



**NEW JERSEY PUBLIC HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION**

# **SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES**

Trends in Adolescent Violent Related Behaviors at School

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• **10AM** •

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# BACKGROUND

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## SCHOOL VIOLENCE

**Theft, substance abuse, vandalism, physical aggression/assault, and/or the use of weapons initiated by a student**<sup>1</sup>

In 2019-2020, 77% of public schools reported at least one crime<sup>2</sup>

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## RISK FACTORS

**Behavioral difficulties (hyperactivity, impulsivity, criminal activity, etc), past trauma, poor academic performance, male sex, low-income, and drug use**<sup>3</sup>

Between 1999 and 2016 adolescent opioid related deaths increased by 268%<sup>4</sup>

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2016). *Understanding School Violence - Fact Sheet*. Retrieved September 20, 2022, from [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school\\_violence\\_fact\\_sheet-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf)

2. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2022, June 22). *Fast Facts - School Crime*. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a part of the U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved September 20, 2022, from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=49>

3. Turanovic, J. J., & Siennick, S. E. (2022). *The causes and consequences of school violence: A Review*. National Institute of Justice. Retrieved September 20, 2022, from <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/302346.pdf>

4. Ehiri, J. E., Hitchcock, L. I., Ejere, H., & Mytton, J. A. (2017). Primary prevention interventions for reducing school violence. *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2017(3), CD006347. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD006347.pub2>

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**01** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the racial/ethnic breakdown of violent related behaviors at school?**

- Weapon carrying (gun/knife/club) per month in/out of school and gun carrying per year
  - Number of physical fights at school in past year
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**02** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is there a relationship between prescription misuse and students who engage in violent related behaviors?**

- Adolescent prescription misuse in past month and during lifetime
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# **METHODOLOGY**

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## **DATA COLLECTION**

**Source: 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) using 13,677 student (grades 9-12) responses from 136 public schools**

Questions: 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 49, 90

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## **STATISTICAL TESTS**

**Frequencies were run for demographics and chi-square tests were performed for associational analyses**

All weapon related questions were recoded to group together the amounts at which students partook in these behaviors

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# ADOLESCENT WEAPON CARRYING AND PHYSICAL FIGHTS

Race/Ethnicity	Weapon Carrying at School		Physical Fights	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %	Row N %
Indigenous	8.8%	91.2%	15.4%	84.6%
Asian	1.5%	98.5%	4.8%	95.2%
Black or African American	3.7%	96.3%	15.0%	85.0%
White	2.2%	97.8%	6.7%	93.3%
Hispanic/Latino	2.7%	97.3%	7.0%	93.0%
Multiracial	3.6%	96.4%	9.8%	90.2%

Table 1. Adolescent Weapon Carrying at School in Past Month by Race/Ethnicity

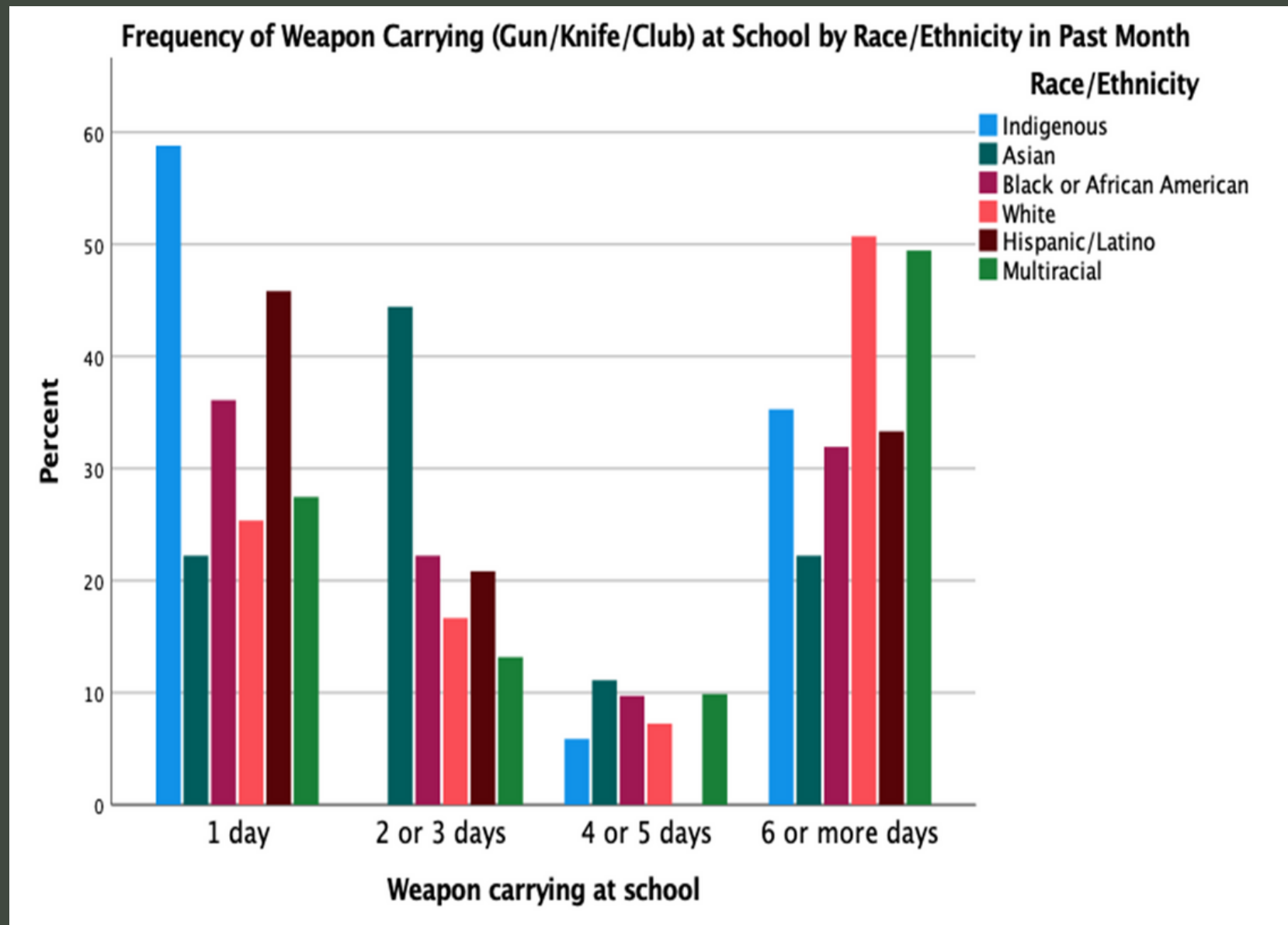


Figure 1. Adolescent Weapon Carrying in Past Month by Race/Ethnicity

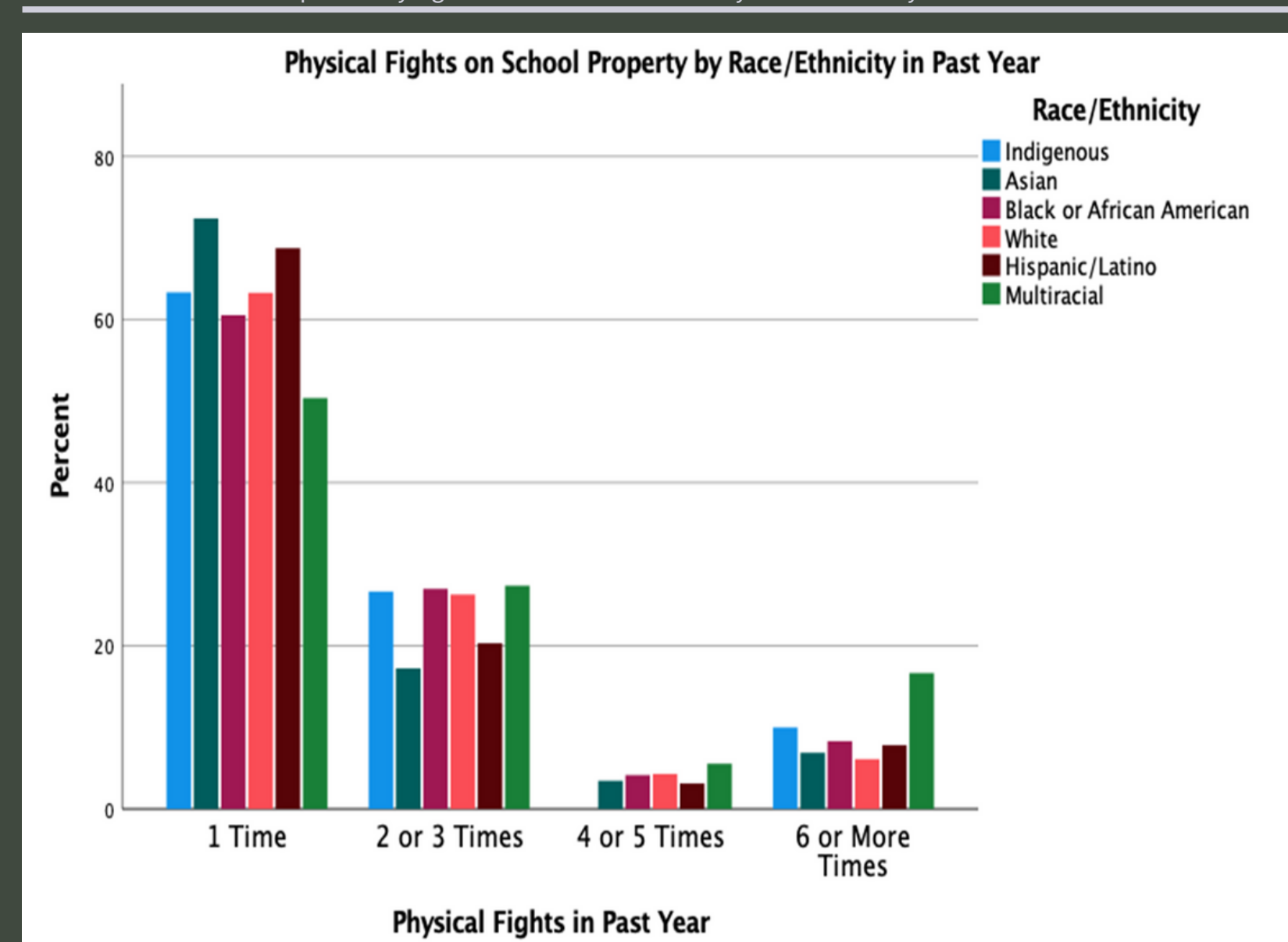


Figure 2. Adolescent Physical Fights on School Property in Past Year by Race/Ethnicity

# GUN CARRYING AND PRESCRIPTION MISUSE

**Frequencies for Gun Carrying in Past Year by Race/Ethnicity of Students**

	0 Times	1 Time	2 or 3 Times	4 or 5 Times	6 or More Times
Indigenous	93.3%	2.0%	1.3%	2.7%	0.7%
Asian	98.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%
Black or African American	93.0%	1.4%	1.8%	0.6%	3.2%
White	96.5%	0.9%	0.9%	0.5%	1.2%
Hispanic or Latino	95.6%	1.5%	1.3%	0.6%	1.0%
Multiracial	94.2%	1.4%	1.3%	0.7%	2.3%

**Table 2. Adolescent Gun Carrying in Past Year by Race/Ethnicity**

**Chi-Square Results for Violent Related Behaviors and Prescription Misuse**

	Prescription Misuse in Past 30 Days	Prescription Misuse During Lifetime
Weapon Carrying in Past 30 Days	p=0.000*	p=0.000*
Weapon Carrying at School in Past 30 Days	p=0.000*	p=0.000*
Gun Carrying in Past Year	p=0.000*	p=0.000*
Physical Fight at School in Past Year	p=0.000*	p=0.000*

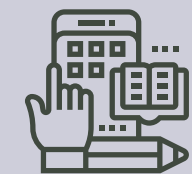
**Table 3. P-Values for Adolescent Violent Related Behaviors and Prescription Misuse**

# RESULTS

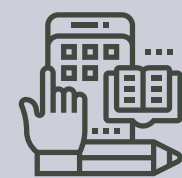
African American students were most likely to carry a gun at least 6 times per year



Indigenous and Black students were most likely to engage in physical fights at school

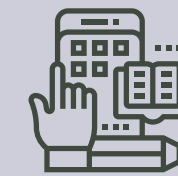


Indigenous (Native American/ Hawaiian /Pacific Islander and Alaskan Native) students were most likely to carry a weapon in or out of school



- Nearly **6X** more likely to carry a weapon at school compared to Asian students
  - Asian students were least likely to bring a weapon

White students were most likely to bring a weapon to school at least 6 days in the past month



Prescription Misuse is strongly correlated with engaging in violent related behaviors

- **p=0.000** for all violent related behaviors and prescription misuse



# WHERE DOES NEW JERSEY STAND?

School violence is common and tends to impact those from marginalized communities

**DURING THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR, NJ  
REPORTED 3,151 CASES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**<sup>5</sup>

23% were categorized as violent and 4.5% involved weapons

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**AMONG VIOLENT  
INCIDENTS, 36%  
WERE CLASSIFIED  
AS FIGHTS AND  
28% AS ASSAULT**<sup>5</sup>

32% were categorized as a  
simple threat

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**PRESCRIPTION  
MISUSE IN THE PAST  
YEAR AMONG  
ADOLESCENTS AGED  
12-17 IN NJ WAS  
ESTIMATED TO BE  
2.06%**<sup>6</sup>

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**OF THE WEAPON  
INCIDENTS, THE  
MAJORITY (73%)  
INVOLVED A KNIFE OR  
BLADE**<sup>5</sup>

Just under 9% were associated  
with the use of an air gun, pellet  
gun, BB gun, or handgun

5. New Jersey Department of Education. (2021). Student safety and discipline in new jersey public schools. *State of New Jersey*. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from [https://www.nj.gov/education/vandv/annualreport/2021/SSDSReport2020\\_2021.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/education/vandv/annualreport/2021/SSDSReport2020_2021.pdf)

6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2021). *National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2021 (NSDUH-2021-DS0001)* | SAMHDA. U.S. Department of Health And Human Services. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://www.datafiles.samhsa.gov/dataset/national-survey-drug-use-and-health-2021-nsduh-2021-ds0001>

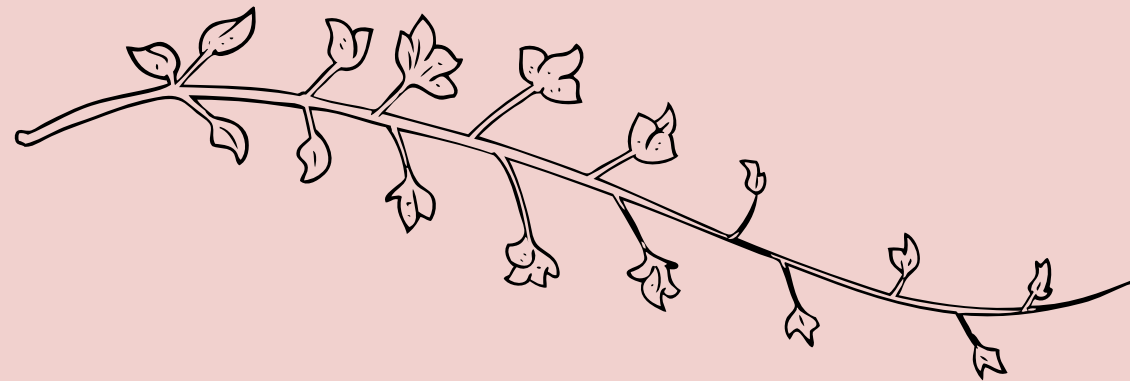


# DISCUSSION

## Considerations for Public Health Interventions

- **Overall, a significant number of adolescents can easily access weapons, including various types of guns**
    - **Suggests further research into why some students feel compelled to bring these items to school**
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- **Address social determinants involved in the racial discrepancies among violent related behaviors:**
    - **Poverty**
    - **Past Trauma**
    - **Educational Access and Performance**
- 
- **Need for increased prevention strategies for opioid use among adolescents**

# THANK YOU!



QUESTIONS?