



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Center for the Prevention of School Violence

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**PREVENTING SCHOOL VIOLENCE:
LESSONS WHICH CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE CONTINUED REDUCTION
OF FIREARMS REPORTED POSSESSED ON SCHOOL CAMPUSES**

With enhanced attention and effort directed at school safety and security, school officials in North Carolina continue to report finding fewer firearms being possessed on their campuses. For school year 2000-2001, school officials reported 86 firearms possessed on campuses throughout the state. This reflects a decrease from the 87 reported for the 1999-2000 school year and continues a trend which dates to the first year of school violence data collection in North Carolina. In 1993-1994 there were 448 reported firearms; in 1994-1995, 305; in 1995-1996, 206; in 1996-1997, 163; in 1997-1998, 160; in 1998-1999, 144. Although the reported existence of any firearms on campuses is unacceptable, the continued decline in the number of reported firearms evidences that efforts directed at preventing firearm incidents from occurring appear to be leading to safer and more secure schools.

In 2000-2001, state and local officials devoted a great deal of time and effort to enhancing the safety of schools in the state. An attitude of "zero tolerance" with reference to firearms continued as the result of legislation which provides stiff legal consequences for possessing firearms on campuses. School consequences were also enforced.

Placement of School Resource Officers (SROs) continued to be related to the reduced number of reported firearms as SROs act as a deterrent and provide an enforcement mechanism. At the state level, the priority of "Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools" for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the efforts of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Center for the Prevention of School Violence focused attention on the problem of school violence and have contributed to safe school planning efforts and program development and implementation.

With reference to the reduction in the number of reported firearms possessed on school campuses, lessons can be learned. The lessons can be understood by noting that multilevel approaches and multiple strategies can help prevent violence from occurring. Passing proactive legislation, communicating that there will be consequences for inappropriate actions, prioritizing safe schools, drawing attention to the problem of school violence, and providing program development and support can all be pointed to as being key factors in the reduction in the number of reported firearms. Given that there were 7565 reported incidents/acts of school violence across North Carolina in the most recent **Annual Report on School Violence: 2000-2001**(NCDPI), the lessons learned from the success associated with the continued reduction in the number of reported firearms should be noted. Through meaningful legislation and efforts as well as awareness and assistance from all levels, schools across the state continue to be made safer and more secure.

