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REPORT

**Weapons Use in
Canadian Schools**

No. 1994-05

Responding
to Violence
and Abuse

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Police Policy and Research Division

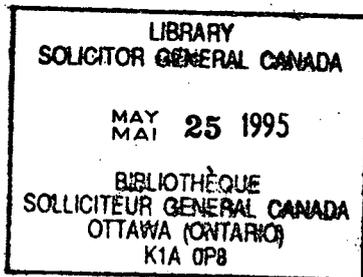
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**SANDRA GAIL WALKER
EDUCON RESEARCH & MARKETING SYSTEMS**

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Weapons Use in Canadian Schools

No. 1994-05



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INTRODUCTION

Violent crimes and weapons use exists within many urban Canadian schools, especially those in cities of over 500,000. Though many assume that the offenders, victims, and others who fear crime in schools are three different groups of young people, the evidence does not support this assumption. Some youth belong to more than one group (Brannigan & Caputo, 1993; Caputo et al, 1991; Caputo & Ryan, 1991; Fattah, 1993; Mathews, 1993, 1992; Ryan et al, 1994; Wilson, 1977).

Nor does crime in the schools happen in isolation from crime in the rest of society. This short-sighted viewpoint has two negative outcomes:

1. Blame and pressure to "fix the problem" is placed mainly on schools and the police.
2. Solutions are narrowly school-related and include: (a) better teachers; (b) smaller classes; (c) fair and equal treatment of students; (d) relevant course subject matter; (e) tighter discipline and stricter rule enforcement including suspensions and expulsions; (f) increased in-school security, including fortress-like renovations to the schools themselves.

Though some of these responses to crime in the school are useful and valid, they cannot work in isolation from solutions to violence in the community at large.

There has been little research on what weapons are carried into schools, and whether these weapons are actually used in violent acts. Because of this, myth and rumour have as much influence on how weapons use is treated as does fact. Information that does exist is not always comparable, even when it has been collected by youth agencies for similar purposes. Such factors make it difficult to address the problem with policy and positive programs.

This study is a beginning for lawmakers, the public and policy makers interested in prevention, safety and law enforcement. However, it is just a start. These initial findings themselves raise other questions for government, police, schools, and the community. They should be treated as an opening of a door to enquiry, not as a definitive analysis of what is, by all indications, a complex problem.

This study concludes with research and policy considerations of interest to the Solicitor General Canada, schools and police services on weapons use by youth in Canadian schools. These include:

- The Solicitor General Canada should continue to collaborate and develop partnerships with other governments, school boards and police services to meet the challenges of weapons use in Canadian schools.
- Community-based policing strategies can enhance community mobilization to deal with youth violence. These strategies should be integrated into the mainstream operational structure and culture of the agency. Otherwise they will be nothing more than an add-on public-relations exercise.

- Further research is required with respect to racial and ethnic groups and subgroups; violence toward gay and lesbian youth, and youth with disabilities; and the psychological makeup and activities of children in youth gangs.
- Systematic, comparable data collection methods are required.
- Video programming on all media should require labelling regarding violent content.
- Public and media consciousness about violence and its effect on our society must be raised.
- Further legislation restricting firearms and ammunition is required.
- The *Young Offenders Act* should be reviewed.

This document is a summary of findings and a listing of planning, policy and research considerations. It is accompanied by two other documents: a literature review and a detailed report of technical findings, including focus group results, and mail-out police and educator surveys.

ABOUT THE STUDY

This study focuses on police, educators and customs officials as sources of information. Based on interviews, focus groups and mail-out surveys, it looks at:

- the nature and extent of weapons use by Canadian youth in school
- why weapons are used by youth
- responses to suppress weapons use

The goals of the study were to:

- examine weapons use by Canadian youth 12 to 17 years old in schools and on school property during school hours in all Canadian provinces and territories
- examine smuggling of illegal weapons across the US border by this same group of youth

Investigations included:

- what weapons are seized from youth
- how often weapons are carried, and by whom
- how and when weapons use is reported
- where youth get weapons
- what they use them for
- why youth carry weapons
- how schools respond to weapons use
- how other authorities suggest suppressing weapons use.

In this study, an *offensive weapon* is defined as those weapons covered by the Criminal Code definition as well as articles having these characteristics:

- a) anything made or adapted to be used to *cause injury* to someone else
- b) other articles *intended* for this use
- c) anything used to *intimidate*, whether or not it is actually a weapon

Study limitations

Because data gathering is not coordinated or formal, information from police services and school districts is not always comparable or complete. However, when analysed together with information from Statistics Canada and the focus groups, the findings are both useful and relevant.

Because funding did not support it, this study did not collect information directly from youth. It is essential that future research explores self-reported crime, victimization (direct and vicarious), and youth's related experiences. Information and findings from this study are an excellent guide for this undertaking.

This study has not considered existing youth violence prevention programs and their effectiveness in Canadian schools. Some programs are too new to evaluate; many others are informal in nature and difficult to assess objectively.

Finally, there is some sample bias in the selection of interview and survey groups. This was necessitated by the requirement to include only those most informed sources: customs regional managers, school superintendents and police officers assigned to patrol, school-liaison, crime prevention, or street-crime sections.

Though this was a formal and objective study, it was part of a dynamic process of discovery. At times, findings guided the direction and progress of the research. This is not considered a drawback.

Further details on the study methodology are given in the appendix.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW FINDINGS

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF WEAPONS USE BY CANADIAN YOUTH IN SCHOOL AND WHETHER THEY ARE SMUGGLING ILLEGAL WEAPONS ACROSS THE CANADA/US BORDER

What weapons are being used?

- Knives are the weapons of choice in the schools. School staff and police must deal with pocket knives, buck knives, machetes and meat cleavers, as well as prohibited weapons such as switchblades and butterfly knives. Many of these are made at home or in school shop classes. In some schools (in municipalities of 250,000+), these sorts of weapons are confiscated daily.
- Firearms such as handguns, sawed-off shotguns and rifles are rare in most schools, and are discovered only once or twice a year. However, in some schools in Montreal and Toronto, firearms are discovered monthly rather than yearly.
- Imitation and replica firearms are being seen increasingly, and are a concern for police officers who must differentiate the real from the fake — sometimes at night or at a distance. There is a real possibility that youth wielding replicas in robberies and for intimidation will be injured or injure others.

Replicas may only resemble real guns such as 0.9mm, 0.357 magnums or machine guns and not be capable of firing. Others are actually CO₂ pistols, pellet guns or B.B. guns capable of injury. (A few people have required plastic surgery from pellet gun wounds.) Nevertheless, all appear very real and are available for sale at stores in most communities. Some communities like Ottawa now have by-laws prohibiting the sale of replica firearms.

Where did weapons come from?

- Youth get firearms to take to school by stealing them, modifying them (for example sawing off the barrel of a rifle) or buying them.
- Other weapons are usually purchased or made at home or in school shop or science class.
- Most weapons discovered in schools were owned by non-students such as outsiders, intruders from other schools or drop-outs; students more often leave their weapons in their vehicles parked nearby.
- Weapons are not only carried and used for violent intent; they are also carried for protection against assault, as a status symbol or for peer approval, or for intimidation of other students.
- Customs officials rarely encounter Canadian youth with weapons at the border. There have been just 12 cases in the last five years. United States residents are discovered with weapons such as nunchaka sticks, butterfly knives, switchblades, brass knuckles and throwing stars, all prohibited by Order-in-Council in Canada, but not prohibited in the USA. It was reported that many American residents do not consider these items as weapons.

Who is involved?

Many of our interview and focus group respondents believed that weapons use in schools has increased in the last five years. Participants in Montreal, Toronto, Guelph and Vancouver reported the highest incidence of weapons use.

Other observations include:

- More younger children (including those in elementary grades) are involved now than before, and extortion is routine in some schools.
- More girls are involved in violent, ruthless offences and weapons use than five years ago.
- Children and youth of all socio-economic groups are involved, not just children from less-advantaged backgrounds.
- Pagers and cellular telephones are related to weapons use.
- Gangs were not seen as a problem in most schools; however, in many regions gang members actively recruit and organize in the schools. Gang members often don't go to school but rely on school networks to exert influence. Gangs are a factor in youth violence outside school.
- Weapons are used in ethnic conflict in schools in many regions. Several Ontario and Quebec participants said the policy of transferring problem students to other schools may make matters worse, especially when students from one group (ethnic or gang culture) are dropped into another's territory.
- In Nova Scotia and especially in Ontario, hate/bias groups are on the increase. Ontario groups are reported to be more involved with weapons than in other regions.
- Drug users are rarely involved with weapons in the schools. However, pushers and weapons were seen as strongly linked together outside the school.

How schools deal with the problem

Schools deal with weapons use in many different ways. However not all weapons are treated the same.

- Although schools are quick to report firearms, they are not as likely to report other weapons.

This is attributed to:

- a. school staff feels that it can deal with non-firearms use without the help of the police
- b. they may deny, avoid or be unaware of these weapons
- c. school staff and police define the problem differently (protection versus enforcement) and this determines the limits of tolerable behaviour in school
- d. schools may not want charges laid for fear of tarnishing the school reputation and its future enrollments
- e. schools may not have consistent policies on weapons use and violence
- f. schools may be concerned that media will exploit incidents at the school's and students' cost
- g. school staff may fear reprisal from students and lack of support from management or school boards
- h. staff may feel that reporting incidents is a waste of time because they do not feel the judicial system will follow through (the *Young Offenders Act* (YOA) is perceived as lenient and inconsistently applied)

WHY WEAPONS ARE USED BY YOUTH

Study participants rated availability as a major factors contributing to weapons use. However they also were strongly concerned about the social milieu in which youth are growing up.

■ Media sensationalism of violence is cited as a major factor. They thought reporting was unbalanced, and contributed to increasing fear of violence. The media is seen as desensitizing Canadians to violence. Violence is glorified, and remorse or consequences are rarely depicted.

■ Violence is more commonplace in some other countries, and this perception of violence as normal is being transplanted to Canada.

■ There is a belief that Canadians are increasingly making decisions in favour of their personal rights and freedoms, not community well-being.

■ Aspects of the YOA are problematic. These include a general lack of understanding about the Act, and perceived difficulties related to inconsistent sentencing, a lack of immediate consequences for misbehaviour, a lack of information-sharing between agencies, and little attention given to victims' rights.

■ The combination of large school populations, and a lack of discipline and consequences for behaviour, are seen as factors in weapons use. There is little consistency in school and school district action regarding weapons use and violence. Social agencies are perceived as fragmented, and fail to collaborate in problem solving.

■ Parents are not being held accountable for their children's actions. Participants cited the lack of parenting skills and the prevalence of absentee parenting as factors contributing to weapons use.

Gangs

There is much misunderstanding about youth gangs. What constitutes gang behaviour? How should it be measured? Three features seem common:

■ gang activity is dynamic and changes over time depending on location and opportunity

■ gang violence is not exclusive to any one ethnic group

■ there are many different kinds of gangs across Canada, with many different characteristics and behaviours

HOW SCHOOLS RESPOND TO SUPPRESS WEAPONS USE

■ Schools mainly respond to weapons use in these ways:

a. protocols (e.g., dress codes, ID badges, locker searches, visitors, parking stickers for school parking lots)

b. policies on student conduct, violence and weapons use

c. 'zero-tolerance' policies

d. enforcement and proactive strategies involving police services

■ Some schools are also cooperating with police to develop alternatives outside the justice system that include students and parents as part of the solution.

■ Views about 'zero-tolerance policies' varied, but included:

a. it deals only with symptoms and not the underlying causes

b. students need to know that weapons are not acceptable, and what are the consequences for their actions

c. the victims feel safer at school

d. students should be suspended and expelled if necessary (e.g. the safety of the school is what must be considered)

e. removing the problem student from the school breaks bad associations with peers

f. we need to find solutions that do more than just punish the perpetrator

■ How well police officers are accepted in schools varied considerably both within school districts and across the country. Some school officials told police that they did not belong in the school, and that their presence meant the school was unsafe. Other schools were very supportive of police-school liaison programs.

■ In some schools, the police liaison/resource officer provided only crime prevention intervention, security and enforcement. Others offered counselling and were proactive, or a combination of enforcement and proactive intervention.

■ Participants identified these factors as essential in suppressing weapons use:

- a. better information sharing and collaboration, and less fragmentation in service delivery between agencies
- b. community policing initiatives, such as school liaison officers, that promote interagency cooperation
- c. including students as part of the solution

d. more parental involvement in the schools

e. more alternative programs, including custody for overtly violent youth

f. inservice programs for educators and police on: proactive media strategies, conflict resolution, crisis intervention, violence, etc.

g. emphasis on safer environments with a primary prevention focus, e.g., the reporting of success stories and successful programs

■ Better collaboration between federal immigration and provincial education ministries was seen as essential. Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver receive the highest portion of immigrants but educators report that funding to programs such as English/French as a second language are underfunded or being reduced. These programs were seen as a key way to help immigrant youth learn and understand Canadian cultural values.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NATIONAL POLICE AND EDUCATORS MAIL-OUT SURVEYS

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF WEAPONS USE BY CANADIAN YOUTH IN SCHOOL

There is no standard of systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of data on the risk and prevalence of weapons use by youth in Canadian schools.

- In general, weapon seizures — especially firearms — are unusual, and are an urban phenomenon, rare in rural settings. Both police and educators agreed on this but reported a slight increase in weapons seizures between 1992 and 1993.
 - Imitation and replica firearm seizures occur in larger municipalities (250,000+ population).
 - Ammunition seizures were rare but occur across Canada in both urban and rural centres.
 - Most weapons seized were knives, shop- or home-made weapons (municipalities 25,000+); firearm replicas and imitations (250,000+); and clubs, bats, and sticks (50,000+).
 - Police reported that the use of weapons in "confrontational" situations between youth in school was not a common practice.
 - Seizures of firearms in both junior and senior high schools were very limited; and restricted to urban centres 50,000+.
 - Other weapons were more common but still limited. Educators reported other weapons most frequently in centres 10,000+, but police did not differentiate.
- Although educators perceive themselves as reporting firearms frequently, police view them as being reluctant to do so. Reporting of other weapons use to police was less frequent according to both police and educators.
 - Police and educators mainly cited the same reasons for reluctance to report weapons in the surveys as they did in focus groups:
 - a. schools see themselves as capable of dealing with the issue themselves without the help of the police
 - b. they may deny, avoid or be unaware of these weapons
 - c. school staff and police define the problem differently (protection versus enforcement) and this determines the limits of tolerable behaviour in school
 - d. schools may not want charges laid
 - e. schools may lack or may have inconsistent policies on weapons use and violence
 - f. schools may be concerned that media will exploit incidents at the school's and students' cost
 - g. school staff may fear reprisal from students
 - h. staff may feel that reporting incidents is a waste of time because they do not feel the judicial system will follow through (the *Young Offenders Act* (YOA) is perceived as lenient and inconsistently applied)

■ Police routine upon seizing weapons is to check if the accused youth had a previous police record and, where firearms are involved, to find out if they are registered and if the youth's parent(s) own the firearm.

■ Most firearms confiscated have been stolen, either from parents, relatives or friends. Police report parents and relatives as the source in communities 100,000 and below; and school mates in communities above 500,000. Educators attributed nonstudents or school mates as the source in communities above 50,000.

■ Other weapons are either purchased or made at home or in school shops. Police report school mates as the main source; educators cite school mates and parents or relatives.

■ In most cases, school staff reported that psychological, not physical, harm was the main outcome of weapons use in the school. This applied whether students or teachers were the victims. Educators reported that students were the main victims of weapons use.

WHY WEAPONS ARE USED BY YOUTH?

■ Youth are using weapons in schools for these reasons:

- a. intimidation and power
- b. protection
- c. as a status symbol
- d. for protection
- e. to gain acceptance and belonging
- f. situational (impulsive).

Interestingly, the police also reported peer pressure as a factor; educators added emulating media characters.

■ Factors contributing to weapons use included:

- a. the availability of weapons
- b. lack of parental intervention
- c. media influences
- d. aspects of the YOA (e.g., perceived problems related to sentencing, information-sharing and a lack of victim's rights)

Educators also included the presence of drug pushers as a contributing factor.

HOW SCHOOLS RESPOND TO SUPPRESS WEAPONS USE

■ Schools *most* often respond to weapons use in these ways:

- a. parents are contacted by either police or school
- b. police are notified
- c. student is suspended
- d. schools deal with the issue themselves
- e. police investigate and lay charges
- f. student conduct policies are established

■ Schools *least* often respond to weapons use in these ways:

- a. installation of TV cameras and metal detectors
- b. hiring security guards
- c. placing student in an alternative learning situation such as a special school or class
- d. transferring student to another regular school
- e. establishing dress codes, ID badges and other protocols
- f. establishing community-based programs
- g. developing curriculum addressing violence and weapons use
- h. developing alternatives to justice system and enforcement

■ Educators *most* frequently reported that policies, regulations or procedures regarding these issues are in place in their school districts:

- a. student conduct
- b. intruders
- c. dealing with violent students
- d. reporting all violent incidents to school authorities
- e. possession of an offensive weapon
- f. reporting incidents to the police

DETAILED FINDINGS: NATIONAL POLICE AND EDUCATORS MAIL-OUT SURVEYS

POLICE PRESENCE IN CANADIAN SCHOOLS

Special school programs

Fifty-four per cent of the police services have a specific section that assigns officers to conduct programs in schools. The larger the municipality (25,000+), the greater the involvement. Regional differences were also evident.

Police services assigned an average of five officers. Actual assignments ranged from 1 officer in 24% of the cases to a maximum of 54 officers in one case. Each officer was normally responsible for programs in about eight schools. Responsibilities ranged from 1 school (13%) to 51 schools in one case. Average time spent per school per officer was 5.5 hours per week; actuals ranged from one hour or less (18%) to 39 hours per week (0.9%).

Forty-eight per cent of the school boards said police officers conduct school programs such as crime prevention and drug awareness. On average each board had 19 schools with police officers conducting school programs. The minimum number of schools in each board having such a program was one school; maximum was 168 schools.

In Edmonton and North Vancouver, the police service and school board share the cost of salaries for police officers in schools. Edmonton does so on a 50:50 basis.

Other cost sharing factors include:

- a. office space in the schools for police
- b. use of equipment such as stationery and pagers
- c. small compensation for the loss of overtime
- d. training/in-service courses

Some police services also receive donations from service clubs to purchase supplies for their school programs.

How the programs work

Most programs exist to deliver crime prevention initiatives (51%) through liaison with the school and community. Twenty-nine per cent of police services said that their role varied from school to school because programs are targeted by age and grade. Safety programs and crime prevention initiatives are directed to the primary and junior levels. Drug and alcohol education, counselling and crime solving are directed to high school students. Different communities also may have different needs and expectations for their school liaison programs.

Police commented that some schools were very open to police involvement while others were not (e.g., school officials did not feel police belonged in the schools). Educators said the school officer program existed mainly for liaison with the school and community.

Liaison with other officers and schools

When asked whether information was shared between school police officers and the general duty officers at least monthly, it was reported that this happened:

never	8%
sometimes	40%
quite often	23%
always	29%

Many educators (45%) said that information was exchanged monthly between the police and the school board only "sometimes". However, they seemed satisfied with the existing lines of communication, responding:

quite often satisfied	33%
always satisfied	33%
sometimes satisfied	29%
not at all satisfied	6%

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF WEAPONS USE BY CANADIAN YOUTH IN SCHOOL

Police and schools report that weapon seizures in Canadian schools is not a common practice. Their perception is that weapons, especially firearms, in many schools are quite limited. It is mainly an urban and suburban phenomenon. However, more weapons of all types were seized in 1993 than in 1992, except seizures of modified shotguns and martial arts equipment, which remained static.

There were more firearms (including imitation and replica models) confiscated in large (50,000+) Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec municipalities and even more so in larger (250,000+) cities. Mace and pepper spray were seized in British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec in centres 50,000+.

Ammunition was seized in seven of the twelve regions, in a wide-range of municipalities. Knives, shop- or home-made weapons were seized across Canada, mostly in centres 25,000+. Other weapons such as clubs, bats, sticks and nunchaku sticks were seized by police across Canada in centres 50,000+. Knives, shop- or home-made weapons were seized by schools in most regions, predominantly in centres 25,000 and above.

Tables 1 and 2 show all weapons seized by police and schools respectively from youth aged 12 to 17 years within schools and on school property during school hours.

Note:

An average of 7.8% of the responding police services do not capture the information by school so they could not provide data for any one particular weapon category.

Most of the other responding police services also record weapon incidents by offence category not by schools, however, the information reported was manually generated from internal records. Only those agencies participating in uniform crime reporting (UCR2) capture the information by schools.

The sources of information — the way in which information is reported, collected, analyzed and evaluated by each agency — also varies. As a result, the findings may not completely depict the extent of weapons use in schools. Furthermore, police services may serve more than one school board, so their figures may include all boards served (e.g., Metro Toronto police provide service to schools from six boards).

The sources of information i.e., the way in which information is reported, collected, analyzed and evaluated by school boards also varies. On average, 7.9% of the sample did not collect specific weapon data.

TABLE 1: Weapons seized from youth by police officers

TYPE OF WEAPON	TOTAL SEIZED 1993	TOTAL SEIZED 1992
REVOLVERS, AUTOMATIC & SEMI-AUTOMATIC	range: 0-22 87% reported none	range: 0-18 87% reported none
OTHER TYPES OF RESTRICTED FIREARMS	range: 0-3 91% reported none	range: 1 incident 89% reported none
MODIFIED SHOTGUNS/RIFLES (e.g., sawed-off)	range: 0-2 91% reported none	range: 0-6 89% reported none
OTHER PROHIBITED FIREARMS	range: 0-6 90% reported none	range: 0-3 89% reported none
SHOTGUNS/ RIFLES	range: 0-2 90% reported none	range: 0-2 89% reported none
FIREARM REPLICAS	range: 0-31 80% reported none	range: 0-28 80% reported none
AMMUNITION	range: 0-40 86% reported none	range: 0-50 86% reported none
PROHIBITED KNIVES	range: 0-29 80% reported none	range: 0-20 81% reported none
KNIVES	range: 0-116 58% reported none	range: 0-103 65% reported none
SHOP OR HOME MADE WEAPONS	range: 0-50 78% reported none	range: 0-48 80% reported none
CLUBS/BATS/STICKS	range: 0-838 79% reported none	range: 0-726 80% reported none
NUNCHAKU STICKS, STARS, ETC.	range: 0-75 80% reported none	range: 0-80 80% reported none
MACE / PEPPER SPRAYS	range: 0-2 91% reported none	range: 0-1 88% reported none
OTHER: spiked rings, roll of quarters, others not specified	range: 0-15 88% reported none	range: 0-18 88% reported none

N=344 police agencies

range: minimum and maximum seizures by agency

TABLE 2: Weapons seized from youth by school authorities

TYPE OF WEAPON	TOTAL SEIZED 1993	TOTAL SEIZED 1992
REVOLVERS, AUTOMATIC & SEMI-AUTOMATIC HANDGUNS	range: 0-2 84% reported none	range: 0-2 84% reported none
MODIFIED SHOTGUNS/RIFLES (e.g., SAWED-OFF)	range: 0	range: 0-1 91% reported none
OTHER RESTRICTED AND PROHIBITED FIREARMS	range: 0-1 90% reported none	range: 0-1 90% reported none
SHOTGUNS/ RIFLES	range: 0-1 91% reported none	range: 0-1 91% reported none
FIREARM REPLICAS	range: 0-12 73% reported none	range: 0-8 83% reported none
AMMUNITION	range: 0-7 83% reported none	range: 0-50 83% reported none
PROHIBITED KNIVES	range: 0-24 70% reported none	range: 0-14 70% reported none
KNIVES	range: 0-41 26% reported none	range: 0-42 42% reported none
SHOP OR HOME MADE WEAPONS	range: 0-21 68% reported none	range: 0-40 73% reported none
CLUBS/BATS/STICKS	range: 0-25 67% reported none	range: 0-16 70% reported none
NUNCHAKU STICKS, STARS, ETC.	range: 0-12 81% reported none	range: 0-22 80% reported none
MACE / PEPPER SPRAYS	range: 0-1 88% reported none	range: 0-1 90% reported none
OTHER: spiked rings, roll of quarters, others not specified	range: 0-10 86% reported none	range: 0-10 83% reported none

N=69 school boards

range: indicates the minimum and maximum seizures by school boards

The story behind the seizures

Both police and school respondents related additional information. Some of their comments are included for the insight they provide:

Replica and imitation firearms: Many police officers said how hard it is to tell the difference between toy guns that look like real guns, sometimes with disastrous consequences. These replicas resemble many common revolvers, machine guns, sub-machine guns, and assault rifles. An officer confronted with what appears to be a firearm does not concentrate on the weapon per se, and definitely not its interior barrel. Some municipalities have responded by passing by-laws like this one:

"... prohibit the manufacture, display, marketing for sale or sale of a replica of a firearm." In such cases, a replica of a firearm means "a toy or other object that is not a firearm but might reasonably be mistaken for a firearm and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, shall include compressed air and compressed carbon dioxide powered B-B and pellet guns that might reasonably be mistaken for a firearm." (Ottawa Police, 1990).

Ammunition: Some officers commented that stricter laws were needed and that ammunition should be sold only to persons at least 18 years old who are holders of a firearms acquisition certificate (FAC). (In fact, such a law was passed in Ontario in 1994.)

Several urban police officers stated, "When we've conducted locker searches, we find lots of ammunition, no guns, but the guns have to be somewhere nearby."

Physical violence: Many police said they encountered physical violence in varying degrees in schools. "One on one" fights were the most common physical violence but these rarely included the use of weapons. To a lesser degree, police said that problems did exist with extortion, harassment, as well as threats of violence and revenge.

"We have always had the fights in schools, and we always will, but it is rare that weapons are used in these situations."

"The most common problem we have with violence is with students bullying and fighting — something that has always been around in the schools. The frequency of these fights does seem to be increasing in recent years though."

"Tradition is deep in the physical and intimidation rather than weapons use."

Educators' experience is quite similar:

"While violence and weapons use is still of only moderate concern in our district, we have noticed an increase in parental/community apprehension about these issues ... Fighting is of greater concern than weapons at this time with the increased involvement of females being particularly concerning."

"Our school division has undertaken a number of initiatives regarding violence and disruptive behaviour ... during the past ten years we have had only two or three situations in which guns were brought to school. There is an increase in violence and in threatening behaviour."

"We encountered difficulty in completing this survey because most of the questions simply are not applicable to a small school system... Some of our schools are in isolated areas with a relatively small population so it is difficult to envisage problems of the type or magnitude that larger centres are encountering."

"At the present time we do not have any mechanisms in place to record firearms and or weapons seizures or use."

How common are weapons in the schools?

This issue generated a divergence in opinion for a few police and educators, depending on the size of the community served and the number of schools. Many respondents had consulted with individual school principals and found almost an even split between principals who felt few schools were affected and those who felt all the schools were affected. Surveying each school within each of the school districts would be ideal but far beyond the scope of this study.

How widespread are weapons in your municipality's junior and secondary schools and on school property during school hours?

Police:

■ Junior high schools affected by firearms:	
not affected	63%
very few affected	35%
a third, half or all affected	2%
■ Secondary/high school(s) affected by firearms:	
not affected	62%
very few affected	34%
a third or all affected	4%
■ Junior high schools affected by other weapons:	
not affected	58%
very few affected	31%
a third, half or all affected	11%
a third, half or all affected	11%
■ Secondary/high school(s) affected by other weapons:	
not affected	57%
very few affected	29%
a third, half or all affected	14%

Firearms were more prevalent in junior and secondary schools in larger urban centres (25,000+) in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba. Other weapons use affected all municipality categories and all regions except Northwest Territories, Yukon, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

Educators:

■ Junior high schools affected by firearms:	
not affected	52%
very few affected	46%
half affected	2%
■ Secondary/high school(s) affected by firearms:	
not affected/very few affected	100%
■ Junior high schools affected by other weapons:	
not affected	2%
very few affected	83%
a third or all affected	16%
■ Secondary/high school(s) affected by other weapons:	
very few affected	86%
a third, half or all affected	14%

Firearms were more prevalent in junior and secondary schools in larger urban centres (100,000+) in Ontario and British Columbia. Other weapons use affected communities 10,000+ in all regions except Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon and the Maritimes.

Are weapons reported by schools to the police?

Police:

There were no significant differences in reporting of weapons by size of municipality or by region.

■ Firearms	
unknown	12%
always	63%
quite often	5%
sometimes	12%
never	9%
■ Other weapons	
unknown	4%
always	51%
quite often	13%
sometimes	24%
never	8%

If a reluctance exists to report weapons use in schools to police, what reasons are attributed to this?

Police were asked to rank 13 possible responses to this question. The four *most* frequently top-rated factors were:

1. school was able to deal with issues themselves
2. differences in educators' and police' philosophies
3. denial or avoidance that a problem exists
4. not recognizing there is a problem

The four *most* frequently second-rated factors were:

1. concern about exploitative media reporting
2. denial or avoidance a problem exists
3. not recognizing there is a problem
4. differences in educators' and police' philosophies

The four *most* frequently third-rated factors were:

1. differences in educators' and police' philosophies
2. aspects of the Young Offenders Act (perceived as lenient and inconsistently applied)
3. denial or avoidance that a problem exists
4. not recognizing there is a problem

The four *most* frequently fourth-rated factors were:

1. fear of reprisals
2. school able to deal with issues themselves
3. differences in educator and police philosophies
4. inconsistent application of school policies.

Educators:

Is firearm and other weapons use reported by school personnel to the school board?

■ Firearms	
always	76%
quite often	3%
sometimes	8%
never	14%
■ Other weapons	
always	46%
quite often	12%
sometimes	38%
never	5%

There were no particular municipal or regional differences in weapons reporting.

Is there any reluctance on the part of school personnel to report weapons use to the police?

never a reluctance	85%
sometimes	12%
quite often	2%
always	2%

There were no particular municipal or regional differences in perceptions of weapons reporting.

If a reluctance exists to report weapons use in schools to police, what reasons are attributed to this?

Educators were also asked to rank 13 possible responses to this question. Seventy-seven per cent said there was no reluctance.

Following are the first, second, third and fourth ranked factors for the 16 school boards that said there was a reluctance in reporting.

The four *most* frequently top-rated factors were:

1. school was able to deal with issues themselves, police intervention was not necessary
2. not recognizing there is a problem
3. concern of exploitative media reporting
4. aspects of the YOA (lack of consistency in sentencing, leniency, lack of information-sharing between agencies)

The four *most* frequently second-rated factors were:

1. not recognizing there is a problem
2. differences in educators' and police' philosophies (protection versus enforcement)
3. concern of exploitative media reporting
4. lack of parental support.

The four *most* frequently third-rated factors were:

1. school does not want any charges laid
2. lack of school policies on weapons use
3. denial or avoidance that a problem exists
4. fear of reprisals.

The four *most* frequently fourth-rated factors were:

1. school does not want any charges laid
2. concern of exploitative media reporting
3. lack of parental support
4. inconsistent application of school policies on weapons

When firearms or weapons are seized from a youth, do police routinely check if the youth has a previous police record?

The majority (96%) of the police services did make this routine check. There were no particular municipal or regional differences in this response.

Following firearms seizure from youth, do police routinely investigate their parents?

■ The majority of the agencies said they 'always' routinely checked to see:

if the parents owned the seized firearm taken from the youth	89%
if the parents had other firearms	66%
if the seized firearm was registered, if required	90%
if the parent had a firearms acquisition certificate	73%
if safe firearms storage regulations had been violated	70%
if the parents had a police record	74%

There were no particular differences by the size of municipality or by region.

Where do youth get weapons?

Police

It was perceived that youth aged 12 to 17 years who have firearms at school have acquired them from parents and relatives (communities 100,000 and below) or other students at their school (communities 500,000+). Most weapons are stolen, especially in communities 100,000+. There were no differences by region.

The main source of other weapons is other students at their school (municipalities 500,000+). Most other weapons are purchased or made at home or at shop (mainly communities 25,000+). There were no differences by region.

Educators

The main source of firearms was perceived to be non-students or other students at their school (mainly communities 50,000+). Most firearms had been stolen. There were no differences by region.

The main source of other weapons was students at their school, and parents or relatives. Most other weapons were shop or home made, purchased or stolen. There were no differences by size of municipality or region.

Why do youth use weapons?

Police

Main reasons why youth are using weapons in school:

- a. status symbol
- b. intimidation /power
- c. protection
- d. acceptance/to belong
- e. peer pressure
- f. situational (impulsive)

Educators

Main reasons why youth are using weapons in school:

- a. intimidation/power
- b. protection
- c. situational (impulsive)
- d. status symbol
- e. to imitate media examples

Generally, there were no differences by region or size of municipality for either group.

Who gets hurt?

Educators

Four questions were asked about the victims of weapons use. The results showed:

■ most frequent victims

students	98%
school personnel	2%

■ when teachers were hurt, their injuries were

not at all different from students	46%
somewhat different	33%
quite different	3%
very different	18%

■ students' injuries were mainly

physical	42%
emotional/psychological	58%

■ teachers' were mainly

physical	4%
emotional/psychological	96%

There were no differences by size of municipality or region.

REVISED UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING SURVEY (UCR2)

Forty-seven police agencies in Canada participate in Statistics Canada, 'UCR2'. This participation has been gradual over time (a few sites commenced reporting in 1988, other sites were added in 1989, etc.). This is the only national data source in which police services currently submit information on weapons use by youth in schools.

FACTORS:

- Statistics from 12 urban police services involved in the 'Revised UCR Survey'. The remaining 35 agencies were not reflected because they were represented collectively as one data source.
- Variables: (a) weapons, series 1000 which represents only the most serious violent incidents against a person; (b) location, school; (c) time, during school hours, 0830 to 1630; (d) police department; and, (f) crime committed by youth, aged 12 to 17 years.
- The size of the municipalities represented:
 - 500,000 & above (3 sites); 250,000 to 499,999 (2 sites); 100,000 to 249,999 (3 sites); 50,000 to 99,999 (2 sites); 25,000 to 49,999 (1 site); and, 2,500 to 4,999 (1 site).
- The 'weapon' categories include: automatic firearm, sawed-off rifle, handgun, rifle/shotgun, other firearm, knife, other piercing instrument, club, fire, physical force, other weapon, threat, no weapon, and unknown.

REPORTS:

- 'Physical force' was identified as the most frequent 'weapon' category for youth involvement, regardless of population size, with an average of 44 youth, and ranging from 231 youth to 1 youth, other than in Toronto which identified more youth were involved in the 'other weapon' category first, followed by 'physical force';
- 'Threats' differed across the centres, with an average of 3 youth, ranging from 34 youth to none, and with the majority reporting no youth involvement;
- 'Knives' were identified as the second most frequent weapons used, regardless of population size, with an average of 7 youth and ranging from 47 youth to none;
- 'Firearms' were identified by five centres 100,000 and above, with an average of 6 youth and ranging from 17 youth to one;
- 'Other weapons' were identified by six centres 250,000 and above, with an average of 20 youth, ranging from 103 youth to one;
- 'Clubs' and 'Other Piercing Instruments' were identified by seven centres, regardless of population size, with an average of 14 youth and ranging from 82 youth to 1.

Note: Comparisons over time could not be made because the number of respondents reporting UCR2 increased over time. In addition, respondents may have begun reporting in mid-year so that annual data from 1988 to 1992 was incomplete. Therefore, only the 1992 data was considered, which rendered the results above.

Source: Statistics Canada (1994)

WHY ARE WEAPONS USED BY YOUTH?

Police

Police named these factors as the top five contributing to weapons use:

1. lack of parental intervention
2. media influences
3. aspects of YOA (lack of consistency in sentencing, leniency, lack of information-sharing between agencies)
4. easy availability of other weapons
5. easy availability of firearms from home/friends

Thirty-seven per cent of respondents (mostly from municipalities of 25,000 and below) gave no response to this question on the basis that their municipality had no problems with weapons in schools, and therefore the question did not apply to them.

Educators

The top five contributing factors included:

1. easy availability of other weapons
2. media influences
3. lack of parental intervention
4. aspects of YOA (lack of consistency in sentencing, leniency, lack of information-sharing between agencies)
5. drug pushers

Once again, 36 per cent of respondents (mainly from municipalities of 25,000 and below) ignored this question. They stated that their municipality did not have concerns about weapons, therefore the question did not apply to their school board.

RESPONSES TO SUPPRESS WEAPONS USE

Police

The most frequent actions to suppress weapons use were:

- parents are contacted by police and school
- police are notified
- student suspended
- schools deal with the issue themselves
- investigation and charges laid

The least frequent responses were:

- TV cameras, metal detectors
- security guards
- student placed in alternative learning situation
- student transferred to another school
- protocols i.e., dress codes, ID badges

When asked this question, 28 per cent of the sample (once again mainly from municipalities of 25,000 and below) did not answer this question.

Educators

The most frequent responses reported by educators were:

- schools deal with the issue themselves
- parents are contacted by school
- police are notified
- student suspended
- policies on student conduct

The *least* frequent responses were:

- TV cameras, metal detectors
- security guards
- community-based programs
- student placed in alternative learning situation
- student transferred to another school
- classroom curriculum that addresses violence and weapons use
- alternative options for consequences rather than the justice system and enforcement

This time, 17 per cent (mainly from municipalities of 100,000 and below) did not answer this question.

Expelling offenders

Educators were asked how many students had been expelled in the school board in 1993. The question was not worded to exclude expulsions for reasons other than violence. Unfortunately, it is unknown whether these totals include all expulsions or only those due to violence. (Many educators commented they were including only those numbers due to violence, however, it cannot be assumed all boards did the same.) Nonetheless, the findings are still relevant in that they reflect differences across regions and size of municipalities for this practice.

The 29 school boards that responded expelled 9 students on average — actual annual expulsions ranged from 1 to 86. Most expelled two a year. School boards in Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon expelled the most students — 25 or more in the year.

Thirty-three school boards reported no expulsions during 1993; seven did not answer this question.

Does your school board have policies, regulations or procedures regarding weapons use in the schools?

Educators

The *most* frequent policies included:

- student conduct
- intruders
- dealing with violent students
- reporting all violent incident to school authorities
- possession of an offensive weapon
- contacting the police

Despite the fact that school boards frequently mentioned the *Young Offenders Act* and proactive media strategies earlier in the survey, neither was included in school board policies.

Twenty-six per cent of the boards had workers compensation policies in place to protect employees from violence.

Communications

Do we need a centralized information system or flow chart that identifies agencies active in this field and their responsibility for youth?

<i>Police</i>	
Yes	54%
No	46%
<i>Educators</i>	
Yes	70%
No	25%

There were no significant differences by region or municipality category.

Would your school board be willing to work with your local police department to develop or improve and evaluate these primary prevention strategies?

- improving staff and student personal perceptions of safety
- fostering self-reliance
- improving social networks

<i>Educators</i>	
Yes	94%

About two-thirds of this group were willing to participate in a project to survey students and staff about weapons use in their schools. There were no significant differences by region or municipality category.

CONSIDERATIONS

This study reviews factors that encourage and support weapons use among youth, but any such research must be evaluated in the greater social and cultural context. No single approach can fully explain weapons use and violence or its recent phenomenal increase in the urban setting.

The literature reports a wide range of findings demonstrating that our society and culture itself is both promoting and buffering violence.

Video effects

Though most Canadians abhor violence, fictional heroes and media images often glorify interpersonal violence. Violent films are widely attended. The news media present images reflecting violence in society and in some cases may exploit or contribute to it.

The effects of violence in the media, however, may be mitigated by teaching children critical viewing skills. There is also evidence to suggest that television can be used to educate and inform, making a major contribution to solving the violence problem rather than contributing to it.

A number of promising programs in classroom management, problem solving skills training, violence prevention and safer violence-free environments for school children and youth have been developed, but few have been evaluated.

The school culture

Schools provide multiple opportunities for bullying, harassment, intimidation, fights, thefts, and other forms of violence. Students who feel personally threatened may bring weapons to school. Students who show poor school achievement and poor peer relations are at increased risk of becoming involved in violence, weapons, drug use and gangs.

On the other hand, schools also give children and youth the opportunity to follow sound principles of personal safety, strengthen academic and social skills, develop sound peer relationships and learn effective non-violent solutions to social conflict.

The school system presents a new frontier for developing primary prevention programs. There is no quick fix to end weapons use and its associated violence, and its impact on our youth. However, the school system, in collaboration with community agencies and the police, offers a most promising light at the end of the tunnel.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The study verifies some known facts and also clarifies other not-so-apparent perceptions. The issue is now: where does government proceed from here? In particular:

- where does the Solicitor General Canada focus its strategic planning on the issue?
- how does the Ministry develop policy that will promote collaboration and partnerships to assist police services in Canada to meet the challenges brought about by weapons in the schools?

Given the Solicitor General's federal responsibility for national leadership in policing, an obvious focus would be the promotion of policy and research through community policing. Law enforcement agencies across Canada are endorsing community policing. There is a recognition by many police departments that simply adopting various community-based policing strategies are not, of themselves, community-based policing.

If these strategies are not integrated into the main operational structure and culture of the entire agency, they will be nothing more than an add-on public relations exercise. The partnership inherent in these programs will ensure that both the schools and the public are an integral part of the development process.

Based on this study's findings, the following policy and research considerations are made to assist with the strategic planning process. They are collected under three key research areas:

- the nature and extent of weapons use by Canadian youth in school
- why weapons are used by youth
- reactions to suppress weapons use

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The nature and extent of weapons use by Canadian youth in school

Mechanisms for the systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of data on the risk and prevalence of weapons use and violence need to be coordinated between agencies with responsibility for children and youth.

- Data should be collected, analyzed, and reported on the risk of and prevalence of weapons use as related to violence by children and youth, in schools and on school property during school hours.
- Data should be collected, analyzed, and reported on the risk of and prevalence of weapons use as related to violence by and toward the predominant racial and ethnic groups and subgroups.
- Data should be collected, analyzed, and reported on the prevalence of weapons use as related to violence toward gay and lesbian youth and youth with disabilities.
- Data should be collected, analyzed, and reported on the prevalence of youth gangs, their breadth of location, their activities, their involvement with drug distribution in relation to their use of weapons and violence, as well as the psychological attributes and functioning of males and females who participate in gangs.

Why weapons are used by youth

Producers and distributors of television and video programming should be required to provide clear and easy-to-use warning labels regarding violent material to permit viewers to make informed choices.

Efforts should be aimed at increasing sensitivity to cultural differences while reducing discrimination and prejudice, which create a climate conducive to weapons use and violence.

- Early exposure to cultural influences that help children and youth build a positive ethnic identity and a sense of belonging to a group with shared traditions and values may help buffer them against social risk factors for involvement in weapons and violence.

A strong developmental predictor of child and youth involvement in violence is a history of previous violence. Effective intervention with aggression and violent behaviour in childhood is critical, and the earlier the better.

- By intervening to counteract, buffer, deflect, or otherwise mitigate developmental factors which are conducive to violence, one can reduce the risk that children and youth will become involved in violence as aggressors, victims or bystanders who condone violence.
- It is critical that a developmental perspective be incorporated into all violence-related interventions.

Responses to suppress weapons use

Solutions should be viewed within the broader, school-community context.

- A greater thrust should be made towards better coordination and integration of institutional and community agencies involved with children and youth, which involves linking information sharing, self-help (empowerment), counselling and public education.
- It is quintessential to include the police as part of the solution to suppress weapons use and violence within the schools.
- Interventions that have a primary prevention focus and promote co-operation and less fragmentation within inter-agency service delivery should be emphasized.

Public and media consciousness has to be raised to the point where a broad plan of action to suppress weapons use and violence is undertaken.

We must adopt a national education program for the promotion of non-violent attitudes.

Police departments and school boards need to implement or expand their community policing efforts and in-service training to include:

- Joint training for professional groups that actively enlists participants in the prevention of weapons use and violence.
- Social and cultural sensitivity training which encourages the increased participation by members of the community.

Legislative changes are needed regarding restrictions on ammunition and imitation and replica firearms sales.

Aspects of the *Young Offenders Act* should be reviewed, including:

- Public and professional education to address the wide lack of understanding about the Act.
- The lack of consistency in sentencing by judges.
- Immediate consequences for criminal behaviour, especially consequences which match the crime.
- Allow agencies dealing with youth a greater exchange and use of criminal history information on young offenders.
- Focus attention on the victims of crime.
- That parents be held accountable for the actions of their children.

RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

The nature and extent of weapons use by Canadian youth in school

Conduct research on the phenomenon of motiveless interpersonal violence.

Conduct research on violence by females.

- To what degree are the differences between boys and girls in aggression attributed to biological gender differences or to sex role socialization into different expectations for appropriate behaviour?

Determine why young people carry weapons and what factors motivate their decision to obtain and carry weapons.

Determine the victimization rates arising from the use of weapons and violence in schools.

Determine the extent to which adults are obtaining weapons across Canadian borders and then distributing them to youth.

Why weapons are used by youth

Support efforts that develop, implement and evaluate alternative programs and custody interventions of overtly violent youth.

- Encourage schools and police departments to engage in the early identification of children and youth who show evidence of problems related to violence.

Study those features which identify students who are drawn to excessive forms of media violence and how media violence fits into the students lifestyle.

Responses to suppress weapons use

Participate in studies on how to mobilize and empower communities to take responsibility for addressing weapons use and violence within their own communities.

Support efforts which develop, implement, and evaluate:

- Comprehensive school-based and police-based violence prevention programs along with interventions designed to provide a safe learning environment and which teach students sound and effective principles of violence prevention.
- School-based curricula and teaching strategies that help build resistance to violence both as perpetrators and/or victims.
- Meta-analyses of programs that have demonstrated an ability to interrupt a student's trajectory towards violence.

- Police school liaison officer roles, police-based programs and initiatives.

Research the effects of altering those factors in the school environment that have been shown to be conducive to aggression (e.g., overcrowding; inflexible use of rules in the classroom; teacher hostility and lack of rapport; and inconsistencies in the limits of tolerance for student's misbehaviour).

Conduct research to determine police and school attitudes about police school liaison officer involvement in school programs.

Support those efforts to develop, implement and evaluate school-based programs that teach critical media viewing skills.

Conduct research with parents to determine their needs in dealing with children's viewing and violence in the media.

Conduct research on the implementation of school-based 'zero-tolerance' policies and the implications for community-based policing.

Support efforts of parents organizations to develop, implement and evaluate parent-child management training programs that foster a repertoire of disciplining techniques. These programs should include behaviour management and social skills training courses to improve family communication and reduce youth behaviour problems.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study included six components:

1. a synthesis of the relevant literature including a comprehensive review of the nature and extent of weapons use, contributing factors, and the many ways used to suppress weapons use
2. an analysis of the incident-based research (variables included weapons, school, police department, and a crime against the person) from the Policing Services Program, Statistics Canada, Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (1988 to 1992), as well as the data collection systems within specific police departments (1992-1993)
3. on-site focus groups, individual and telephone interviews with police, educators and customs personnel from Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta and Quebec
4. separate consultations, including a conference on violence-free schools held by the British Columbia Teachers Federation, a conference on the prevention of youth violence in Victoria, British Columbia, a national conference on youth violence and youth gangs in Hull, Quebec, an Education Department forum on student conduct and school violence in Edmonton, Alberta, an Ontario Ministry summit for violence-free schools in Ottawa, Ontario and the annual meeting of elementary school principals for the Ottawa-Carleton Board of Education
5. a national mail-out survey of 510 police services in centres from 100 - 500,000+
6. a national mail-out survey of 125 school boards with student enrolments from 1800 to over 100,000

Definitions

■ *Community groupings:* The study followed the Statistics Canada municipal size categories for sample selection for the surveys and for reporting findings:

100 - 2499

2500 - 4999

5000 - 9999

10,000 - 24,999

25,000 - 49,999

50,000 - 99,999

100,000 - 249,999

250,000 - 499,999

500,000 +

■ *Region:* one of the 10 provinces and 2 territories.

■ *Offensive weapon:* includes the Criminal Code definition and any article that matches these descriptions:

- a. any article made or adapted to be used as a weapon for use for causing injury to another person
- b. any article intended by the person having it for such use
- c. intended to serve as intimidation for such use, whether or not it is designed to be used as a weapon

■ *School property:* all school yards, playing fields and associated parking lots as well as all public streets and sidewalks immediately bordering the school premises

FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

Twenty focus groups (13 police groups; 4 educator groups and 3 customs groups) and 13 separate individual interviews took place involving 235 individuals from the three targeted groups. In addition, six consultations were undertaken at meetings and conferences. The individual groups, interviews and consultations took place with representatives from cities in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia.

The findings reported in this chapter reflect the urban environment, as the focus groups were held with individuals involved with schools in urban centres 50,000 and above. Given the belief that weapons in schools are more an urban phenomenon it was deemed important to test that fact in this exploratory study.

After this part of the study and further discussions with Canada Customs managers, it was decided not to pursue other customs-related research because of the low incidence of weapons seizure from Canadian youth at border crossings.

NATIONAL POLICE AND EDUCATORS MAIL-OUT SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Surveys were mailed to 510 police services and 125 school boards across Canada. This resulted in response rates of 68 per cent or 344 police service surveys, and 55 per cent or 69 surveys from school boards. These response rates are favourable. The norm is 28 per cent cited for response rates to mail-out surveys (Henry, 1990; Jackson, 1988).

Response rate from the police surveys was well distributed across the country and can be treated as representative. School boards in the 250,000+ group were underrepresented, and included large cities in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. The survey results must be interpreted in this light, however this deficiency is compensated for by the representative nature of focus groups, interviews and other consultations.

Police respondents

■ The respondents completing the police survey were assigned to:

School resource/liaison, crime prevention or street crime units	37%
General duties	31%
Officer in charge of the detachment, chief of police or administration	26%
General investigation services/criminal investigation bureau/youth bureau	5%
Records/court	1%

■ Rank of respondents was as follows:

Corporals or constables	45%
Staff sergeants or sergeants	29%
Inspectors, superintendents or chiefs	26%

School board respondents

■ The respondents completing the educator survey were at these levels:

Superintendent/director of schools	67%
Assistant or deputy superintendents	33%

Schools serviced by police respondents

■ As of March 26, 1994, the responding police services had responsibility for schools as follows:

One elementary school	8%
Three elementary schools	13%
Average:	17 elementary schools
Maximum (one regional force):	622 schools

One junior high school	31%
Average:	4 junior high schools
Maximum:	93 schools

One high school	43%
Average:	4 high schools
Maximum:	157 schools

■ Total schools serviced

One school total	2%
Four schools total	10%
Ten schools total	8%
Average:	22 schools
Maximum:	790 schools

Schools serviced by educator respondents

As of April 19, 1994, the responding school boards were serving municipalities from 2500 to 500,000+ and were responsible on average for 35 schools (including separate, public and independent schools).

■ Range of schools

Responsible to board	2 to 228 schools
Average number of students:	14,658
Range of student enrollment	325 to 105,000

■ Educational level of schools:

Elementary schools	
Range	0 to 191
Average	25

Junior high schools	
Range	0 to 91
Average	9

High schools	
Range	0 to 37
Average	5

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES

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