

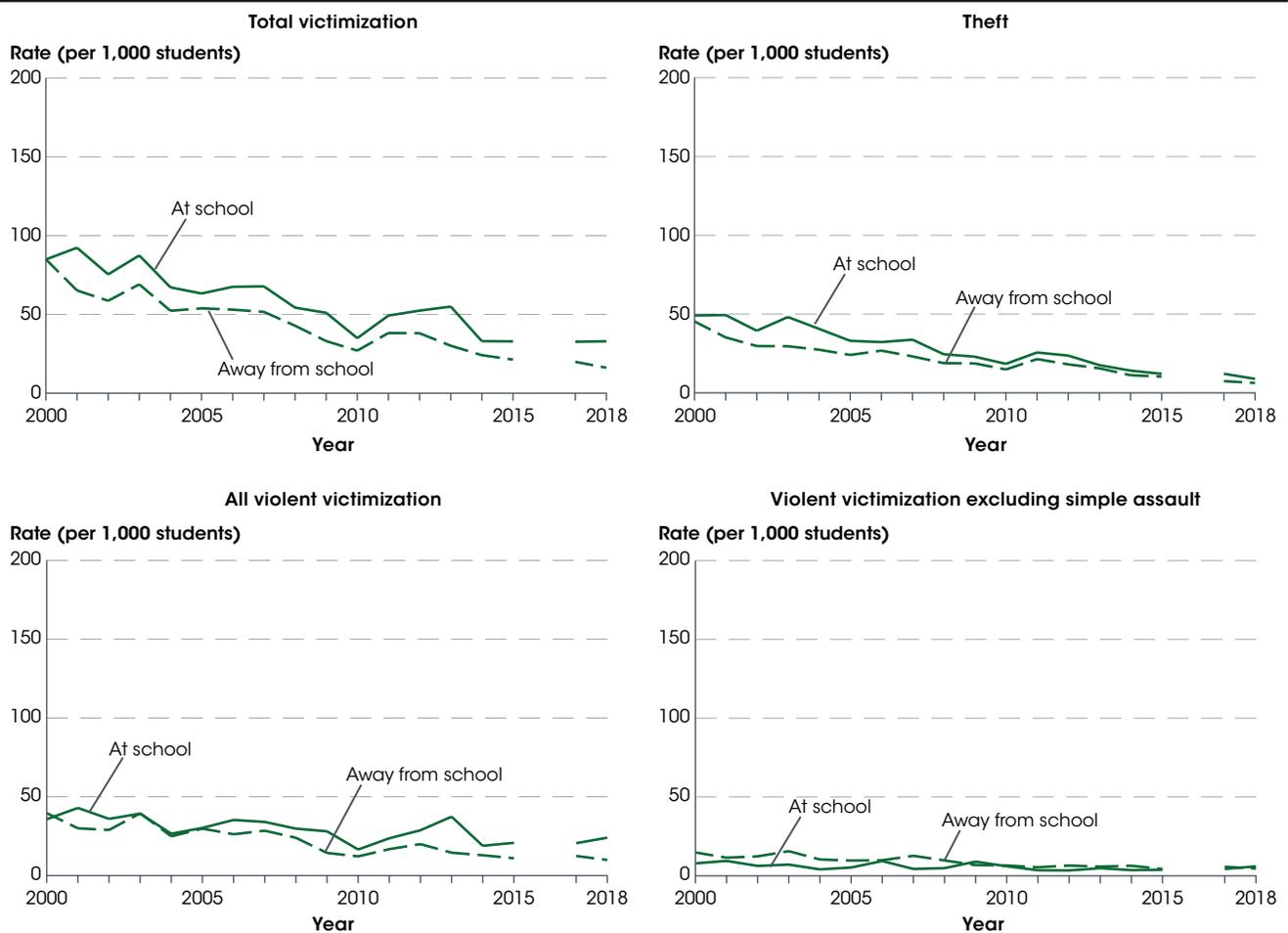
# School Crime and Safety

*Between 2000 and 2018, the rates of nonfatal victimization both at school and away from school declined for students ages 12–18. The rate of victimization at school declined 61 percent, and the rate of victimization away from school declined 81 percent.*

In 2018, students ages 12–18 reported 836,000 nonfatal victimizations at school<sup>1</sup> and 410,000 nonfatal victimizations away from school. Nonfatal victimizations include theft and all violent crime. Violent crime includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and

simple assault. These figures translate to a total rate of victimization at school of 33 victimizations per 1,000 students, compared with a total rate of victimization away from school of 16 victimizations per 1,000 students.

**Figure 1. Rate of nonfatal victimization per 1,000 students ages 12–18, by type of victimization and location: 2000 through 2018**



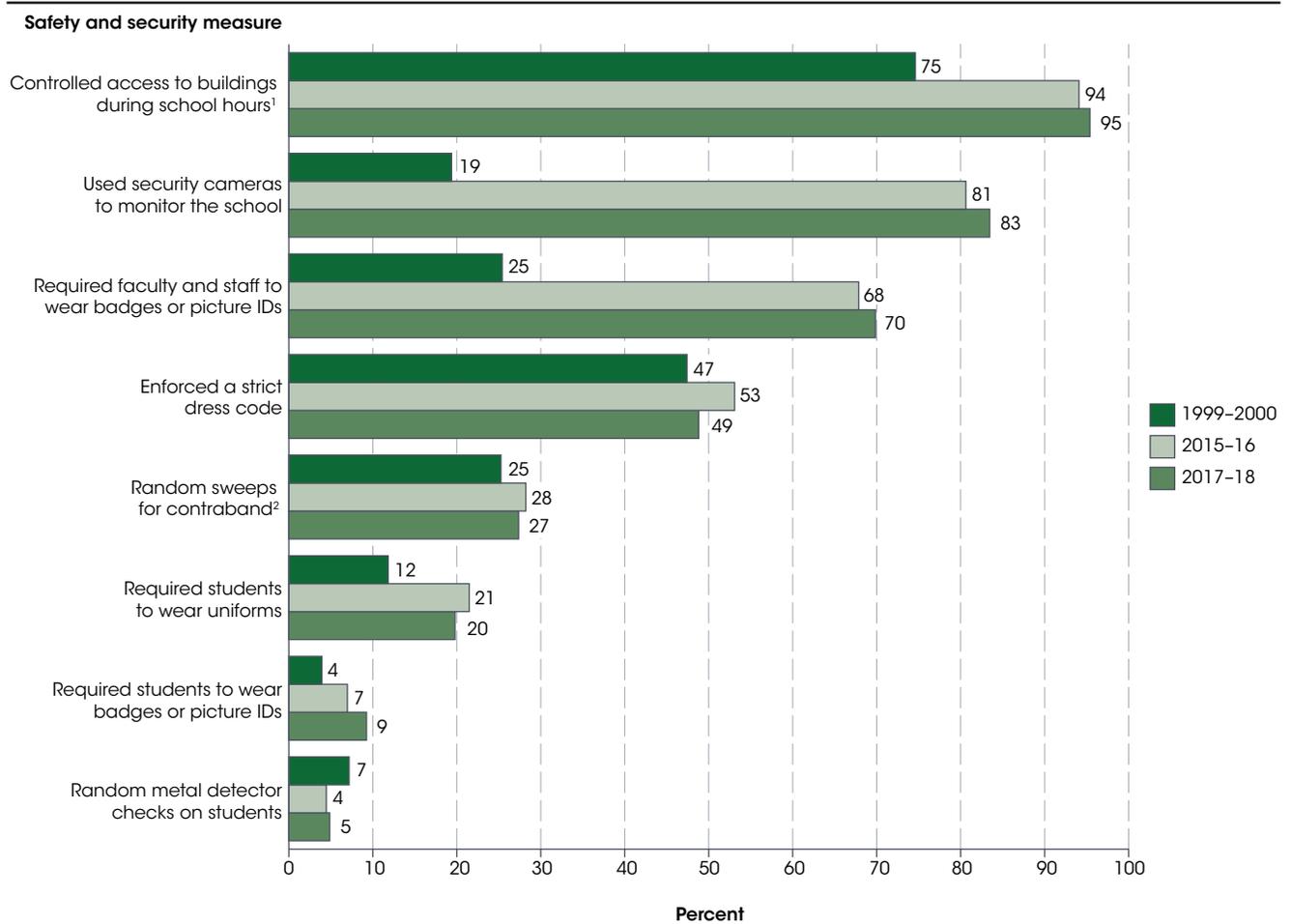
NOTE: "Total victimization" includes theft and violent crimes. "Theft" includes attempted and completed purse-snatching, completed pickpocketing, and all attempted and completed thefts, with the exception of motor vehicle thefts. Theft does not include robbery, which involves the threat or use of force and is classified as a violent crime. "All violent victimization" includes the crimes of rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. "At school" includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to or from school. The survey sample was redesigned in 2006 and 2016 to reflect changes in the population. Due to the sample redesign and other methodological changes implemented in 2006, use caution when comparing 2006 estimates to other years. Due to a sample increase and redesign in 2016, victimization estimates among students ages 12–18 in 2016 were not comparable to estimates for other years and thus were excluded from the figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 2000 through 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 228.20.

Between 2000 and 2018, the total rates of nonfatal victimization both at school and away from school declined for 12- to 18-year-old students.<sup>2</sup> The total rate of victimization at school declined 61 percent, and the total rate of victimization away from school declined 81 percent. In terms of specific types of victimization, the rates of

theft and violent victimization—both at school and away from school—declined between 2000 and 2018. The rate of violent victimization excluding simple assault<sup>3</sup> at school was not measurably different between 2000 and 2018, while the rate of violent victimization excluding simple assault away from school declined during this period.

**Figure 2. Percentage of public schools that used selected safety and security measures: School years 1999–2000, 2015–16, and 2017–18**

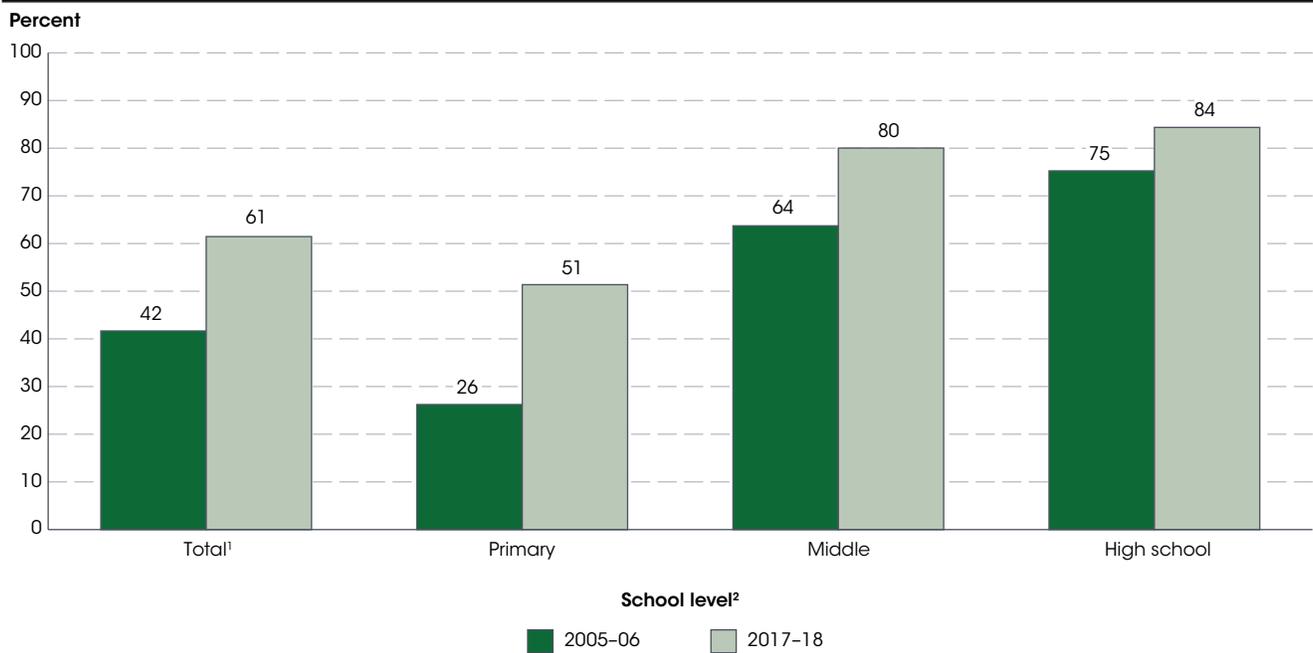


<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2017–18, the examples of controlled access to buildings included only “locked or monitored doors” and did not include loading docks.  
<sup>2</sup> The 2017–18 questionnaire included only a single item about random sweeps for contraband, and it provided locker checks and dog sniffs as examples of types of sweeps. Prior to 2017–18, the questionnaire included one item about dog sniffs for drugs, followed by a separate item about sweeps not including dog sniffs. For years prior to 2017–18, schools are treated as using random sweeps for contraband if they answered “yes” to either or both of these items; each school is counted only once, even if it answered “yes” to both items.  
 NOTE: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999–2000, 2015–16, and 2017–18 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2000, 2016, and 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 233.50.

Some security practices, such as locking or monitoring doors and gates, are intended to limit or control access to school campuses, while others, such as the use of metal detectors and security cameras, are intended to monitor or restrict students’ and visitors’ behavior on campus. The percentage of public schools reporting the use of safety and security measures was higher in 2017–18 than in most prior years for several categories of measures. For example, the percentage of public schools reporting the use of security cameras increased from 19 percent in 1999–2000 to 83 percent in 2017–18. The percentage of public schools reporting the use of the following safety and security

measures also increased during this time: controlling access to school buildings (from 75 to 95 percent), requiring faculty and staff to wear badges or picture IDs (from 25 to 70 percent), requiring school uniforms (from 12 to 20 percent), and requiring students to wear badges or picture IDs (from 4 to 9 percent). Conversely, the percentage of schools that reported using random metal detector checks on students decreased from 7 percent in 1999–2000 to 5 percent in 2017–18. There were no measurable differences between 1999–2000 and 2017–18 in the percentages of public schools that reported enforcing a strict dress code or using random sweeps for contraband.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 3. Percentage of public schools with one or more security staff present at least once a week, by school level: School years 2005–06 and 2017–18**



<sup>1</sup> Total includes combined schools, which are not shown separately in this figure.

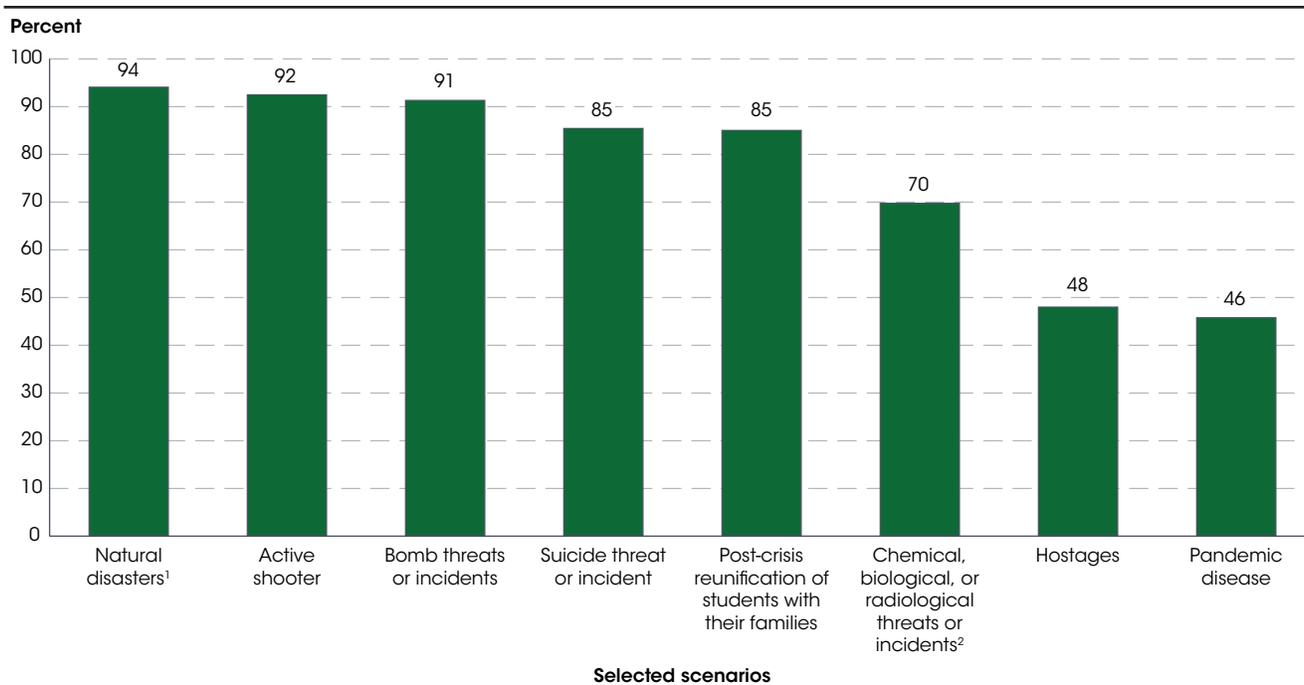
<sup>2</sup> Primary schools are defined as schools in which the lowest grade is not higher than grade 3 and the highest grade is not higher than grade 8. Middle schools are defined as schools in which the lowest grade is not lower than grade 4 and the highest grade is not higher than grade 9. High schools are defined as schools in which the lowest grade is not lower than grade 9.

NOTE: Security staff include security guards, security personnel, school resource officers (SROs), and sworn law enforcement officers who are not SROs. SROs include all career law enforcement officers with arrest authority who have specialized training and are assigned to work in collaboration with school organizations. Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005–06 and 2017–18 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2006 and 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 233.70.

In the 2017–18 school year, 61 percent of public schools reported the presence of one or more security staff at their school at least once a week during the school year.<sup>5</sup> The percentage of public schools reporting the presence of any security staff was higher in 2017–18 than in 2005–06 (42 percent). This same pattern of a higher percentage of public schools overall reporting the presence of any security staff in 2017–18 than in 2005–06 was observed for primary, middle, and high schools. The

percentage point change from 2005–06 to 2017–18 was larger for primary schools (25 percentage points) than for middle schools (16 percentage points) and high schools (9 percentage points). Despite these changes, the percentage of primary schools reporting the presence of any security staff in 2017–18 (51 percent) remained lower than the corresponding percentages of middle schools (80 percent) and high schools (84 percent).

**Figure 4. Percentage of public schools with a written plan for procedures to be performed in selected scenarios: School year 2017–18**

<sup>1</sup> For example, earthquakes or tornadoes.

<sup>2</sup> For example, release of mustard gas, anthrax, smallpox, or radioactive materials.

NOTE: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2017–18 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2018. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 233.65.

Schools use a variety of practices and procedures to promote the safety of students, faculty, and staff. One aspect of school safety and security is ensuring that plans are in place to be carried out in the event of specific scenarios. In 2017–18, about 94 percent of public schools reported they had a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of a natural disaster, 92 percent reported they had a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of an active shooter, and 91 percent

reported they had a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of bomb threats or incidents. The percentage of schools reporting that they had a written plan for procedures to be performed in response to other events included in the survey questionnaire ranged from 85 percent each for suicide threat or incident and post-crisis reunification of students with their families to 46 percent for a pandemic disease.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> “At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to or from school.

<sup>2</sup> Due to a sample increase and redesign of the National Crime Victimization Survey in 2016, victimization estimates among students ages 12–18 in 2016 were not comparable to estimates for other years and were thus excluded from this analysis.

<sup>3</sup> “Violent victimization excluding simple assault” includes the crimes of rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. In prior versions of this indicator, this was labeled as “serious violent victimization.”

<sup>4</sup> The 2017–18 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) questionnaire included only a single item about random sweeps for contraband, and it provided locker checks and dog sniffs as examples of types of sweeps. Prior to 2017–18, the SSOCS

questionnaire included one item about dog sniffs for drugs, followed by a separate item about sweeps not including dog sniffs. For years prior to 2017–18, schools are treated as using random sweeps for contraband if they answered “yes” to either or both of these items; each school is counted only once, even if it answered “yes” to both items.

<sup>5</sup> Security staff include security guards, security personnel, School Resource Officers (SROs), and sworn law enforcement officers who are not SROs. “Security guards” and “security personnel” do not include law enforcement. SROs include all career law enforcement officers with arrest authority who have specialized training and are assigned to work in collaboration with school organizations.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 228.20, 233.50, 233.65, and 233.70

**Related indicators and resources:** *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*; *Safety at School* [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]

**Glossary:** Public school or institution