

Colorado Statewide Youth Development Plan: Supplemental Material, 2014

SCHOOL SAFETY

School safety is a broad concept that incorporates five missions of preparedness outlined by the U.S. Department of Education: Prevention, Mitigation, Protection, Response and Recovery. Schools in Colorado are required to have an emergency response plan that incorporates all five of these aspects.

School safety must take into account both the physical and psychological safety of students. The school climate and experiences of equity and connectedness are just as important to students' academic achievement as their physical safety inside of the building and going to and from school.

NATIONAL AND COLORADO DATA

National

According to the [Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2013](#):

- There were 31 school-associated violent deaths during the 2010 to 2011 school year.
- In 2012, there were just fewer than 1.4 million non-fatal victimizations at school.
- During the 2011 to 2012 school year, 88% of public schools reported that they controlled access to school buildings by locking or monitoring doors during school hours.
- During the 2009 to 2010 school year, 23% of public schools reported that bullying occurred among students on a daily or weekly basis and 3% reported widespread disorder in classrooms on a daily or weekly basis.
- The percentage of students in grades 9 to 12 who reported that illegal drugs were offered, sold or given to them decreased from 32% in 1995 to 26% in 2011.

According to the [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance](#) 2013 survey of high school students from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- 6.9% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the last 12 months.
- 8.1% were injured in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the last 12 months.
- 14.8% had been bullied electronically over the past 12 months.
- 7.3% were physically forced to have sexual intercourse.
- 29.9% felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row in the last 12 months that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.
- 17.0% seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months.
- 8.0% attempted suicide during the past 12 months.
- 34.9% had at least one alcoholic drink on at least one day during the last 30 days.
- 23.4% used marijuana one or more times during the last 30 days.

Colorado

According to the [Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2013](#):

- 5.1% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the last 12 months.
- 20.4% were involved in a physical fight.
- 15% had been bullied electronically over the past 12 months.

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- 6.6% were physically forced to have sexual intercourse.
- 24.3% felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row in the last 12 months that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.
- 14.5% had seriously considered attempting suicide over the previous 12 months.
- 6.6% attempted suicide during the past 12 months.
- 36.4% had at least one alcoholic drink on at least one day during the last 30 days.
- 19.7% used marijuana one or more times during the last 30 days.

GAPS

- There is a gap in the ratio of counselors to students in Colorado schools. According to the American School Counselor Association, the recommended ratio of counselors to students is 1:250. In the 2010 to 2011 school year, Colorado's ratio was 1:402 ([Student-to-School-Counselor Ratios, 2010-2011, American School Counselor Association](#)).
- There is similarly a gap in the ratio of school psychologists to students in Colorado schools. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, the recommended ratio of school psychologists to students is 1:500-700. During the 2009 to 2010 school year, Colorado's ratio was 1:221 ([Jeffrey L. Charvat, Ph.D., "Ratio of Students Per School Psychologist by State: Data from the 2009-10 and 2004-05 NASP Membership Surveys," National Association of School Psychologists, 2011](#)).
- Assessment and treatment of substance abuse among students through school-based health centers in Colorado is another area where a gap exists. Of the 1,843 public schools in Colorado, 54 (3%) had a school-based health center from 2013 to 2014. Ninety-six percent of school based health centers provided mental health assessment and treatment; however, only 24% provided assessment and treatment for substance abuse ([Derrick Meador, "Colorado Education: Profile on Colorado Education and Schools"](#)).

PRIORITIES

Increase the number of students assessed and treated for:

- Mental health disorders.
- Suicide.
- Substance abuse.
- Trauma.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Provide a Collaborative Management Program multi-agency team approach in every community in Colorado so that youth and their families are assigned a caseworker and receive integrated services.
- Provide school based-health services, including mental health and substance abuse services, in all school districts in Colorado.
- Increase the number of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers to recommended levels in all Colorado schools.
- Provide Youth Mental Health First Aid training to as many members of school staff as possible so that they can recognize and refer students in need of assistance.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

School Safety Resource Center

The Colorado School Safety Resource Center was established by legislation in 2008 and is housed in the Colorado Department of Public Safety. Its mission is to assist educators, emergency responders, community organizations, school mental health professionals, parents and students create safe, positive and successful school environments for all Colorado students in PreK-12 and higher education schools.

For more details, see the [Colorado School Safety Resource Center Legislative Report \(Colorado Department of Public Safety: Colorado School Safety Resource Center, 2013\)](#).