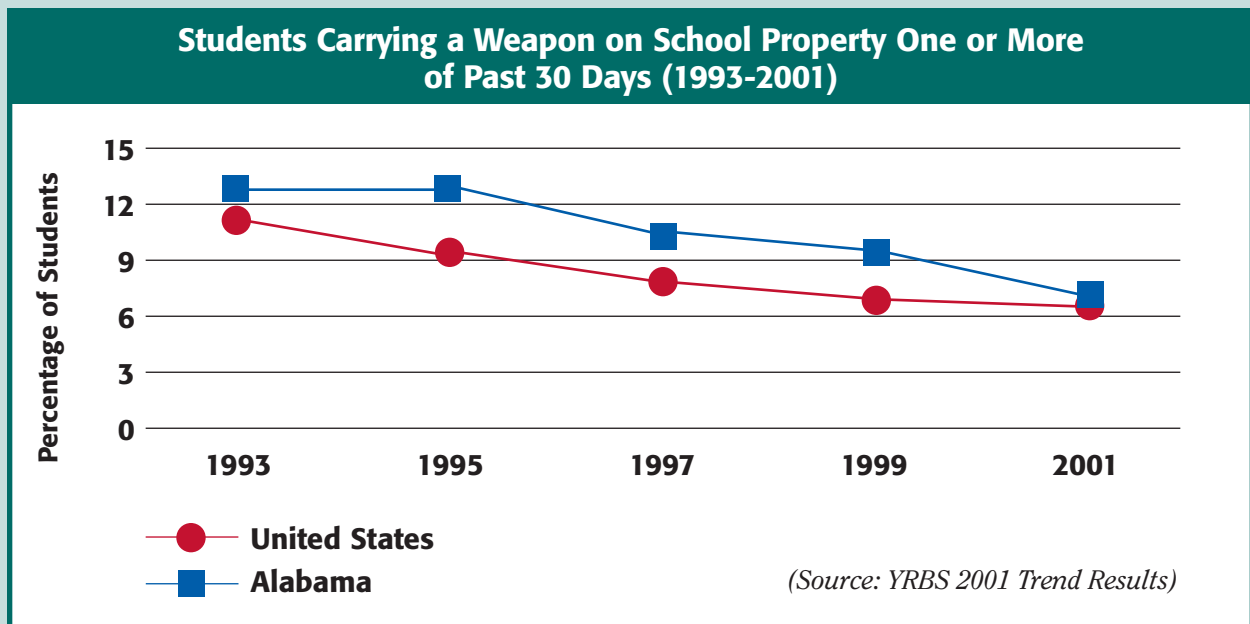
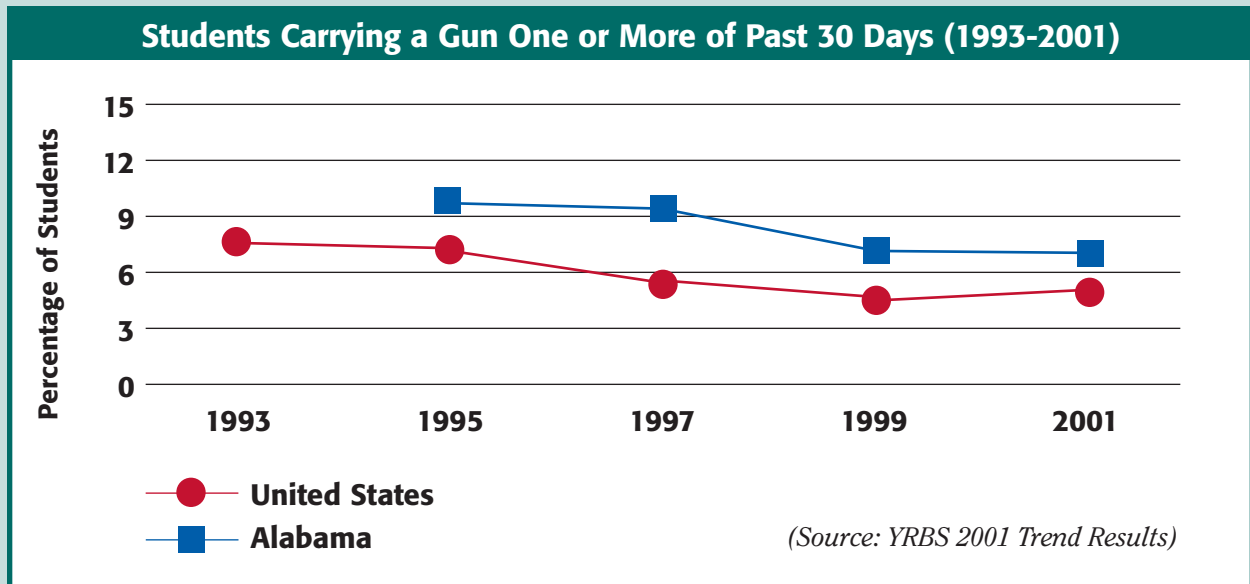


Students Injured in a Physical Fight and Treated by Medical Personnel One or More Times in the Past 12 Months (1991-2001)



Most school-associated violent deaths occur around the start of the school day, during the lunch period, or the end of the school day. Research indicates that rates of school-associated homicide events are

higher near the beginning of both the spring and fall semesters and gradually decline during the course of each semester. Most young homicide victims are killed with guns.



Continued next page.

YOUTH VIOLENCE *continued*

The Alabama School Incident Report (SIR) was developed in 1997 by a task force composed of local school and selected State Department of Education personnel. This program provides the framework for all Alabama public schools and school systems to collect school safety and discipline information in a uniform manner. Offenses tracked and reported are violations of the law or represent a serious breach of local board of education policy. Included are those offenses considered severe enough to be reported to local law enforcement or which resulted in a student being suspended out of school, expelled or placed in an alternative program. During the 2002-2003 school year, there were 39 reports of handgun possession and 2 homicides.

Statewide Annual School Incident Report (2002-2003 school year)
(Note: Total Incidents include victims and perpetrators)

Type of Incident	Total Incidents	Grades
Fighting	19,916	K-12
Harassment	3,488	K-12
Homicide	2	10-12
Sexual Harassment	881	K-12
Threats/Intimidation	2,731	K-12
Handgun Possession	39	K-12
Handgun Use	3	K-12
Knife Possession	615	K-12
Knife Use	7	K-12

The Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE) survey is a voluntary survey that is administered to students in grades 6-12. Since 1982 more than 7,600 school systems in 46 states have used the PRIDE questionnaire. That equates to more than 7.5 million students. It is administered by teachers in the classroom setting. The questionnaire not only explores the types and extent of drug use within the school, it also touches upon drug use outside of the school setting. It further delves into the prevalence, or lack thereof, of positive reinforcers in each child's life. It also asks the student to answer questions concerning violence, safety, and suicide. The truly valuable aspect of the program is that the data gleaned from the surveys are returned to school systems on a very comprehensive CD that not only displays the raw data, it also shows multiple linkages in that data. Consequently, individual schools can see how closely drug use and skipping class or violence and participation in extracurricular activities are correlated. Then the schools can tailor their at risk programs to address their particular needs based on data collected from only their students.

In April 1999, the State of Alabama implemented a statewide school safety hotline so that Alabama's students, parents and concerned citizens may report their school safety-related information and concerns on an anonymous basis 24 hours a day. This statewide hotline, 1-888-SAV-KIDS, is operated by the Alabama Department of Public Safety's

Missing and Exploited Children's Unit. By September 2002, over 2,800 calls had been received and 21% of the calls involved possible threats which were referred to local law enforcement, school or mental health office for further investigation and action. Only 2% have involved imminent threat which were referred to the necessary office for immediate action, and 1% involved drug threats at or near school grounds and were referred to local law enforcement. Almost 75% involved suggestions to improve school safety, miscellaneous calls from media, general complaints, hang ups and some just wanting to talk.

PREVENTION:

- **Youth violence can be reduced and prevented.**
- **Effective interventions must be disseminated and adopted by local and state authorities, community-based organizations and private sector partners.**

Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General, released in 2001, is a report that summarizes research regarding youth violence and, based on the research, recommends action steps. The report concludes that youth violence can be reduced and prevented. It states that the most important finding is that the public already has the knowledge and the tools to reduce or prevent much of the most serious youth violence. It calls for the use of systematic research-based approaches and cites a number of prevention programs that have been shown to work. Courses of action recommended include continued efforts at reducing gun use by

youths, improving public awareness of effective programs and disseminating model programs in the community.

Currently, Alabama has implemented a comprehensive plan which promotes safety and emergency response. The "Alabama Safe Schools Initiative" is a comprehensive plan that provides training and resources to Alabama schools. The initiative is a joint effort by the State of Alabama Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Governor, Department of Public Safety and Department of Education. It is comprised of five parts:

- 1) The production and distribution of standardized Alabama "School Emergency" crisis notebooks,
- 2) Statewide School Safety Hotline,
- 3) Statewide trainings,
- 4) A public service announcement "Prevent School Violence" marketing campaign,
- 5) Development of "Safe Schools for Alabama's Children: An Educator's Guide".

Alabama is also one of five states that received funding in 2001 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the causes of youth violence. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, recipient of the funding, has established the Comprehensive Youth Violence Center (CYVC). Studies conducted at the CYVC will produce innovative intervention programs directed towards reduction in violent behavior and related health and social problems in many youths.

Violence is a significant public health issue which impacts the health and well-being of our youth. It cuts across

Continued next page.

YOUTH VIOLENCE *continued*

all geographic and socio-economic boundaries. It has devastating and costly effects on individuals, families, communities, and society. Addressing individual and social factors that increase the probability of violence during adolescence and young adulthood such as individual, family, peer/school and neighborhood is a first step toward preventing violence.

ALABAMA'S STRATEGY TO REDUCE YOUTH VIOLENCE:

GOAL:

Reduce injuries and deaths due to youth violence.

1. Support data collection and analysis.

- a. Support administration of the Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE) Survey through the Alabama Department of Education to identify the risk factors and protective factors involved in youth violence in Alabama.
- b. Continue to support administration and analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).
- c. Continue to support administration and analysis of the Alabama School Incident Report (SIR).

2. Promote education on youth violence.

- a. Support comprehensive school violence prevention curriculum in grades K-12.
- b. Support programs that conduct anti-bullying, conflict resolution and mediation activities for youth.
- c. Support ongoing effort of the Alabama Department of Education to provide proactive youth development and counseling services.
- d. Support statewide communication campaign to heighten public awareness and individual and community responsibility for preventing youth violence.

3. Improve public awareness of effective interventions.

- a. Support use of research-based approaches to reducing youth violence.
- b. Disseminate information about effective prevention programs.

4. Provide a forum for individual groups and public and private sector agencies for addressing various types of youth violence.

5. Support development of state reporting of crime information and violence surveillance.

References:

1. Alabama Department of Education, Data Collection. School Incidence Report.
2. Alabama Department of Education, Prevention and Support Services. PRIDE Survey.
3. Alabama Department of Public Safety, Missing and Exploited Children's Unit. Statewide School Safety Hotline.
4. Anderson M, Kaufman J, Simon TR, Barrios L, Paulozzi L, Ryan G, Hammond R, Modzeleski W, Feucht T, Potter L, and School-Associated Violent Deaths Study Group. "School-Associated Violent Deaths in the United States, 1994-1999." JAMA 2001; 286: 2695-2702.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. *Injury Fact Book 2001-2002*. Atlanta, GA: 2001.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: URL: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Youth Violence Fact Sheet. Available from URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/youth/youth.htm>.
8. Healthy People 2010: Objectives for Improving Health, Injury and Violence Prevention. Washington, DC, November 2000.
9. State of Alabama Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Governor, Department of Public Safety and Department of Education. Alabama Safe Schools Initiative. Available from URL: www.ago.state.al.us/schools.
10. University of Alabama at Birmingham, Comprehensive Youth Violence Center. Available from URL: <http://www.uab.edu/youthhealth/cyvc.html>.
11. Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Public Health Service. Rockville, MD, 2001.
12. World Health Organization. World Report on Violence and Health. Geneva 2002.