



# SCHOOL CRIME 2015-2017



TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
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**Mark Gwyn**  
Director

May 15, 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is releasing its annual School Crimes Study. This study presents the nature, volume, and extent of reported crimes on school campuses, excluding colleges and universities in 2017.

The study is based on data submitted to the TBI through the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program, which collects data on all crimes occurring in Tennessee. All law enforcement agencies as well as colleges and universities, are mandated to report crime statistics to the TBI. This study is produced from the TIBRS program and includes comparison statistics.

This study will hopefully assist law enforcement, school administrations, and government officials in planning their efforts in the fight against crime and continue to create awareness that crime exists as a threat to our communities. The threats to society by criminal activity must be addressed by efforts from all law-abiding citizens, as well as law enforcement agencies.

Thank you to all participating law enforcement agencies for their hard work and contributions to making this report a thorough and accurate picture of crime in Tennessee. It is only with their support that the state continues to maintain such a successful TIBRS program.

Sincerely,

Mark Gwyn  
Director



## Introduction

This study presents information about the characteristics surrounding crime in Tennessee schools, focusing upon public and private school systems, excluding colleges/universities and technical schools. The time frame covered by this study was the years 2015 through 2017. This study was completed using data provided to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS).

**Explanatory Note:** This report is based on incidents submitted by law enforcement agencies and excludes offenses reported by colleges and universities. Data submitted by colleges and universities is contained in the annual Crime on Campus report which can be viewed on the TBI website at [www.tn.gov/tbi](http://www.tn.gov/tbi). Since the offense of Justifiable Homicide is not considered a crime, the offense is excluded from the study.

It is important to understand the characteristics surrounding school crime; the offenders who reportedly commit these offenses; and the demographics of the victims. A better understanding of these characteristics will help law enforcement, policy makers, school administrators, and the public properly combat and reduce the amount of crime occurring at Tennessee schools.

Situations surrounding school crime vary based on the offender's motive and the intended victim. For example, incidents involving student offenders and student victims constitute the stereotypical definition of crime at schools where the offender and victim are present to participate in school related activities. However, there are situations involving adult and/or juvenile offenders and victims where the school serves only as an offense location. Crimes perpetrated by offenders against victims who are not instructors or students and have no other relation to the school, i.e. a drug deal committed in a campus parking lot or an assault involving multiple offenders and victims, would be examples of such situations.

### What is Incident Based Reporting?

Incident based reporting views a crime and all of its components as an incident. In order to obtain incident data, facts recorded and preserved about the incident are organized into specific categories or segments. The mechanism used for recording these facts is a data element. Data elements provide information about crime and its involvement with victims, offenders, property, arrestees, etc.

### What is TIBRS?

The Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program is designed to collect data on every single crime occurrence and on each incident and arrest within the occurrence. TIBRS differs from the national crime statistics data released by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR). The most significant difference between TIBRS and the national UCR summary data is the degree of detail in reporting. Unlike the summary system that collects only eight Part 1 crimes (Murder, Forcible Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson), TIBRS collects 24 crime categories made up of 54 specific crimes called Group A offenses. Additionally, arrests are reported for 10 Group B offense categories. Under the summary UCR program, only the most serious offense was reported. In TIBRS, up to ten offenses can be reported in an incident, providing a much more accurate picture of crime. Because of the differences between UCR summary data and TIBRS data, any cross-comparisons would provide inaccurate results in trend analysis.

Additionally, the ability to conduct the type of data analysis found in this report is due in large part to the amount of detailed information collected through an incident based reporting system.

## Methodology

The study specifically addresses incident characteristics, offender characteristics, offense characteristics, and victim characteristics.

Throughout this study, age groups are used versus individual age. The age groups are: Under 18, 18 – 24, 25 – 34, 35 – 44, 45 – 54, 55 – 64, 65 and Over, and Unknown.

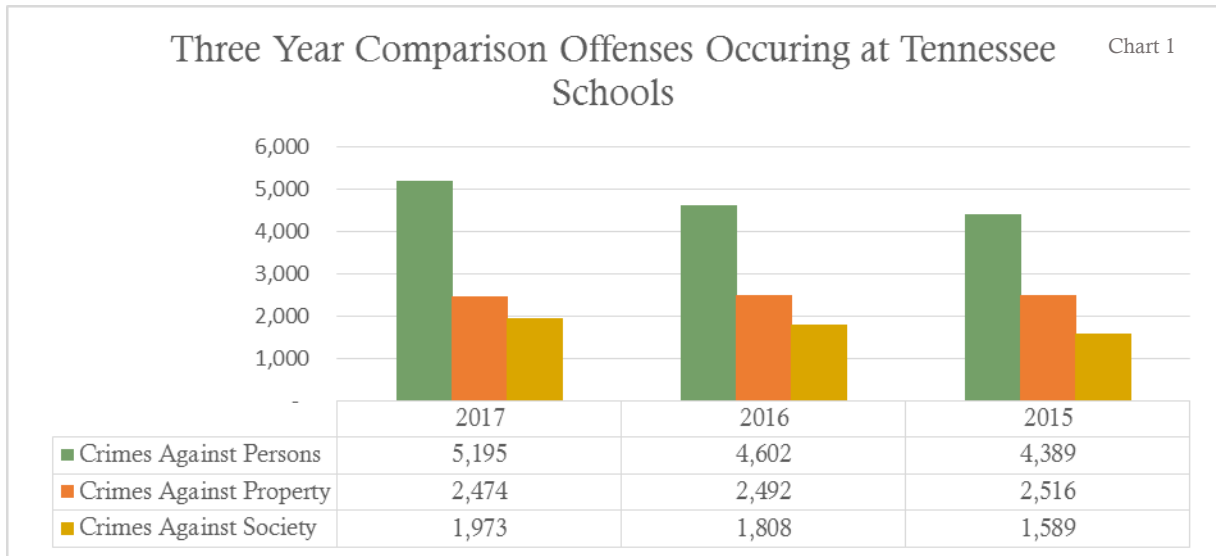
An additional consideration for this study is that Victim to Offender relationships are only collected for those offenses that are considered as Crimes Against Persons and Robbery. Crimes Against Persons consist of the offenses: Murder, Non-negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Vehicular Manslaughter, Kidnapping/Abduction, Rape, Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, Fondling, Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Intimidation, Stalking, Incest, Statutory Rape, Commercial Sex Acts, and Involuntary Servitude.

## Quick Facts

- ❖ From 2015 to 2017, a total of 27,038 offenses were reported by Tennessee law enforcement agencies with a school location code.
- ❖ Overall, the number of offenses occurring in school increased 13.5% from 8,494 offenses in 2015 to 9,642 offenses in 2017.
- ❖ Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense (37.4%).
- ❖ From 2015 to 2017, 78.4% of school crime offenses that showed a clearance were cleared by arrest and 21.6% were exceptionally cleared.
- ❖ Friday was the most frequently reported day of week for school crimes.
- ❖ School crime offenses occurred predominately between 12:00 pm and 2:59 pm.
- ❖ The month of September had the highest frequency of school crimes.
- ❖ The most common weapon type was Personal Weapons (hands, fist, feet, etc.) at 80.1%.
- ❖ Females accounted for 52.8% of total victims and 46.8% of the victims were Male.
- ❖ Males contributed to 57.3% of the offender total compared to 26.4% reported as Female. The remaining offenders were reported as having an Unknown gender (7.3%) or Missing (9.0%).
- ❖ Males aged 16-17 were the most reported offenders comprising a total of 28.1% followed by the age group category of 14-15 at 27.4%.
- ❖ Black or African American was the most reported offender's race (44.3%), followed by White at 37.3%.

## School Crime Offenses by Year

School crime reported in Tennessee elementary and secondary schools has shown a steady increase over the past three years. Over this study period, reported crime in Tennessee schools increased 13.5% from 8,494 offenses in 2015 to 9,642 offenses in 2017. More specifically, two of the three TIBRS Group A categories have shown a year-to-year increase in reported offenses. Reported Crimes Against Society offenses saw the most significant increase at 24.2% from 2015 to 2017 whereas, Crimes Against Property decreased slightly by 1.7%. Crimes against Persons increased by 18.4% from 2015 to 2017.



- ❖ Crimes Against Persons are those crimes in which victims are always individuals, or law enforcement officials, e.g., Murder, Rape, Aggravated Assault, etc.
- ❖ Crimes Against Property are those crimes in which the offender's intent is to obtain money, property, or some other benefit, e.g., Robbery, Bribery, Burglary, etc..
- ❖ Crimes Against Society are those crimes which represent society's prohibition against engaging in certain types of illegal activity, e.g., Gambling, Prostitution, Drug Violations, etc.

Simple Assault was the most common offense reported during this time frame accounting for 37.4% of the overall offenses reported in 2017. Further examination of 2017 data indicated that Drug Violations had the next highest frequency at 12.2%, followed by Theft from a Building at 10.4%.

Analysis on the three year study period also revealed that Drug Violations increased significantly by 29.2% from 2015 to 2017.

## School Crimes by Clearance Three Year Comparison

	Offenses Cleared			Percent Change		
	2015	2016	2017	2015 to 2016	2016 to 2017	2015 to 2017
<b>TIBRS Group A Offenses</b>						
<b>Crimes Against Persons - Total</b>	<b>4,389</b>	<b>4,602</b>	<b>5,195</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
Murder	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Negligent Vehicular Manslaughter	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kidnapping/Abduction	21	23	28	9.5%	21.7%	33.3%
Rape	21	38	34	81.0%	-10.5%	61.9%
Sodomy	15	10	14	-33.3%	40.0%	-6.7%
Sexual Assault w/Object	9	6	9	-33.3%	50.0%	0.0%
Fondling	245	319	363	30.2%	13.8%	48.2%
Incest	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Statutory Rape	8	3	8	-62.5%	166.7%	0.0%
Aggravated Assault	207	234	295	13.0%	26.1%	42.5%
Simple Assault	3,109	3,235	3,604	4.1%	11.4%	15.9%
Intimidation	744	722	808	-3.0%	11.9%	8.6%
Stalking	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Commercial Sex Acts	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Involuntary Servitude	10	12	32	20.0%	166.7%	220.0%
<b>Crimes Against Property - Total</b>	<b>2,516</b>	<b>2,498</b>	<b>2,475</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>-1.6%</b>
Arson	15	13	21	-13.3%	61.5%	40.0%
Bribery	1	0	0	-100.0%	N/A	-100.0%
Burglary	189	187	253	-1.1%	35.3%	33.9%
Counterfeiting/Forgery	39	44	48	12.8%	9.1%	23.1%
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism	535	609	625	13.8%	2.6%	16.8%
Embezzlement	7	12	12	71.4%	0.0%	71.4%
Extortion/Blackmail	1	2	3	100.0%	50.0%	200.0%
Fraud - False Pretenses	20	28	23	40.0%	-17.9%	15.0%
Fraud - Credit Card/ATM	11	6	8	-45.5%	33.3%	-27.3%
Fraud - Impersonation	8	7	7	-12.5%	0.0%	-12.5%
Fraud - Welfare	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fraud - Wire	1	2	1	100.0%	-50.0%	0.0%
Fraud- Identity Theft	0	0	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fraud- Computer Hacking/Invasion	0	1	1	N/A	0.0%	N/A
Robbery	24	36	31	50.0%	-13.9%	29.2%
Theft - Pocket Picking	22	12	17	-45.5%	41.7%	-22.7%
Theft - Purse Snatching	3	4	5	33.3%	25.0%	66.7%
Theft - Shoplifting	5	4	2	-20.0%	-50.0%	-60.0%
Theft from Building	1,308	1,120	1,007	-14.4%	-10.1%	-23.0%
Theft from Coin Machine	0	1	4	N/A	300.0%	N/A
Theft from Motor Vehicle	73	112	115	53.4%	2.7%	57.5%
Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts	15	30	15	100.0%	-50.0%	0.0%
Theft - All Other Larceny	204	234	227	14.7%	-3.0%	11.3%
Motor Vehicle Theft	29	29	39	0.0%	34.5%	34.5%
Stolen Property Offenses	6	5	7	-16.7%	40.0%	16.7%
<b>Crimes Against Society - Total</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>1,970</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>
Animal Cruelty	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drug Violations	911	1,089	1,177	19.5%	-7.5%	29.2%
Drug Equipment Violations	261	271	341	3.8%	-20.5%	30.7%
Gambling-Betting/Wagering	1	3	3	200.0%	0.0%	200.0%
Gambling-Operating/Promoting	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gambling-Equipment Violation	1	1	0	0.0%	N/A	-100.0%
Gambling-Sports Tampering	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pornography/Obscene Materials	120	117	135	-2.5%	-13.3%	12.5%
Prostitution	5	0	1	-100.0%	-100.0%	-80.0%
Purchasing Prostitution	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prostitution-Assisting/Promoting	0	0	1	N/A	-100.0%	N/A
Weapon Law Violations	290	327	312	12.8%	4.8%	7.6%
<b>Total School Crimes by Clearance</b>	<b>8,494</b>	<b>8,908</b>	<b>9,640</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>13.9%</b>

Note: Cleared by Arrest and Exceptional Clearances are combined.

## School Crime Offenses by Clearances

Per TIBRS, there are two ways to clear an offense. The offenses can be Cleared by Arrest or Cleared by Exceptional Means. If an arrest has been made in an incident, an exceptional clearance is never applicable and cannot be submitted. A total of 14,026 of the 27,038 offenses were cleared from 2015-2017. Of all the offense clearance types reported for 2015- 2017, 78.4% of school crime offenses were cleared by arrest and 21.6% were exceptionally cleared.

An offense is cleared exceptionally when an element beyond law enforcement control prevents a physical arrest. All four of the following incidents must be met to clear an offense by exceptional means:

1. The investigation must have established the identity of at least one offender. This means the agency knows at least one offender's sex, race, age, ethnicity, and resident's status.
2. Sufficient probable cause must have been developed to support the arrest, charging, and prosecution of the offender.
3. The exact (present) location of the offender must be known so that an arrest could be made.
4. There must be a reason outside of law enforcement control, which prevents the arrest. The valid reasons and explanations are provided below.

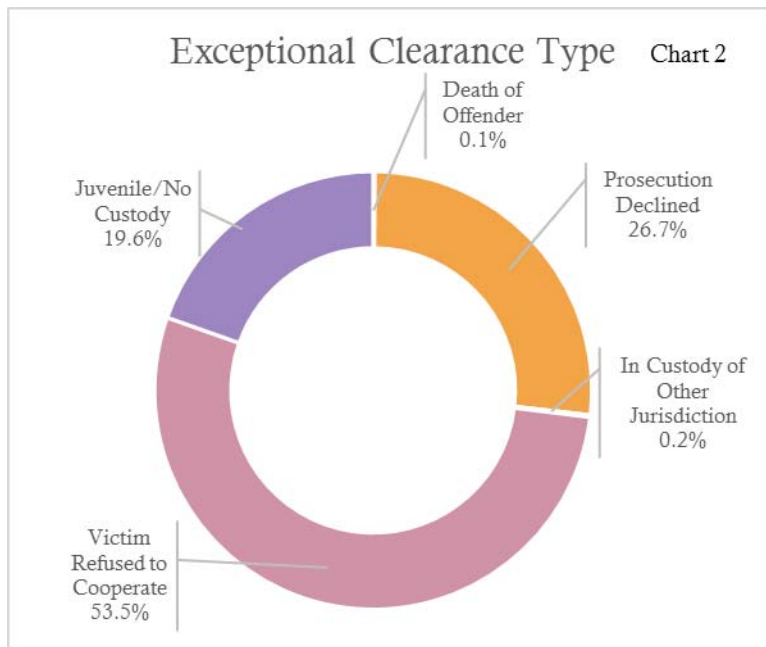


Chart 2 breaks down the different reportable exceptional clearance types. Victim Refused to Cooperate was the most common exceptional clearance with 53.5% of all exceptional clearances during the three year study period.

Prosecution Declined accounted for the second highest reported at 26.7%. Juvenile/No Custody accounted for 19.6%. Death of Offender and In Custody of Other Jurisdiction accounted for less than one percent of all reported types.

Another point to remember is, in a multiple offense incident the exceptional clearance of any one offense involved clears an entire incident. An incident cannot be cleared exceptionally when an arrest has been made in connection with the incident because the incident will be cleared by arrest.



## Day of Week

Data shown on Chart 3 revealed that Friday had the greatest number of offenses reported accounting 20.0%, followed by Thursday at 19.9%. Data also revealed an increase of 15.1% from Sunday to Monday indicating that offenses are less likely to occur in the beginning of the week.

Sunday and Saturday combined accounted for a total of 4.2% compared to other days of the week.

## Time of Day

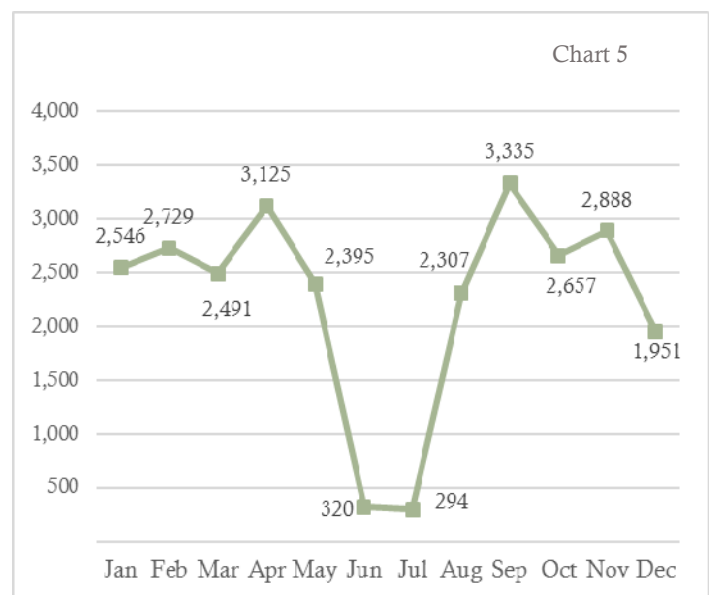
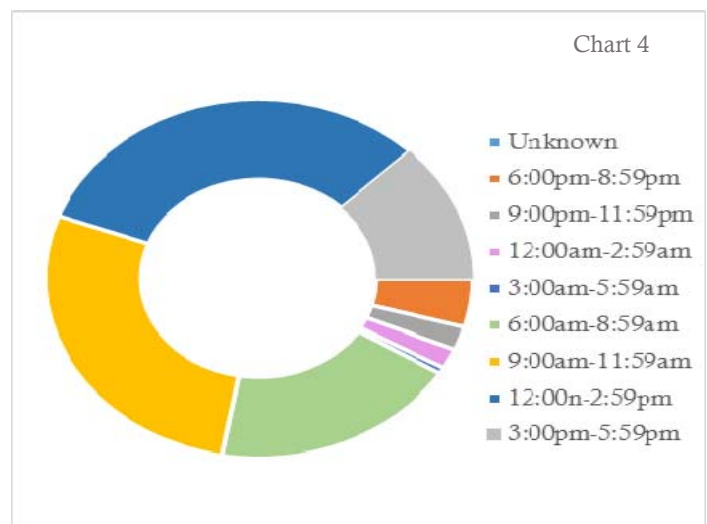
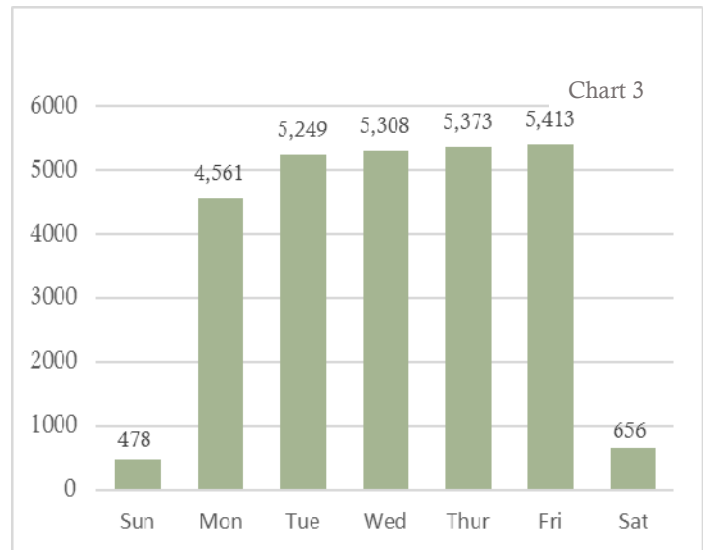
Further analysis of data revealed the incident time frame of noon to 2:59 pm was the most common time for offense occurrences at 31.8%, followed by the time frame of 9:00 am to 11:59 am at 27.9%.

Offenses were less likely to occur during the time frame of 3:00am -5:59 am —when schools are closed.

## School Crimes by Month

Additionally, September had the greatest number of reported offenses representing 12.3% followed by the month of April at 11.6%.

The frequency of offenses decreased in June and July, when schools are not generally in session, accounting a combined total 2.3% of the overall reported incidents within the three year study





## School Crime Offenses by Weapon Type

Of the 27,038 reported offenses, 46.7% reported an offense with a weapon involved. The largest percentage of weapon type used in offenses at Tennessee schools was Personal Weapons (i.e. hands, fist, feet, etc.) accounting for 80.1% of reportable weapon types in TIBRS. The second most reported weapon category was Dangerous Weapons (i.e. knife/cutting instrument, blunt object) at 6.6%.

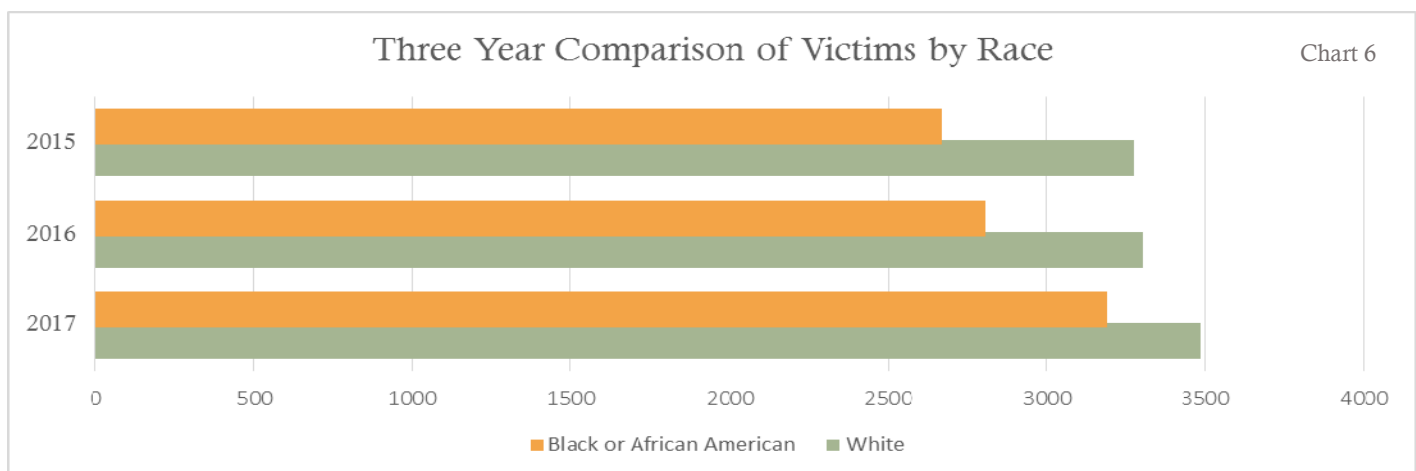
Weapon Types Involved in School Crime Offenses	
Weapon Type Category	Number of Offenses
Firearm	351
Dangerous Weapons	828
Motor Vehicle as Weapon	39
Asphyxiation/Strangulation	9
Personal Weapons	10,121
Poison/Drugs	7
Fire Explosives	19
Other/Unknown	1,263

Note: Up to three weapon types may be reported per incident.

Per TIBRS, up to five injury types may be reported with offenses requiring an injury entry. The majority of injuries were reported as None with 61.0%. The second most frequent injury type reported was Apparent Minor Injury at 37.1%. The remaining injury types comprised less than one percent of reported injuries within the three year study period.

## School Crime Victims

From 2015 to 2017, a total of 19,093 victims were involved in a school crime. This number includes victims of multiple offenses (i.e. a victim involved in a Simple Assault offense and a Theft offense will be counted twice). The number of school crime victims has increased 11.4% from 2015 to 2017. Females accounted for 52.8% of total victims and 46.8% of the victims were Male. There were a total of 78 victims with an Unknown gender. The most frequently reported victim race was White (52.7%) followed by Black or African-American (45.4%). The remaining 1.8% of victims had a race of Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, or Unknown race and are not included in the chart below.



## School Crime Victims Continued

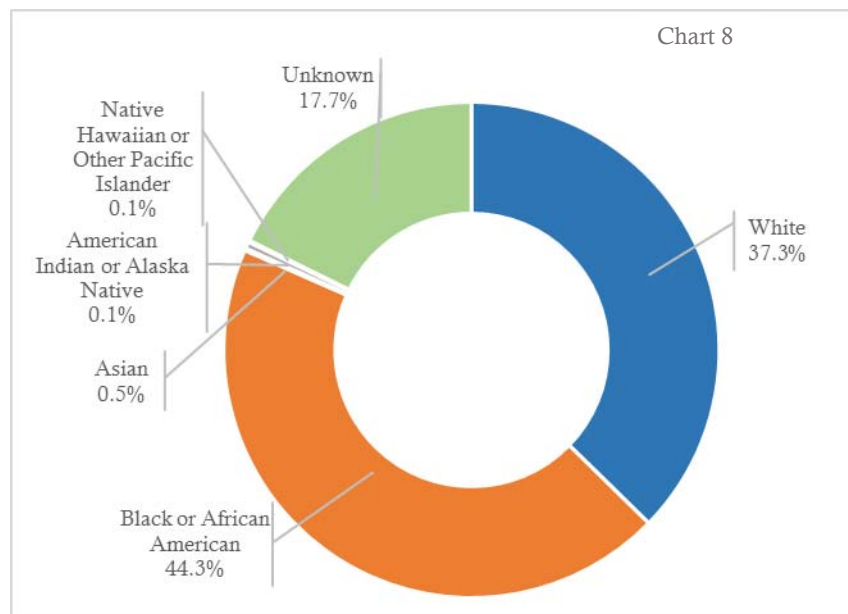
The age group category of 14-15 had the highest percentage of victims (25.1%) followed by the age group category of 16-17 year old category (21.1%). Victims with an age of Unknown accounted for 0.7% of the victim total count in this study period.



Please note: The above graph does not include victims involved in multiple offenses; it is only a count of individual victims.

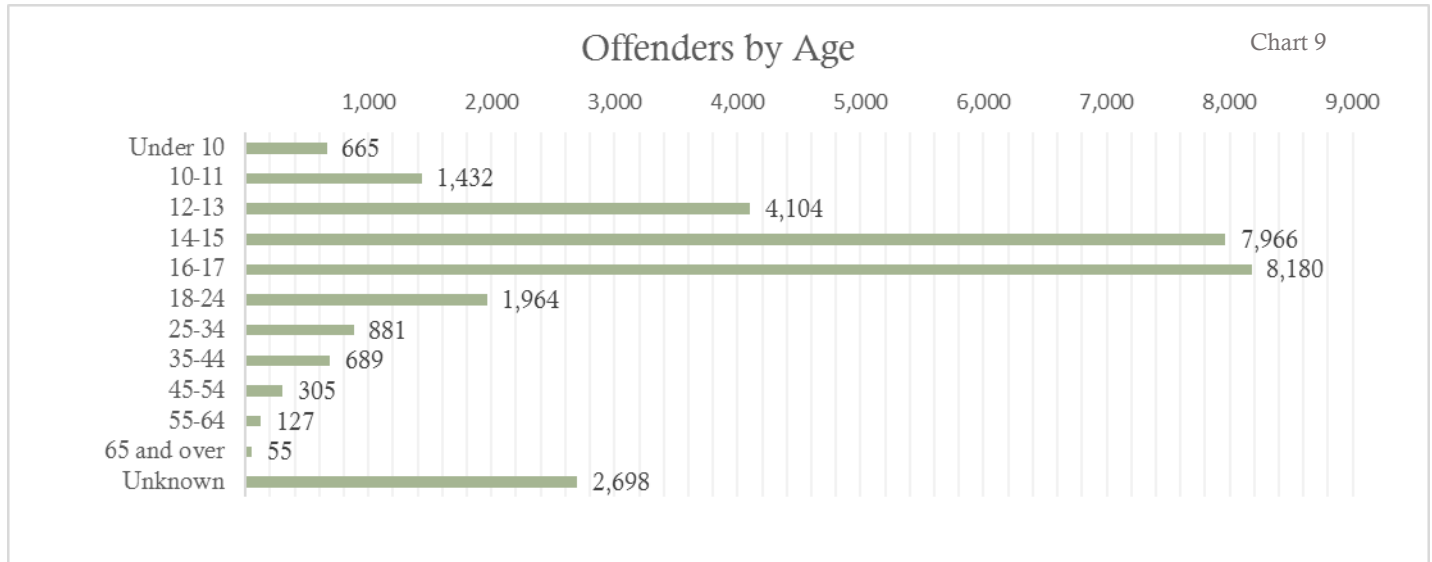
## School Crime Offenders

A total of 28,268 school crime offenders were reported in 2015 through 2017. Males contributed 57.3% of the offender total compared to 26.4% reported as Female. The remaining offenders were reported as having an Unknown gender (7.3%) or Missing (9.0%). The most frequently reported offender race was Black or African-American (44.3%) followed by White (37.3%). Offenders with an Unknown race comprised 17.7%. Offenders with a reported race of Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander accounted for less than one percent of the total.



## School Crime Offenders Continued

Offenders under the age of 18 accounted for 76.9% of school crime offenders. The age group category of 16-17 accounted for the highest percentage of offenders at 28.1%, followed by the age group category of 14-15 at 27.4%. The category of Unknown accounted for 9.3%.



Please note: One incident can have up to 99 offenders. The number of offenders compared to the number of incidents will rarely match.

The Unknown category is used only when the officer is unable to determine the age or age range of an offender. Quality control tools have been established within the TIBRS program to confirm the category of Unknown is properly used. However, in many instances nothing is known about the offender so the Unknown demographic is all that can be reported.