

RESEARCH IN BRIEF

School Violence Prevention in Nevada

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Violence in schools has become an increasingly prevalent concern for U.S. police, school administrators, and communities over the past several decades. Violent behaviors among school children include physical fighting, gang violence, bullying and weapon use. Mass shooting incidents, such as those that occurred at Columbine High School and Sandy Hook Elementary School, have generated widespread public attention and calls for prevention efforts.

This *Research in Brief* provides an assessment of a K- 12 school shooting prevention effort in Clark County, Nevada. The School Violence Initiative (SVI) was developed and implemented in response to a series of school shootings that occurred between 2004 and 2008. The SVI represents a formal collaboration between several police agencies in Clark County. This collaboration involves interventions that facilitate the collection, management, and dissemination of intelligence in an effort to reduce opportunities for school shootings. While gun-violence was the initial focus of the effort, this research attempts to explore whether the SVI has impacted other forms of school violence.

This report provides a description of Clark County, Nevada and the Clark County School District. Incidents occurring at high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools are examined in an effort to measure overall levels of serious violence across schools. Descriptions of the SVI and its nine primary interventions are provided, along with an evaluation of their impact on school shootings and other serious forms of violence. The current assessment also examines whether any of three types of crime displacement has occurred: tactical (whether students are using different types of weapons to commit violent offenses), crime type (whether students are committing other forms of violence), and spatial (whether gun-related crime has moved

HIGHLIGHTS

- Crime is not evenly distributed across schools in Clark County, Nevada. A small proportion of schools generate a larger proportion of all serious violent incidents in public schools.
- Eleven school shootings occurred in Clark County between 2004 and 2008. Based on an analysis of these incidents and problems identified with existing response strategies, police developed and implemented the School Violence Initiative (SVI).
- Since the implementation of the SVI in early March 2008, no shootings have occurred at Clark County schools. The numbers of weapons reported and recovered on school properties also have declined substantially.
- There is little evidence of tactical displacement. The data suggest that the targeting of guns at schools also reduced the numbers of knives recovered on school campuses.
- There is some evidence of crime type displacement. The number of school fights and harassment/threats have increased since 2008; however, there has been a precipitous drop in behaviors that tend to lead to lethal violence.
- There is no evidence of spatial displacement of gun-related crime to neighborhoods surrounding schools. Crime in these neighborhoods dropped dramatically after the implementation of the SVI; however, analyses show that this may be the result of a larger city- or countywide trend and not the outcome of the SVI alone.
- Guidelines and considerations for adopting the School Violence Initiative in other jurisdictions are offered.

from school properties to nearby neighborhoods). The report concludes with recommendations for other agencies interested in adopting a similar program.

Clark County School District (CCSD)

The Clark County School District (CCSD) is the fifth largest school district in the United States. CCSD

Table 1: CCSD Student Race/Ethnicity Distribution

| Race/Ethnicity | Population | Percent |
|---------------------------|------------|---------|
| Hispanic/Latino | 139,710 | 44.4% |
| White/Caucasian | 90,042 | 28.6% |
| Black/African American | 39,047 | 12.4% |
| Asian | 20,646 | 6.6% |
| Multi-racial | 18,982 | 6.0% |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 4,476 | 1.5% |
| American Indian | 1,470 | 0.5% |

Source: CCSD “Fast Facts” Sheet 2013

provides K-12 educational services to Clark County, Nevada residents living in the greater Las Vegas metropolitan area and its surrounding communities. During the 2011-2012 academic year, 309,893 students were enrolled in 375 Clark County Schools. The district employs more than 39,000 people and serves a diverse community and student population. Table 1 provides the race/ethnicity distribution of students currently enrolled in CCSD schools.

There has been tremendous population growth in Clark County over the past century. In 1960, Clark County had 127,016 residents. By 2010, the population had grown to near 2 million residents (see Table 2). Further, CCSD has experienced more growth than any other U.S. school district over the past 20 years.ⁱ This growth has made it difficult to keep up with demand for educational and safety resources in Clark County schools and communities.

To help manage disorder and civil unrest in and around schools in the 1960s, the school district hired school security officers to assist local police agencies. In 1971, county officials sought to further increase school safety and established the Clark County School District Police Department (CCSDPD). The CCSDPD currently employs 41 civilian support staff and 163 sworn police officers. CCSDPD police share jurisdiction with five police agencies within Clark County:

Table 2: Population Growth in Clark County, NV

| Year | Population | %± |
|------|------------|--------|
| 1910 | 3,321 | -- |
| 1920 | 4,859 | 46.3% |
| 1930 | 8,532 | 75.6% |
| 1940 | 16,414 | 92.4% |
| 1950 | 48,289 | 194.2% |
| 1960 | 127,016 | 163.0% |
| 1970 | 273,288 | 115.2% |
| 1980 | 463,087 | 69.5% |
| 1990 | 741,459 | 60.1% |
| 2000 | 1,375,765 | 85.5% |
| 2010 | 1,951,269 | 41.8% |

Source: census.gov

- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD)
- Henderson Police Department (HPD)
- North Las Vegas Police Department (NLVPD)
- Boulder City Police Department (BCPD)
- Mesquite Police Department (MPD)

Violence in CCSD Schools

There are currently 216 elementary schools, 58 middle schools, and 43 high schools in Clark County.ⁱⁱ Since 2008, CCSDPD has helped to maintain a “School Violence Log” that tracks violent incidents at each of these schools. Table 3 lists the types of events typically included in the School Violence Log.ⁱⁱⁱ

Table 3: School Violence Log Incidents

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Abuse/Neglect | Kidnapping |
| Arson | Larceny from Person |
| Assault/Battery | Lewdness |
| Deadly Weapon | Obstructing an Officer |
| Explosive Device | Sexual Assault |
| Fight/Disturbance | Subject with Weapon |
| Harassment/Threats | Suicide |
| Illegal Shooting | Suspicious Vehicle |

Source: CCSDPD Fusion Center Liaison Quick Reference Guide

Figure 1: Concentration of Violent Incidents Across All High Schools (4-year average)

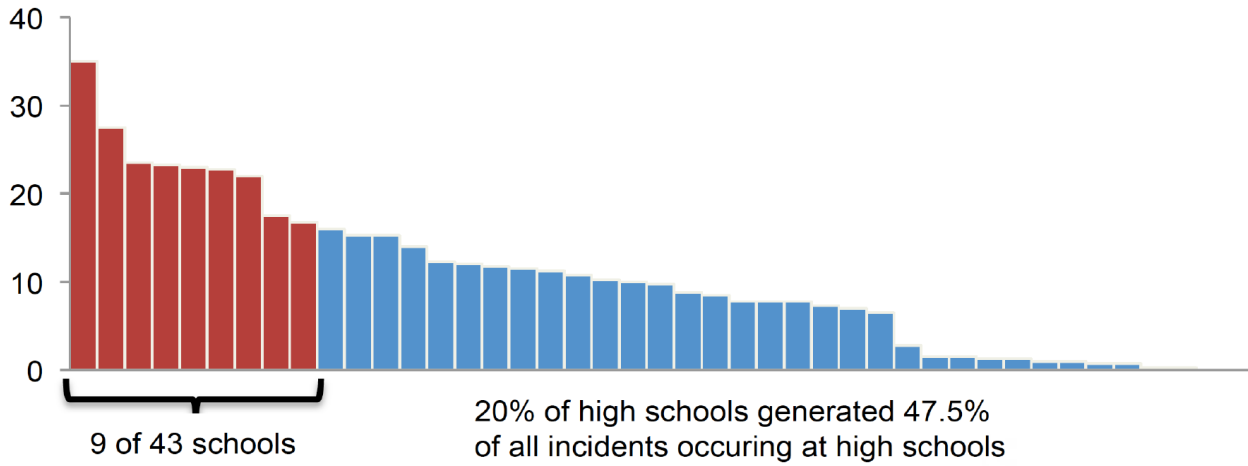


Figure 2: Concentration of Violent Incidents Across All Middle Schools (4-year average)

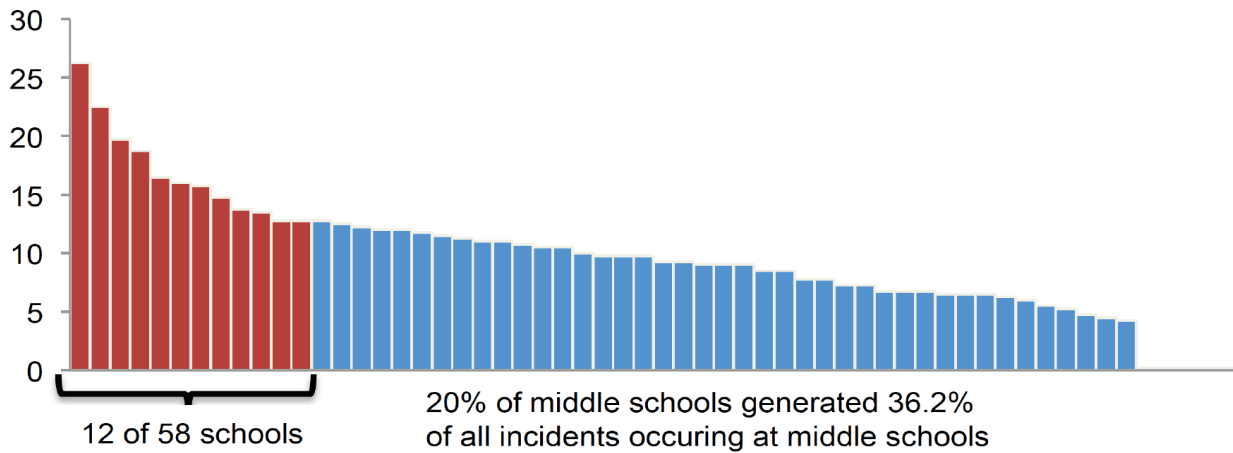
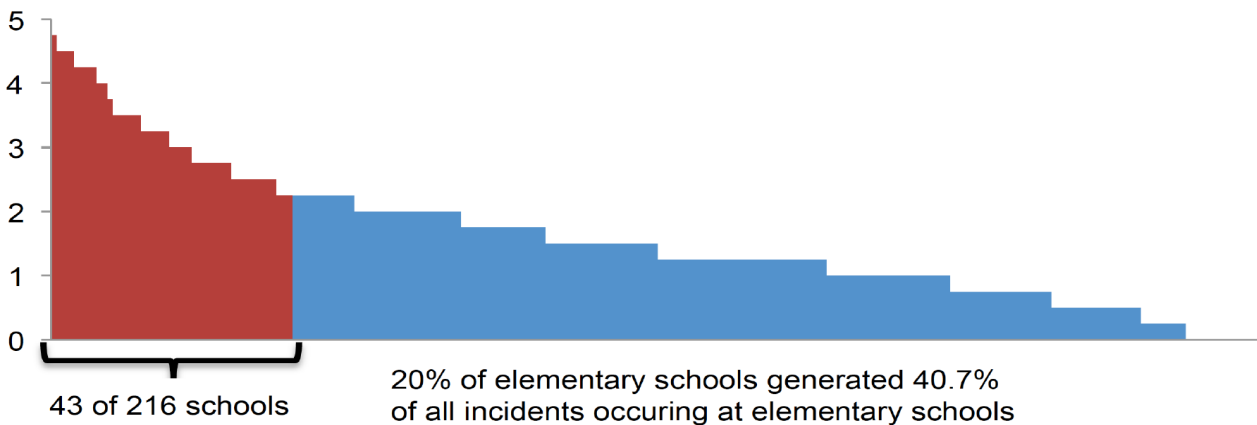


Figure 3: Concentration of Violent Incidents Across All Elementary Schools (4-year average)



Source: SNCTC School Violence Logs (2008-09 to 2011-12)

Although it is difficult to compare levels of school violence in Clark County to violence within other school districts,^{iv} we can assess the degree to which violence is concentrated within particular CCSD schools. Figures 1- 3 present a four-year average (2008-09 to 2011-12 academic years) of incidents occurring at each CCSD school (by school level). Police data indicate that serious violent incidents are not evenly distributed across these schools.

Following previous academic findings on crime concentrations,^v Figures 1-3 show that a small proportion of schools generate a much larger proportion of incidents than others. The uneven distribution of school violence is most pronounced across high schools, although violence is also more heavily concentrated within particular middle and elementary schools.

On average, high schools are more likely to experience serious violent incidents (average = 10.3 per year) than middle schools (average = 9.7 per year). Elementary schools typically experience far less violence (average = 1.6 serious incidents per year).

Preventing School Violence^{vi}

Greater attention to Clark County school violence was generated in 2008 as a result of several shootings that occurred on or near school campuses. One particular shooting of a high school freshman, Christopher Privett, by two gang-affiliated high school students, sparked public outcry and demands for police action.

Following a large town hall meeting, Sheriff Doug Gillespie made preventing school shootings a top priority for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD). A research team led by Patrick Baldwin, the analytical manager of the LVMPD's crime analysis unit, first investigated the scope and nature of the problem. The team discovered the following:

- Eleven school shootings occurred in Clark County between 2004 and 2008.
- Although members of the general public were victims in a few cases, high school students were the most common victims (n = 8), and middle school students were also victims in one incident.
- CCSD students were identified as the parties responsible for the shootings in about half of the

incidents (n = 5).

- Five shootings took place on school grounds, five occurred in route to or from schools, and one occurred at a bus stop. There were no specific repeat locations.
- Contrary to previous police perceptions, less than half of the shootings were gang-related.

Focus group discussions were held with representatives from each Clark County police agency and school district employees. Through these discussions, the research team found three weaknesses of the existing school violence prevention strategies.

- **Misplaced Resources.** Although community members, including the police, believed that school shootings were strictly the result of gang issues, the analysis did not support this assumption. As a result, over-reliance on LVMPD's Gang Unit led to less effective responses and wasted resources.
- **Information Silos.** Information concerning school shootings was often available before incidents occurred. Students, parents, school officials, and the public were reporting useful information. However, Clark County police agencies lacked a formalized procedure for information sharing. This made it difficult, and often impossible, to identify patterns and intervene to prevent violent events.
- **Lack of Coordination and Accountability.** No protocol was in place to quickly compile and disseminate information to appropriate personnel. There was no person(s) responsible for these tasks, nor was an infrastructure in place to facilitate the necessary exchange of information.

School Violence Initiative (SVI)

The School Violence Initiative (SVI) was designed to address previous strategy weaknesses. The SVI involves the use of nine responses designed to reduce school violence and shootings and facilitates collaboration between Clark County police agencies.

Response #1: Use of the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center (SNCTC)

The SNCTC is a centralized collaboration center and information clearinghouse for 20 different Federal, State, and local agencies (see Table 4). It functions as a 24/7 "all-crimes / all-hazards" fusion center

designed to respond to incidents within Clark County.

Housing the SVI within the SNCTC allows analysts and officers to engage in horizontal information sharing. Those working on investigations related to school violence have access to real-time information and partner agency databases. Crime analysts work alongside police command staff and officers to develop and refine interventions to increase effectiveness.

The SNCTC was the first fusion center in the U.S. to utilize fusion center infrastructures and resources to share and streamline school violence information. It has helped to reduce misplaced resources through access to better data, eliminate information silos that are typically associated with police work, and improve coordination efforts among agencies.

Table 4: Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center (SNCTC) Partners

- Boulder City Police Department
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- City of Las Vegas Fire Department
- Clark County District Attorney
- Clark County Fire Department
- Clark County School District Police Department
- Department of Homeland Security
- Federal Air Marshals
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Henderson Police Department
- Las Vegas Convention Authority
- Las Vegas Emergency Management
- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
- Nevada Department of Public Safety
- Nevada High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- Nevada National Guard
- North Las Vegas Police Department
- Silver Shield
- Transportation Security Administration

Source: SNCTC

Response #2: School Liaison Officer

The SVI significantly strengthened the partnership between the SNCTC and the CCSDPD by embedding a CCSDPD school liaison officer within the fusion center. The liaison position allows the CCSDPD officer access to criminal databases (e.g., the LVMPD gang system) and real-time incident systems managed by multiple agencies across Southern Nevada. The liaison can immediately communicate with CCSDPD officers and school personnel if an incident occurs in a neighborhood

surrounding a school. The liaison’s responsibilities include reviewing the daily incident log to discern emerging trends and creating the School Violence Log. The liaison officer also has access to, and control over, 12,000 cameras that provide real-time visuals of activities on and around school campuses, thus increasing the live intelligence capacity of the SNCTC.

The creation of the school liaison officer position within the SNCTC has helped to overcome previous problems with information sharing. It has also improved coordination between CCSDPD and other county agencies.

Response #3: Communication and Accountability Protocol

Sheriff Doug Gillespie issued Directive #PO-012-11 to resolve questions regarding procedural responsibilities for handling information on potential school violence. The protocol has helped to reduce misplaced resources and increase coordination/accountability by (1) requiring immediate dissemination of relevant information and follow-up by the LVMPD watch commander, (2) calling for distribution of information to the most appropriate officer or supervisor – and to the gang unit, if warranted, and (3) improving the quality of data collected to track school-related incidents.

Response #4: Routine Planning Meetings

Representatives from each police agency meet regularly to review the effectiveness of existing protocols, plan for upcoming events, discuss emerging trends, and engage in brainstorming sessions to identify new methods of intervention. This task-force meets at least four times a year: before the first week of school, toward the end of the fall semester, before spring break, and before the last week of school.

Planning meetings help to address each of the weaknesses found to be associated with intervention efforts prior to the SVI. Still, the most important function of these meetings is to ensure that current protocols remain effective or change as new intelligence is received and analyzed.

Response #5: Public Service Announcements

SVI task force members provide regular public service announcements (PSAs) to increase communication between police and the public. These

PSAs provide an opportunity to share information about potential hazards that threaten school safety and offer guidance to help parents keep children safe during high-risk times (e.g., spring break).

Although the LVMPD research analysis found that school officials, parents, students, and the general public were actively reporting information to police prior to the SVI, PSAs offer a forum to encourage additional information sharing.

Response #6: Social Network Monitoring

Past incidents revealed that concerned parents and students provide the best intelligence related to potential school shootings. Even if not directly reported to police, a tremendous amount of information is publicly available on social networking sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. SNCTC crime analysts conduct random and targeted (e.g., when a tip is received concerning a particular individual) reviews of these sites to find leads concerning student weapon possession, recent altercations that may prompt future violence, and tensions that are building between students or student groups. This information is then used to direct resources to specific locations (e.g., house parties) or investigate threats made against other students.

Analysis of social networking information helps to prevent misplaced resources by identifying factors that are instigating violence or threats of violence in

particular circumstances. This allows effective and meaningful coordination with appropriate specialized police units or social service organizations.

Response #7: Incident Action Plans

Pre-established tactics are used to deal with issues commonly encountered on specific school days. Although school shootings have not occurred on these days, historical analyses found that fights and other disturbances that lead to later incidents tend to increase on the first and last day of the school year. The adopted tactics for these days include setting up an operation center in the fusion center, staging various specialized units across the Las Vegas valley to provide rapid response to problems, and developing Incident Action Plans within each police area command. These operations increase accountability and coordination of police resources during high-risk time periods.

Response #8: Training CCSDPD Analysts

The SNCTC provides specialized training opportunities for CCSDPD analysts. SNCTC resources have been used to send analysts to professional conferences and classes designed to enhance the analytical skills of personnel. This training has helped to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the CCSDPD crime analysis unit and encourage greater collaboration among analysts across agencies.

Table 5: Responses Used to Address Identified Problems and Reduce School Violence

Nine Responses to Identified Problems

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Use of the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center | 5. Public Service Announcements |
| 2. School Liaison Officer | 6. Social Network Monitoring |
| 3. Communication/Accountability Protocol | 7. Incident Action Plans |
| 4. Routine Planning Meetings | 8. Training CCSDPD Analysts |
| | 9. Identification of Core and Watch Schools |

| Identified Problems | Response # | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Misplaced Resources | X | -- | X | X | -- | X | X | -- | X |
| Information Silos | X | X | -- | X | X | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Lack of Coordination/Accountability | X | X | X | X | -- | -- | X | X | -- |

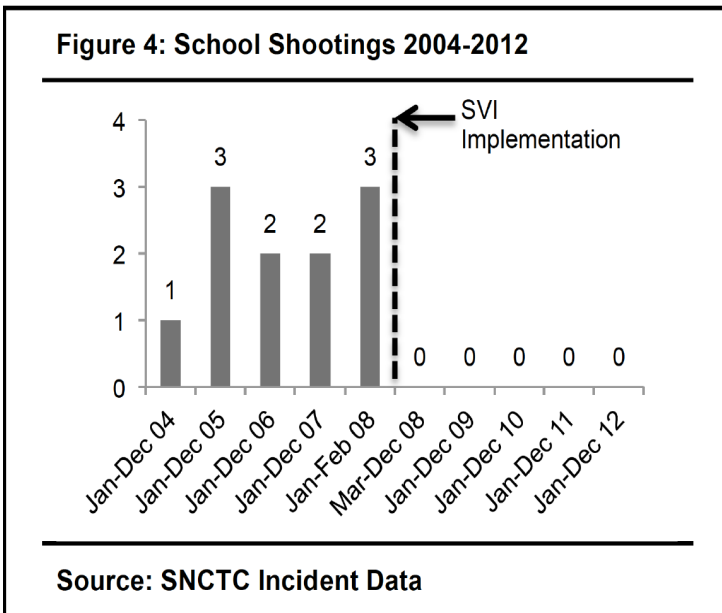
Source: SNCTC

Response #9: Identification of Core and Watch Schools

The data intelligence capacity of the SNCTC permits the analysis of emerging school violence trends based on documented incidents, calls for service across the county, and school district data concerning violent students. As a result, specific schools are classified by the SVI taskforce as “Core Schools” (i.e., schools with chronic problems) or “Watch Schools” (i.e., schools identified as having emerging problems). For the 2011- 2012 school year, 7 Core Schools and 11 Watch Schools were identified.

Although repeat school shooting locations were not identified, the places in which the shootings occurred were not random. The Core and Watch lists allow police to conserve and direct resources to high-risk schools.

Table 5 lists the nine SVI responses and the weaknesses addressed by each intervention.

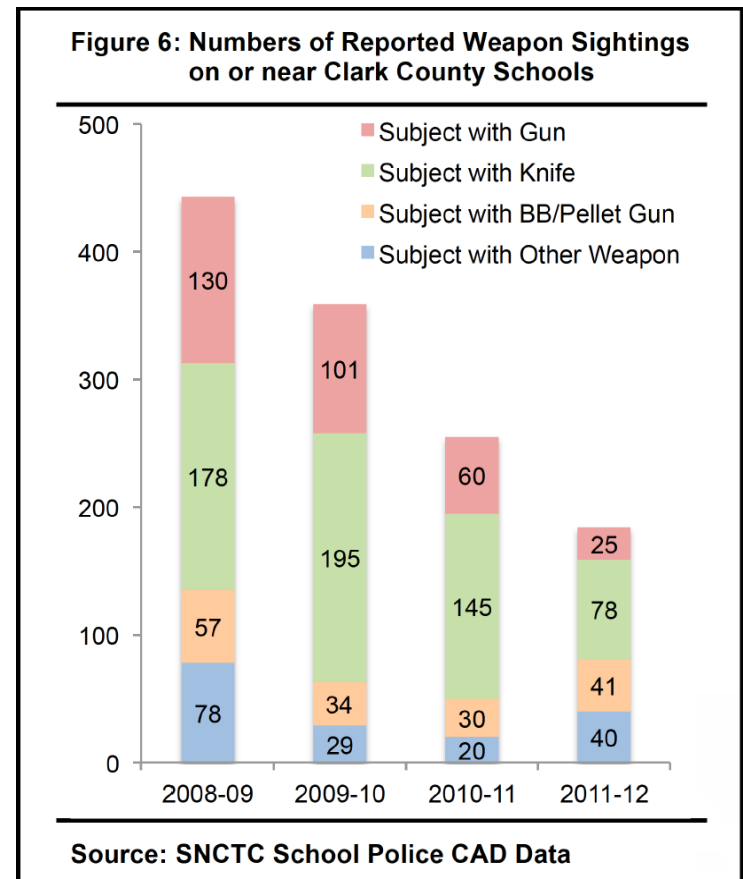
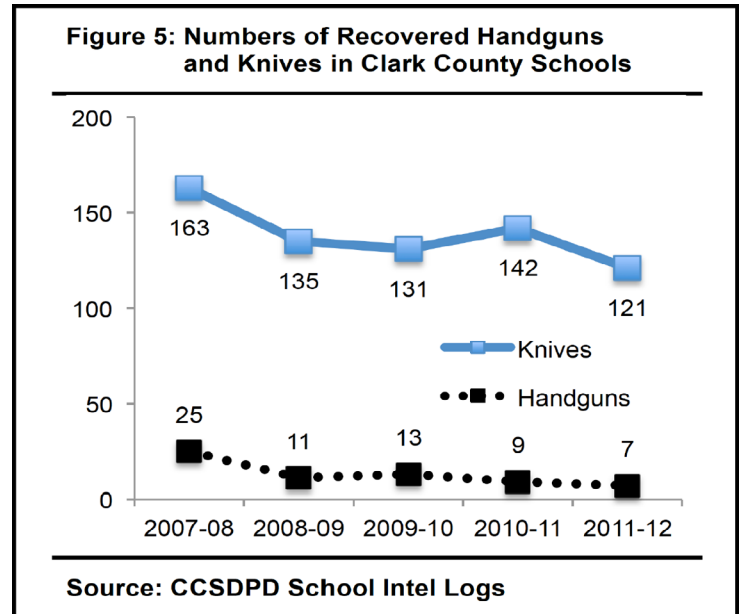


SVI Impact on School Shootings

The SVI was implemented in early March 2008. No school shootings have occurred on or near Clark County schools since February 2008. Figure 4 shows the distribution of these events across time (2004 to 2012).

Police data also show a decline in the number of weapons recovered at schools (see Figure 5). There were 163 knives recovered during the 2007-2008 school year. This number has generally declined over time, with the exception of an increase in 2010-

2011. In 2011- 2012, 121 knives were recovered – 25.8% fewer than the number recovered prior to the implementation of SVI. The numbers of handgun recoveries have also declined over time, from 25 recoveries prior to SVI implementation to 7 recoveries in 2011-2012



School police calls-for-service, or CAD, data also suggest that the presence of weapons has declined following the SVI intervention. Figure 6 shows a consistent decline in reports of subjects with a gun at schools. While slightly more knives were reported in the second year, and an increase in BB/pellet gun and other weapon sightings was reported between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, the total number of reported weapons on school campuses has declined each year. This provides little evidence of harmful tactical displacement to other weapons carried by potential offenders. For example, if the increase in BB/pellet gun and other weapon sightings in the final analysis year is the result of tactical displacement, its potential effects have been offset by greater declines during the same time period in the use of more dangerous weapons (i.e., guns and knives).

SVI Impact on Other Types of School Violence

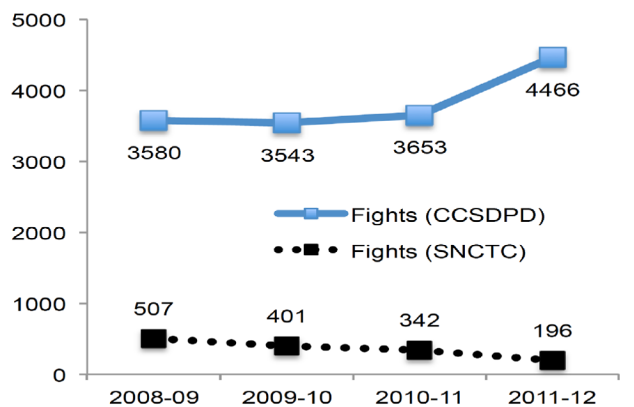
Trends in three other crime types – fights, assaults/batteries, and harassment/threats – were examined to determine whether the decreases in shootings and weapons on campus have resulted in displacement to other forms of violence.

Table 6: Criteria for Logging School Incidents into SNCTC School Violence Log

- Fights and Assaults/Batteries
- More than two individuals involved
 - Gang-related incident
 - Multiple events in quick succession
- Harassment/Threats
- Only threats to life

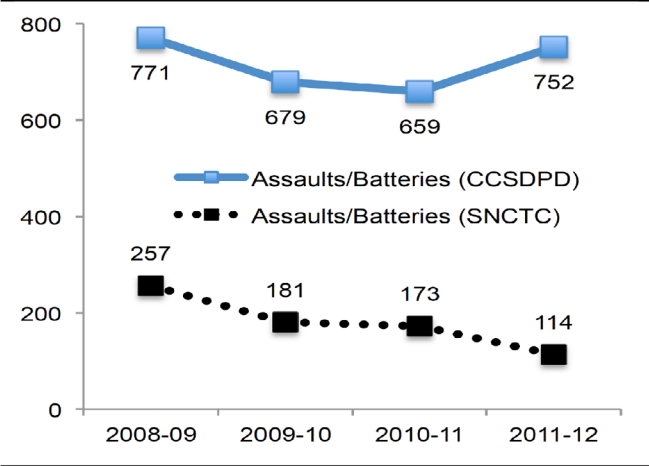
Source: SNCTC Fusion Center Liaison

Figure 7: Numbers of Fights Reported in Clark Country Schools



Source: CCSDPD School Intel Logs; SNCTC School Violence Logs

Figure 8: Numbers of Assaults/Batteries Reported in Clark Country Schools



Source: CCSDPD School Intel Logs; SNCTC School Violence Logs

Two data sources were used in this analysis: (1) data from the CCSDPD School Intel Logs, and (2) data from the SNCTC School Violence Logs. The CCSDPD School Intel Logs capture all incidents reported to the CCSDPD dispatch center and documented by CCSDPD officers. The SNCTC School Violence Logs contain a subset, and generally fewer numbers, of these incidents. This subset includes the list of incidents previously presented in Table 3. However, to be included in the database, these incidents must also meet other criteria. Table 6 lists these criteria by crime type. The school liaison officer housed within the SNCTC fusion center manually reviews each incident reported by CCSDPD to determine whether the incident meets the criteria for inclusion in the SNCTC School Violence Log. This information is used to identify emerging trends that may precede lethal violence.

Figure 7 depicts the number of fights included in both logs. According to the CCSDPD School Intel Logs, fights remained relatively consistent for the first three years of the SVI, but increased by approximately 22.3% between school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The SNCTC School Violence Logs report a different pattern. These data show a steady decline in the number of fights that meet the “red flag” criteria listed in Table 6. These incidents have declined from 507 (in school year 2008- 2009) to 196 (in school year 2011-2012) yearly incidents.

These data suggest that there may be some crime type displacement since a greater number of fights are occurring on school properties. However, the

SNCTC School Violence Logs also suggest that this potential displacement is directed toward incidents that are less likely result in lethal violence.

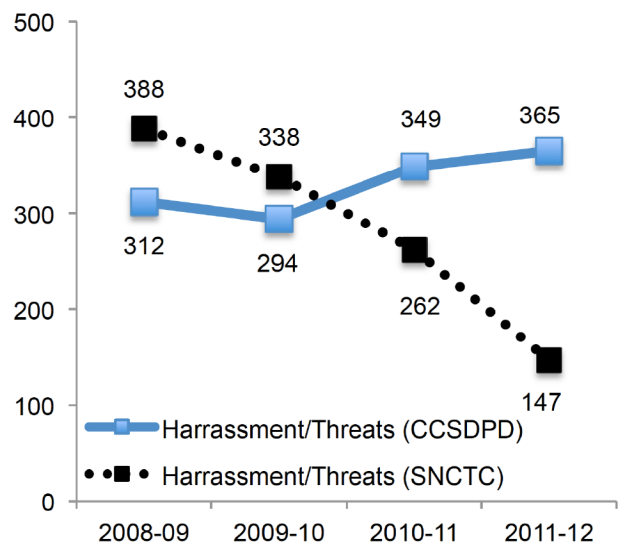
There is less evidence of crime type displacement involving assaults and batteries. Figure 8 shows that annual incident numbers have fluctuated over time, but have not increased above the number reported for the 2008-2009 school year (CCSDPD School Intel Logs).

The annual numbers of assaults and batteries added to the SNCTC School Violence Logs have consistently declined since the implementation of the SVI. The annual numbers of “red flag” assaults and batteries have declined by 55.6% over this four-year period.

The graph presented in Figure 9 shows that the total number of school harassment and threats has increased over time, following a small decline during the second year of the initiative. According to the CCSDPD School Intel Logs, 53 more incidents of harassment or threats occurred during 2011-2012 than during 2008-2009.

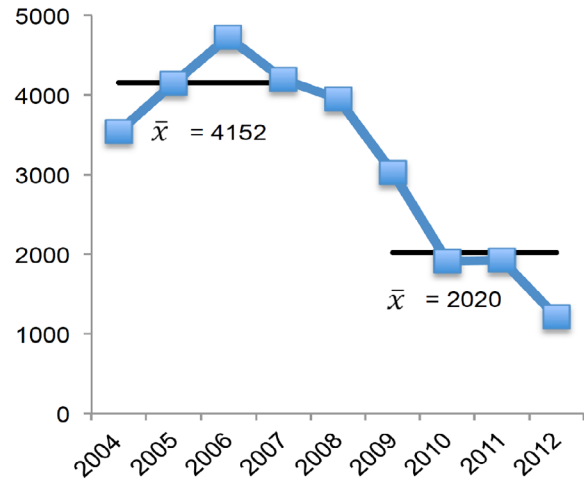
The SNCTC School Violence Logs show a major decline in the number of incidents involving threats to life. Incidents involving threats to life have declined by 62.1% between 2008-2009 and 2011-2012. These data suggest that, while there may have been an

Figure 9: Numbers of Harassment/Threats Reported in Clark County Schools



Source: CCSDPD School Intel Logs; SNCTC School Violence Logs

Figure 10: All Gun-Related Incidents in School Neighborhoods 2004-2012



Source: LVMPD Calls-For-Service Data

increase in documented incidents of harassment in Clark County schools, the SVI may be responsible for reducing the number of incidents in which life-threatening statements are made at schools.^{vii}

SVI Impact on Surrounding Neighborhood Crime

If the SVI has reduced school shootings and weapon-related offenses on campuses, the initiative might have displaced these crimes to neighborhoods surrounding school properties. Should such a spatial displacement effect occur, this effect would be most pronounced around middle and high schools since these schools (1) experience more violence than elementary schools and (2) are the primary focus of the SVI.^{viii}

Figure 10 shows the yearly number of calls-for-service for gun-related incidents occurring within one-half mile of each middle and high school within the LVMPD jurisdictional boundaries.^{ix} These incidents include four crime categories: robbery,^x assault/battery with a gun, person with a gun, and illegal shootings.

Contrary to the spatial displacement hypothesis, the analysis finds that gun-related crime in neighborhoods surrounding middle and high schools substantially decreased following the implementation of the SVI in 2008. The average number of gun-related incidents occurring between 2004 and 2007 (n = 4152) decreased by 51.3% when compared to the average number of incidents occurring between 2009 and 2012 (n = 2020).

This analysis was replicated for each specific crime category. Figures 11-14 depict the results of these analyses. The data show that, following the implementation of the SVI, the 4-year average number of incidents occurring in neighborhoods surrounding middle and high schools decreased for each crime type. In particular:

- Reported robberies decreased by 43.6%
- Reported assaults/batteries involving guns decreased by 62.0%
- Reports of person with a gun decreased by 57.8%
- Reported illegal shootings decreased by 51.2%

To determine whether these declines resulted from a diffusion of benefits associated with the SVI, these numbers were compared to the number of crimes

that occurred around elementary schools during the same time periods. Table 7 lists the percent change in gun-related crime before and after the implementation of the SVI for both groups of schools. The bolded statistics represent the group that experienced the greater decline.

As is shown, middle and high school neighborhoods experienced slightly larger declines in gun-related incidents overall, as well as in reports of person with a gun and illegal shootings (-1.6%, -4.0%, and -3.5% respectively). There was no difference in the percent change in assaults/batteries reported in each of the neighborhoods, and elementary school neighborhoods experienced a slightly larger decrease in reported robberies (-1.2%). Overall, these differences between the middle/high school and elementary school percentages appear negligible.

Figure 11: Reported Robberies in School Neighborhoods 2004-2012

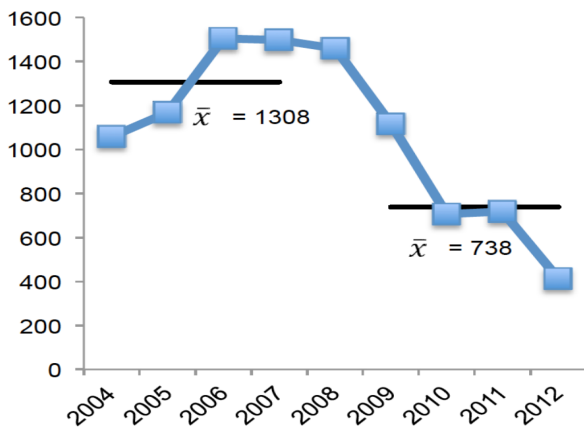


Figure 12: Reported Gun Assault/Battery Incidents in School Neighborhoods 2004-2012

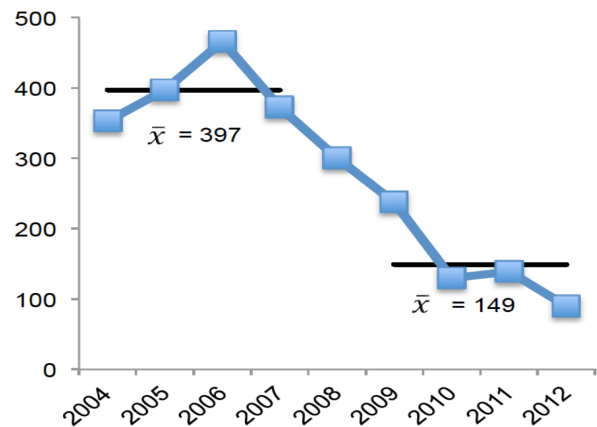


Figure 13: Reported Person with a Gun in School Neighborhoods 2004-2012

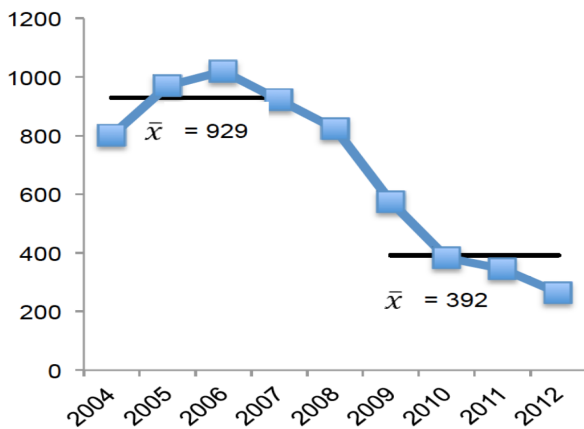
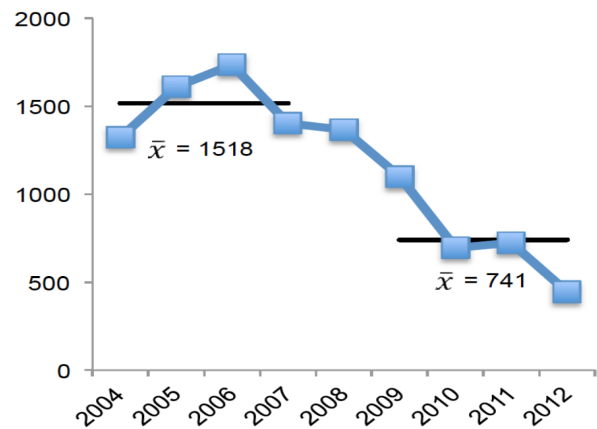


Figure 14: Reported Illegal Shootings in School Neighborhoods 2004-2012



Source: LVMPD Calls-For-Service Data; 64 Middle and High Schools within LVMPD Jurisdiction

Table 7: Percent Change in Gun-Related Incidents in Neighborhoods Surrounding Schools Following SVI Implementation

| | Middle & High Schools (n = 64) | Elementary Schools (n = 151) |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| All Gun Incidents | -51.3% | -49.7% |
| Robberies | -43.6% | -44.8% |
| Assaults/Batteries | -62.0% | -62.0% |
| Person with Gun | -57.8% | -53.8% |
| Illegal Shootings | -51.2% | -47.7% |

Source: LVMPD Calls-For-Service Data; Schools within LVMPD Jurisdiction

These findings suggest two things. First, the evidence does not support the notion that gun-related crime was displaced to neighborhoods surrounding schools. Second, while the SVI appears to have eliminated school shootings and decreased the presence of weapons on campus, the evidence does not suggest that this also has reduced these problems in nearby neighborhoods. Given similar reductions in elementary school neighborhoods, the large decrease in neighborhood violence may be part of a larger general crime trend.

Guidelines for Adopting the School Violence

Initiative in Other Jurisdictions Developing an effective program to reduce school violence – and school shootings, specifically – can prove challenging. The School Violence Initiative described in this report offers lessons to agencies that are working to improve the effectiveness of their existing prevention or response strategies. Those involved in Clark County’s SVI have identified five characteristics considered to be critical to the success of the initiative.

1. Adoption of an Intelligence-Led Model

The success of the SVI has been largely attributed to the ability to collect, manage, and disseminate intelligence in a timely and effective manner. Since extreme violence, including school shootings, is a relatively rare event, overreliance on reactive strategies or traditional “hot spots” policing will likely prove less effective than developing a greater capacity to gather, analyze, and act upon information from numerous and diverse sources (e.g., parents, school police, neighbors, teachers).

2. Initial and On-Going Analysis

The SVI research team conducted an in-depth analysis of prior school shootings in order to better

inform future strategies. This exercise proved highly useful. Widely held assumptions regarding the nature of school violence were disproved (e.g., most were not gang-related events). This initial analysis, and the on-going analysis conducted by the SNCTC, continues to help police and school administrators to respond more efficiently and effectively to potential safety threats.

3. Coordination Between Agencies

Clark County spans 7,910 square miles, and six different local/school police agencies have jurisdiction within the county. Six agencies working independently created information silos that restricted the flow of critical information to those best positioned to utilize incoming intelligence. For Clark County, use of the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center as a centralized information clearinghouse proved effective for managing and analyzing the large amounts of data generated within a district of 375 schools. Housing a full-time school liaison officer in the SNCTC further strengthened the county’s intelligence sharing capacity and increased overall agency coordination. Formalized coordination is an important aspect of this prevention program.

4. Accountability

Holding specific people accountable for carrying out essential tasks helps to ensure that information is consistently received and used appropriately. Accountability for Clark County school violence information was increased in a variety of ways. For example, the school liaison officer is directly responsible for maintaining and ensuring the accuracy of the School Violence Log. Also, the directive issued by the Sheriff outlines the procedures and persons responsible for acting immediately upon receiving information concerning the potential for school violence. This highly focused accountability helps to ensure proper coordination between agencies.

5. Leadership

Support from, and engagement of, agency leaders is an essential element of any school violence initiative. Agency leaders set the tone and priorities of organizations. They ensure that the other necessary elements (e.g., coordination and accountability) are in place by dedicating resources to achieve specific goals. Leaders are also instrumental in obtaining buy-in from others in an organization who must work to establish and maintain prevention strategies.

END NOTES

- i. Clark County School District Police Department Information Sheet July, 2013
- ii. CCSD also operates alternative/special schools in addition to traditional elementary, middle, and high schools. These schools, which often mix traditional age groups, were excluded from the analyses presented in Figures 1-3.
- iii. Although not all incident types appear to be violent, these incidents must meet particular criteria before being eligible for inclusion in the log. These criteria are discussed later in the report. The School Violence Log was established as a result of the School Violence Initiative in 2008. Therefore, any analyses involving these data are restricted to years 2008-2012.
- iv. Comparisons are difficult for many reasons. For example, detailed incident data is often unavailable and event definitions or classifications can vary considerably across jurisdictions.
- v. Figures 1-3 depict a well-known pattern called a Jcurve. Eck, Clarke and Guerette (2007) describe this as a product of the “risky facilities” phenomenon: “...for any similar group of facilities (for example, taverns, parking lots, or bus shelters), a small proportion of the group accounts for the majority of the crime experienced by the entire group” (p. 226). See Eck, J., Clark, R., & Guerette, R. (2007). *Risky Facilities: Crime Concentration in Homogeneous Sets of Establishments and Facilities*. In *Imagination for Crime Prevention: Essays in Honour of Ken Pease*. Crime Prevention Studies (Vol. 21, pp. 225-264). Boulder: Lynne Reiner.
- vi. The authors prepared the following LVMPD analysis and SVI intervention summaries as part of a document previously shared with the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center. The SNCTC now distributes this document to other agencies interested in replicating the SVI interventions.
- vii. It is interesting to note that the SNCTC School Violence Logs reported higher numbers than the CCSDPD School Intel Logs for harassment/threats occurring in years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. It is rare that more incidents are recorded in the SNCTC School Violence Logs than

in the School Intel Logs. Sergeant Mike Blackeye of the CCSDPD suggested that this statistical anomaly might have been caused by two factors. First, police filed Monthly Action Reports at the start of the initiative, and these contained information about offenses that might not have been captured by the Intel Logs, including harassment and threats. Second, the school liaison officer housed within the SNCTC reads through police incident reports. This officer may have identified threats that occurred prior to or in conjunction with other criminal activity and included these ancillary crimes in the School Violence Logs.

- viii. This would also include alternative schools that serve high-risk student populations.
- ix. This sub-group of schools was selected due to data availability and the fact that the majority of CCSD schools fall within the LVMPD jurisdictional boundaries (64 middle and high schools; 151 elementary schools).
- x. This category includes both completed and attempted robberies.

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