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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AND OVERVIEW**

**the
CHICAGO
SAFE SCHOOL
STUDY**



Victimization Survey of Students and Teachers

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eneral Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education
City of Chicago

August, 1981

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THE CHICAGO SAFE SCHOOL STUDY

A VICTIMIZATION SURVEY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AND OVERVIEW**

NCJRS

JUN 24 1982

ACQUISITIONS

The content of this report was developed under a grant from the National Institute of Education, a part of the U.S. Education Department (Grant Number NIE-G-79-0048). However, contents of the report do not necessarily represent the policy of that agency, and no endorsement by the Federal Government should be assumed.

Chicago Board of Education

August, 1981

ABSTRACT

The Chicago Safe School Study was undertaken at the request of the General Superintendent of Schools, and supported by Grant Number NIE-G-79-0048 of the National Institute of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The study began in the summer of 1979 and data collection was completed in the summer of 1980. Analysis of the data was completed in the Spring of 1981.

The Chicago study was modeled after the National Safe School Study done by the National Institute of Education and completed in 1978. Modifications in the model were made on the basis of particular needs and interests of the local school district. Basically, the study is a victimization survey of students and teachers in the school system. Respondents were asked to describe in detail specific incidents of crime where they were the victims.

Based on survey results, it is estimated that about 62,500 students (25%) in grades 7 through 12 have something stolen from them in a two-month period. It is also estimated that about 8250 students are physically attacked (3.3%) and 6250 students are robbed (2.5%) in these same grade levels in a two-month period. It is further estimated that 6750 teachers (27%) have something stolen from them; 443 teachers (1.77%) are physically attacked; and 100 teachers are robbed (0.4%) in a two-month period. These estimates are projections from a sample of 12,882 students out of a population of approximately 250,000, and a sample of 1413 teachers out of a population of 24,000 classroom teachers.

In spite of these large rates of victimization, in comparing the Chicago schools with other large urban school systems, the Chicago victimization rates for both students and teachers are below national averages for cities over 250,000 population as determined by the 1978 NIE study.

The Chicago survey also determined that (a) many students bring some form of weapon to school for self-protection at least part of the time, (b) many students avoid certain places in and around the school, and certain places on the way to or from school because of fear, and (c) the presence of street gangs and the fear of personal safety because of their presence is felt throughout the entire school system.

Students, teachers, and principals who were respondents in the survey all recommend a firm and consistent disciplinary policy more often

than anything else as the best way to deal with the problems of crime and violence in the Chicago schools. These recommendations are consistent with those made by students and teachers in the NIE national study.

With rare exceptions, the findings of the Chicago survey are not inconsistent with national findings, especially as the national findings have to do with large urban school systems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In any study of this magnitude, many individuals and groups contribute to the final product. Special contributions were made by members of the Management and Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee, especially in the early stages of the study. Valuable assistance was provided by Alfred Rudd of the Bureau of School Safety, Environment, and Pupil Transportation, and by Irving Brauer, Director of the Department of Research and Evaluation of the Board of Education. Major contributions in the form of technical assistance came from Bill Rice, Carole Perlman, Khazan Agrawal, and George Norek of the Department of Research and Evaluation.

The advice and suggestions of project consultants George Balch, Bryant Feather, Ron Czaja, and John Vidmar proved invaluable. Errors of omission and commission found in the study are the responsibility of the principal investigator, but many more would have been found if it were not for the advice of these individuals. Grant management problems were kept to a minimum through the efforts of Lloyd Mendelson and McNair Grant of the Department of Government Funded Programs.

A special acknowledgement is due the students, teachers, and principals who gave, with rare exceptions, their full cooperation. Conducting the study in the schools was an intrusion, but one which we hope will prove fruitful. Finally, we want to thank our staff coordinator, Anna Marie Lollino. Without her assistance the study would not have been launched, let alone completed.

Edward Tromanhauser and Thomas Corcoran

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OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS

Growing public concern about crime in the schools in the early 1970's culminated in hearings of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency and the House Committee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education. As a result of these hearings, a number of national studies were undertaken to fill the information gap regarding school crime and violence

The study of school-related crime is relatively new, and nationally aggregated data have only been available for the last few years. Crime data is usually generated as a by-product of the administration of criminal justice agencies, the most obvious example being the Uniform Crime Reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. School systems have generally handled all but the most serious incidents internally, and the majority of incidents which may be classified as crime have not even been brought to the attention of the police. Officially collected crime statistics, whether from the police, juvenile courts, or the schools, have not shed much light on the problem of school-related crime since the information has not been readily available and the information available has not come even close to assaying the problem.

For these and other reasons, most of the data collected in recent years have come from survey research--the use of interviews and questionnaires--and the source of information has been the victims--students and teachers. The most significant of these survey studies with respect to schools was the survey conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE) in 1976-77. This survey involved over 30,000 students in

642 public high schools. According to this study the risk of personal violence for both student and teacher is greatest in large urban school systems, and steadily decreases as one moves to suburbs, small towns, and finally to rural areas. This finding is not surprising, since all measures of crime which we have, ranging from the Uniform Crime Reports to national victimization survey data obtained in National Crime Surveys (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the U.S. Bureau of the Census) indicate that serious crime occurs much more frequently in large urban areas.

In 1979 the Chicago Board of Education decided to conduct a study of school-related crime and violence--modeled largely after the NIE national survey--within the schools of Chicago. The Chicago study was not undertaken without trepidation. The NIE study showed that school-related crime rates were often three to four times higher than the national average in large metropolitan school systems, and it was expected that victimization rates in Chicago schools would prove to be both shocking and embarrassing. Such did not prove to be the case. While Chicago victimization rates were in some cases higher than the national averages, they were substantially lower than the rates for large urban school systems nationally, as determined in the NIE study. A major finding of the Chicago study was that, in comparison with the victimization rates for other large urban systems, Chicago rates were lower.

Since we do not have data from a prior victimization study of the Chicago schools, we have no comparison data and cannot state that school-related crime and violence has gone down. All we can say is that in comparing 1977 data for large urban school systems nationally, with 1980

data from the Chicago study, we find less crime being reported by students and teachers than could have been expected if the 1977 national data were relied upon.

One explanation for the lower rates in Chicago may be simply that the Chicago survey was done about three years after the national study. The NIE national study report stated that school-related crime appeared to have leveled off, and was decreasing. Perhaps the Chicago data is confirmation of the NIE prediction. Another explanation for the lower rates in Chicago may have to do with the different populations sampled (small samples in a large number of urban school systems versus a large sample in one urban school system) and the different ways in which the two studies were conducted.

Other than the victimization rates, the Chicago study findings are very similar to those of the national study. Throughout this report we will compare the findings of the two studies and show striking similarities. These similarities add to the validity of the findings for both studies.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Chicago study was designed to provide guidance for the development of policy and program initiatives formulated to reduce crime and violence directed against the person. The Chicago system has an adequate approach to the prevention, monitoring, and evaluation of crimes against school property, but, like most school systems, it finds it difficult to obtain an adequate picture of the extent and nature of crimes against persons. The Chicago study was designed not only to provide information about the frequency of such incidents, but also to answer the following

questions concerning the incidents:

- * Who are the victims?
- * Who are the offenders?
- * What is the extent of injury involved?
- * To what extent are weapons used?
- * When are the incidents occurring?
- * Where are the incidents occurring?
- * What proportion of the incidents is reported?
- * What are the perceptions and feelings of students and teachers regarding crime and violence in and around the school?

To some extent the Chicago victimization survey has found answers to all of these questions.

Measures of School Crime and Violence

To measure school-related crime and violence, information was collected about four types of crimes: theft, assault, robbery, and rape. There were too few valid cases of rape reported for analysis or meaningful comment. Thus, all of the information about specific incidents in this report deals with three types of crimes: theft, assault, and robbery.

The survey was conducted during the months of March, April, and May, and the first week of June, 1980. Respondents were given questionnaires which asked them, among other things, to describe in detail any incident of theft, assault, robbery, or rape in which they were victims in the last two months. Successive waves of students and teachers were given the questionnaire each week during the survey period. With a two-month recall period, the survey measured incidents over a 5 month period.

The study should shed some light on little known facets of school-related crime as it affects the Chicago schools. Some of the information is system-specific and may not prove useful to other school systems, except as a model for analysis. This is another way of saying that the findings, or portions of it, may not be generalizable to other large school systems which have their own set of unique problems. Of interest to administrators of other school systems may be Volume II of the report, which concerns the methodology of the study, and a third document entitled Conducting a Victimization Study in Your School. Both may be obtained by writing to the Center for Urban Education, 160 West Wendell, Chicago, Illinois 60610.

The information presented here is based on sample data. Estimations and projections from a sample always contain some error. In addition to possible error found in any survey sample, it must be kept in mind that the present survey concerns crime, and estimates of crime, regardless of the measurement approach, are especially difficult to make with confidence. Finally, the student respondents are individuals between the ages of 12 and 18 years for the most part. The age of many of the respondents, especially students in the lower grades, introduces another error source. While the questionnaire was constructed with the youthfulness of some of the respondents in mind, it cannot be assumed that all of the students understood all of the questions or that the incidents reported by students would in all cases be ordinarily regarded as reportable crimes.

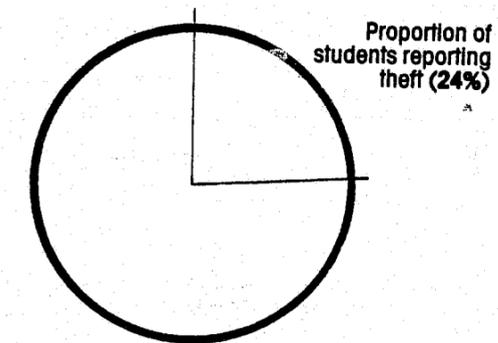
In this overview section of the report the major findings concerning incidents of theft, assault and robbery are reported as well as a brief comparison of the Chicago data with national data. The national

data are taken primarily from a National Institute of Education report entitled Violent Schools - Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress which was published in 1978. For details of the Chicago study, readers are referred to the Introduction and subsequent chapters of Volume I of the report. In the next several pages we have attempted to summarize a large amount of information for quick perusal. This overview, therefore, contains only the barest highlights of the findings.

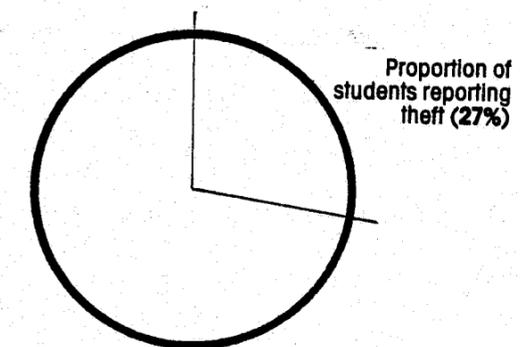
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS

Students and Teachers as Victims of THEFT..... Theft of personal property is an everyday occurrence in almost all of the schools, although the vast majority of such incidents involve loss of such items as pencils, notebooks, and other kinds of school supplies and books. Among the major findings regarding theft are the following:

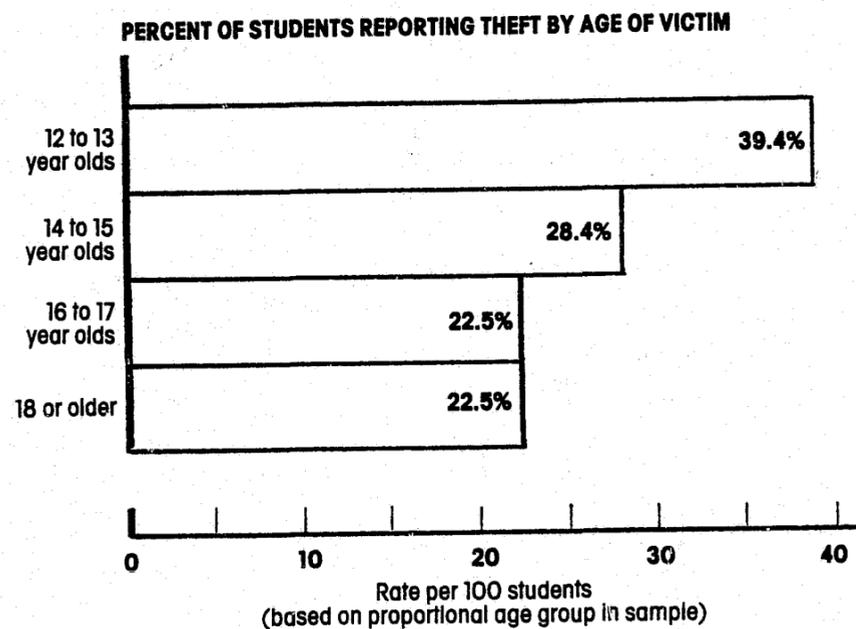
* About 24 out of every hundred students in grades 7 through 12 report having something worth more than one dollar stolen from them in a two-month period.



* About 27 out of every 100 classroom teachers report having something stolen from them in a two-month period

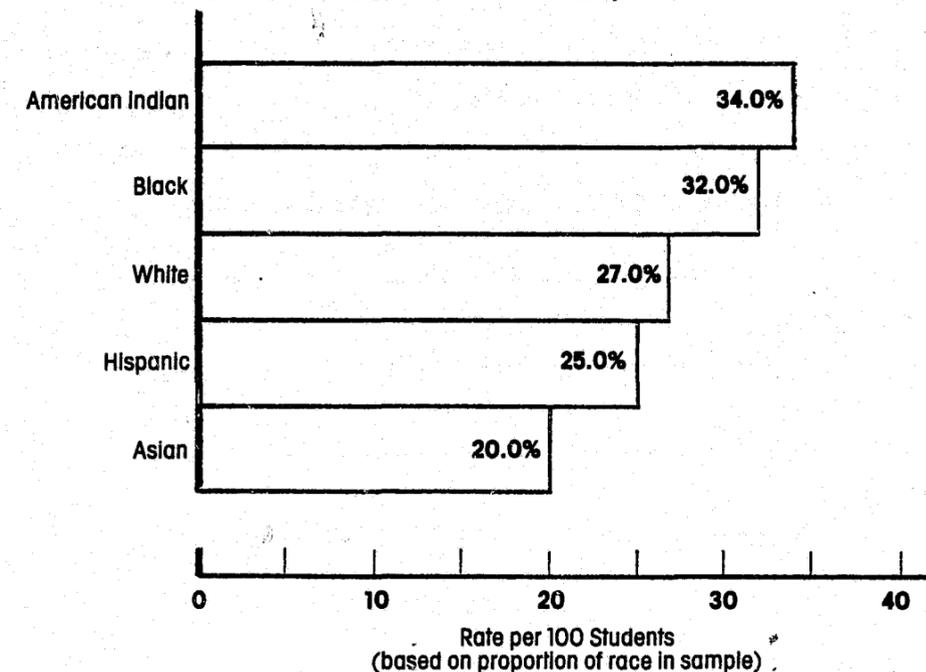


* The likelihood of a student becoming a victim of theft is a function of age in grades 7 through 12. Students who are 12 to 13 years of age are almost twice as likely to report a theft as students 16 years of age or older.



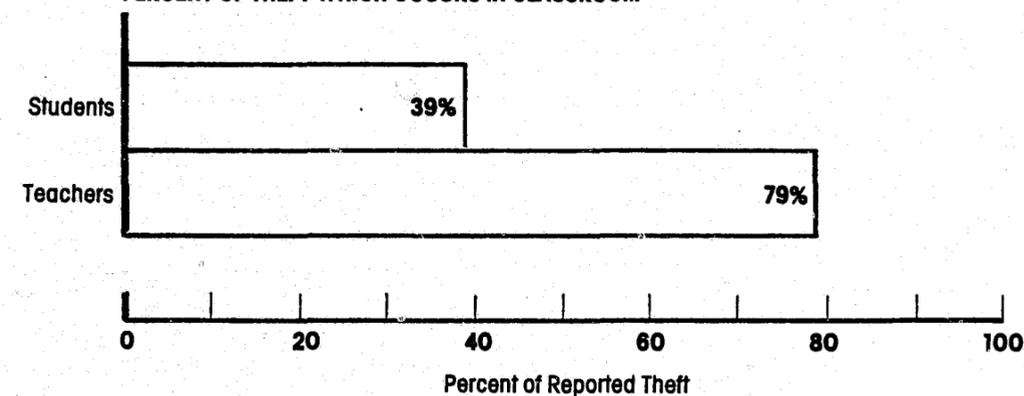
* The likelihood of a student becoming a victim of theft is related to race (in grades 7 through 12). While American Indian students represent the smallest racial minority identified in the survey, as a proportion of their race in the sample, these students report the most incidents of theft, followed by blacks, whites, Hispanics and Asians in that order.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPORTING THEFT, BY RACE

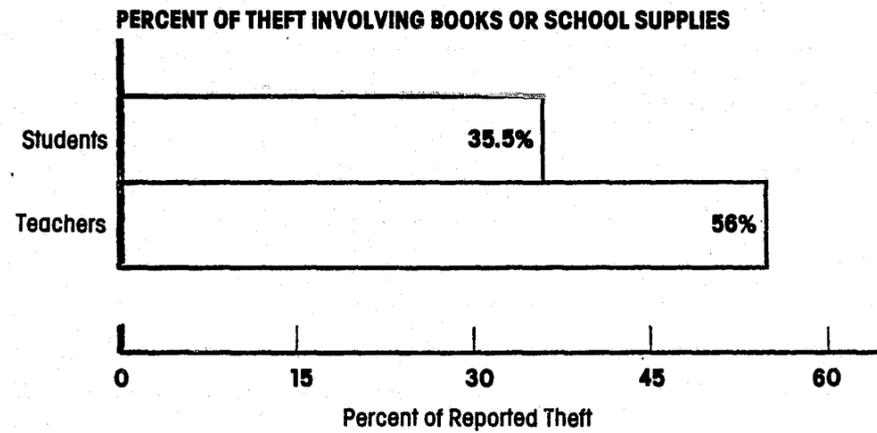


* The classroom is the most likely place for theft to occur, regardless of the sex, age, or race of the victim, and regardless of whether the victim is a student or a teacher.

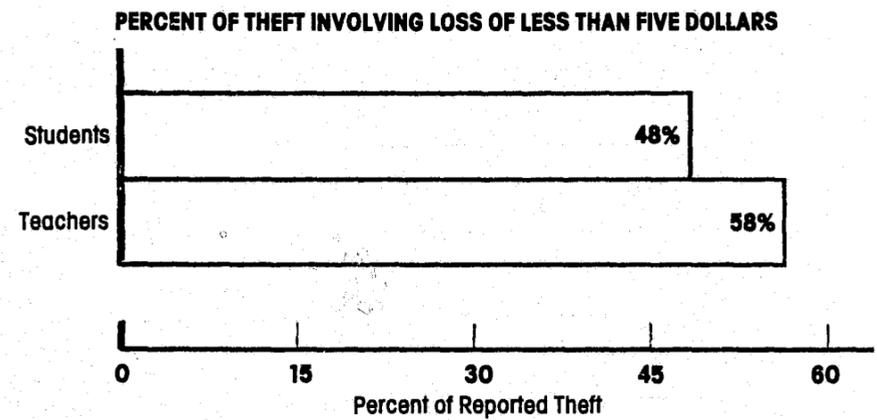
PERCENT OF THEFT WHICH OCCURS IN CLASSROOM



* Over one-third of theft from students and two-thirds of theft from teachers involve the loss of school books and supplies.

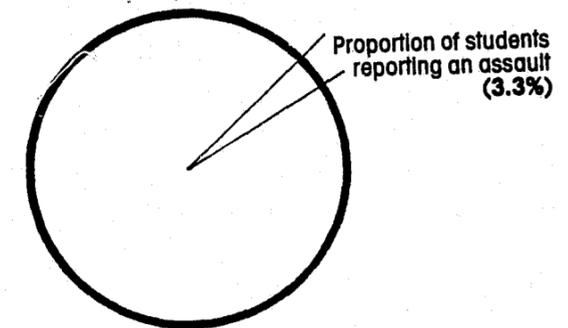


* For both students and teachers, a large proportion of the thefts involve losses of less than five dollars in replacement cost.

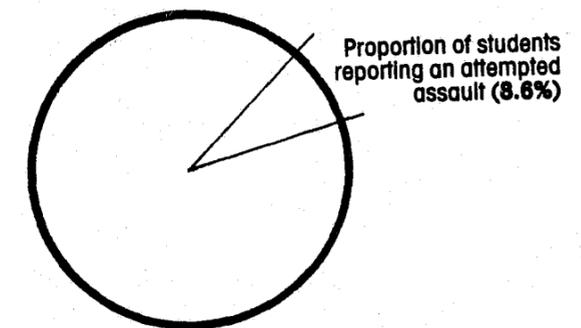


Students and Teachers as Victims of ASSAULT..... A large proportion of both students and teachers report being physically attacked in a two-month period, with an even larger proportion reporting attempted or threatened assaults. Among the major findings about assault are the following:

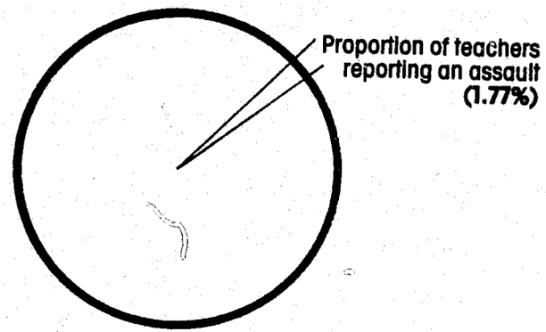
* Just over 3 out of every 100 students in grades 7 through 12 report being physically attacked in a two-month period, either in the school environment or on the way to or from school.



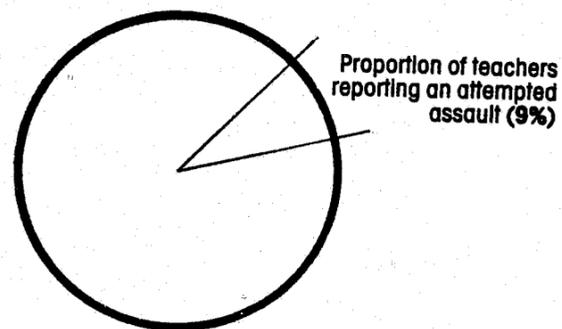
* About 8.6 percent of the students report an attempt being made to attack them in a two-month period, either in the school environment or on the way to or from school.



* Almost 2 out of every 100 teachers report being physically attacked in the school in a two-month period

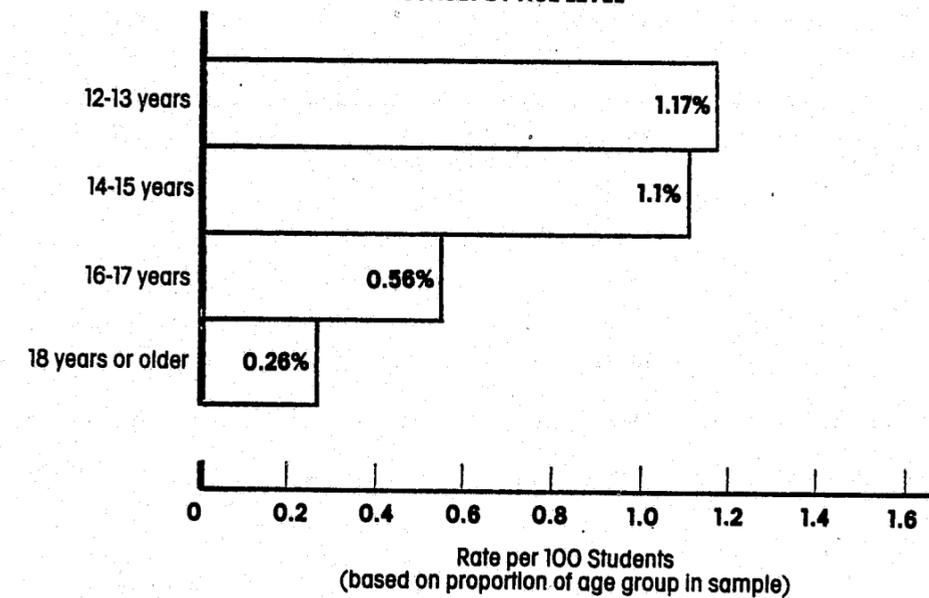


* About 9 out of every 100 teachers report being threatened with an assault or an attempt being made to assault them in the school in a two-month period.

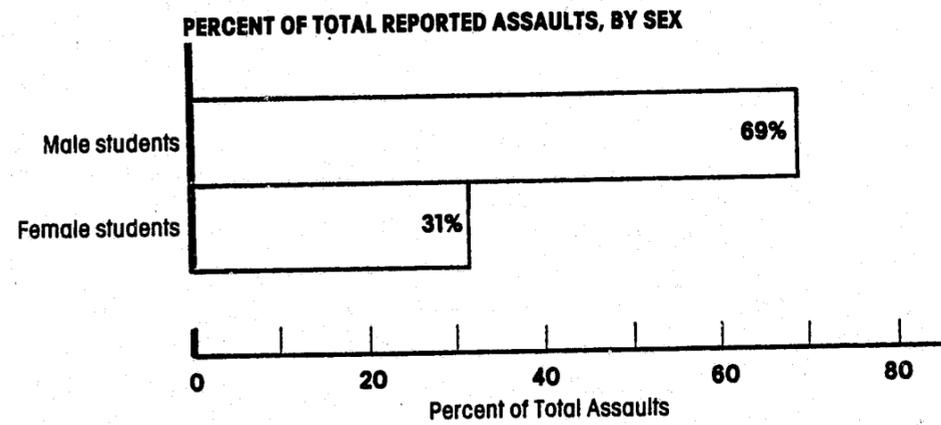


* The likelihood of assault is greatest for 12 and 13 year old students and steadily decreases with age (18 year olds are victims of an assault about one-fourth as often as 12 to 13 year olds)

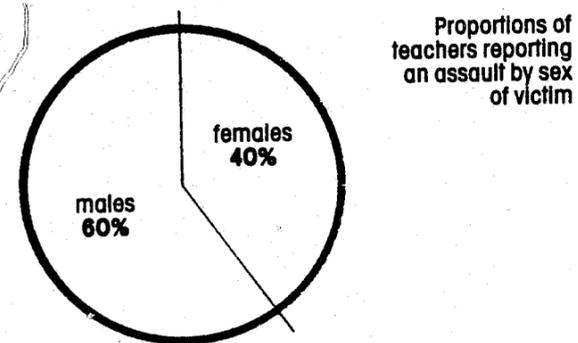
RATE OF STUDENT ASSAULT BY AGE LEVEL



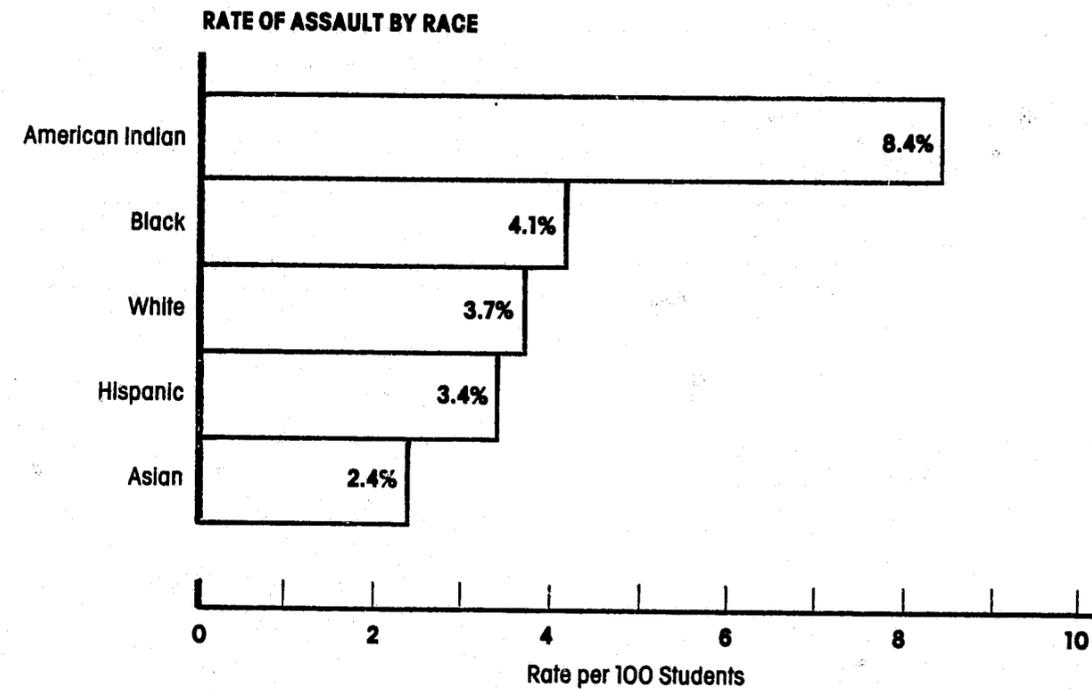
* Male students are almost twice as likely to become victims of an assault as are female students



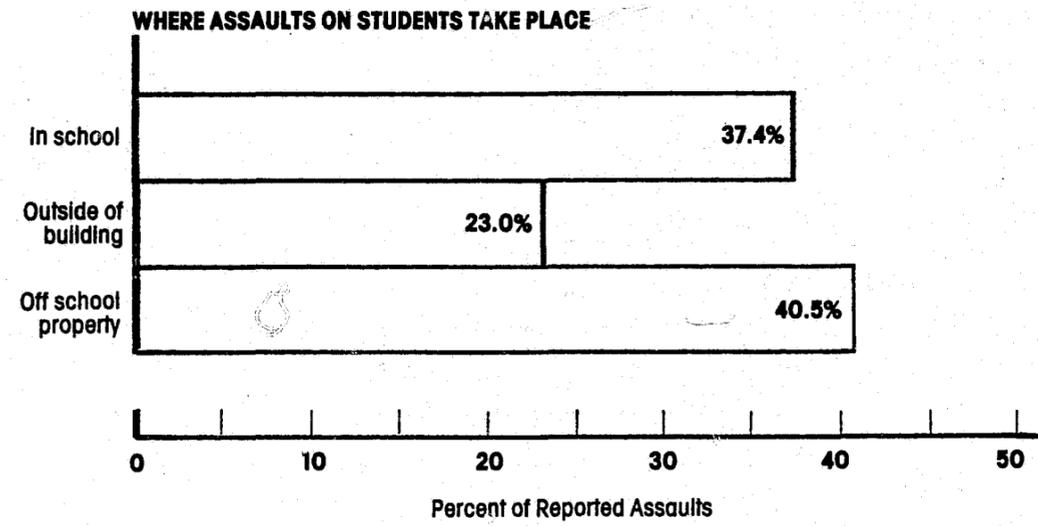
* As a proportion of the sample, male teachers are more likely to report an assault than female teachers, even though there are far more female teachers in the system than males.



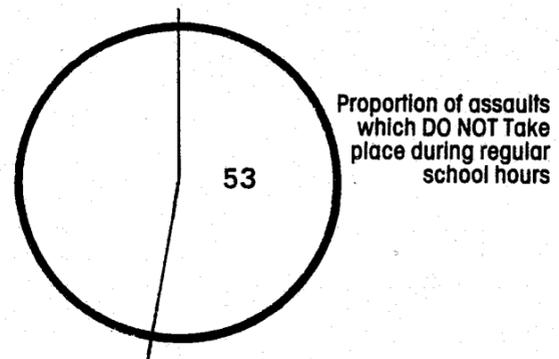
* The likelihood of assault on students is linked to race. American Indian students experience the highest victimization, followed by Asians, blacks, Hispanics, and whites, in that order.



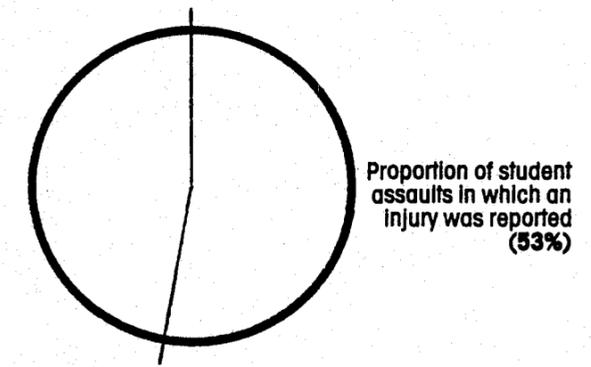
* About 4 in 10 assaults on students take place off school property, usually while on the way to or from school.



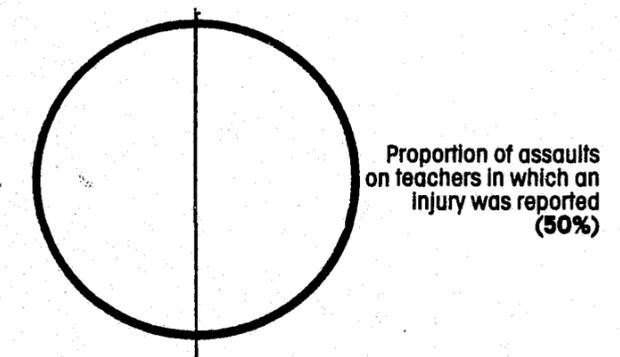
* Over half the assaults on students take place before or after regular school hours.



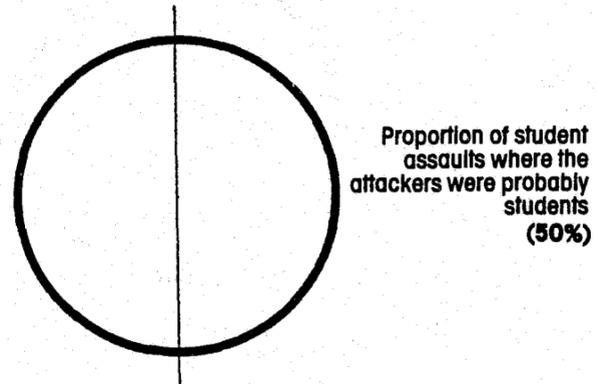
* In about half of the assaults on students the victim report being injured.



* In about half of the assaults on teachers, the victim report being injured.

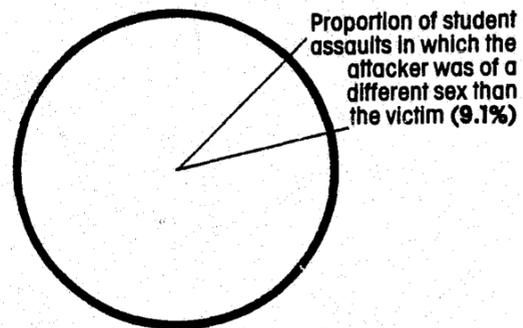


* In about half of the assaults on students, the attackers were probably other students at the school.



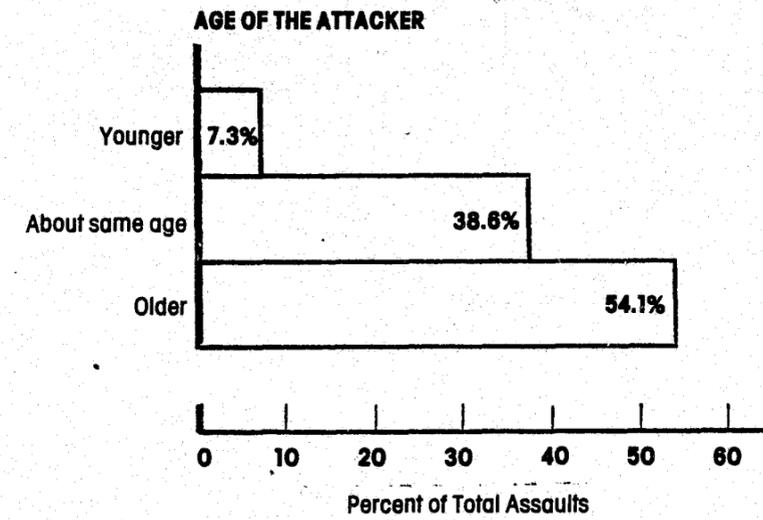
Proportion of student assaults where the attackers were probably students (50%)

* In about 9 out of 10 assaults on students the attacker was of the same sex as the victim.

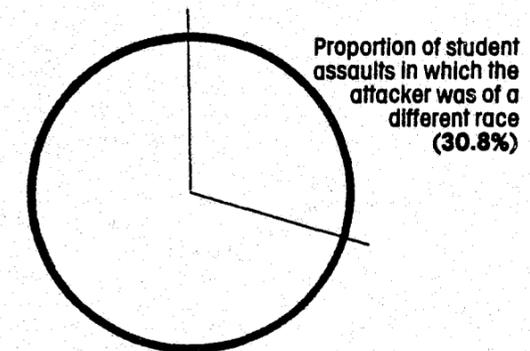


Proportion of student assaults in which the attacker was of a different sex than the victim (9.1%)

* Over half of the assaults on students involved attackers who were older than the victim.

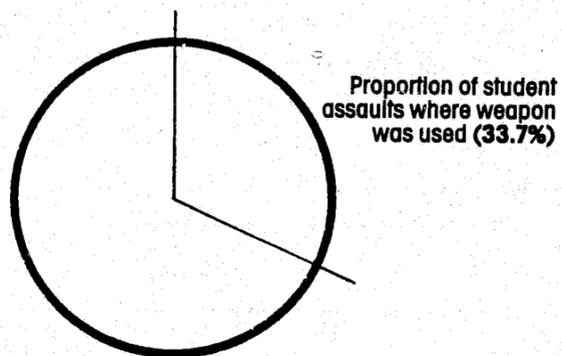


* In 7 out of 10 assaults on students, the attackers were of the same race as the victim.

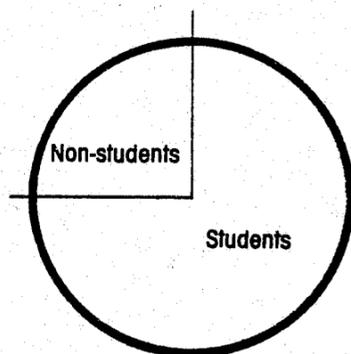


Proportion of student assaults in which the attacker was of a different race (30.8%)

* In about 2 out of 3 assaults on students, no weapon was involved.

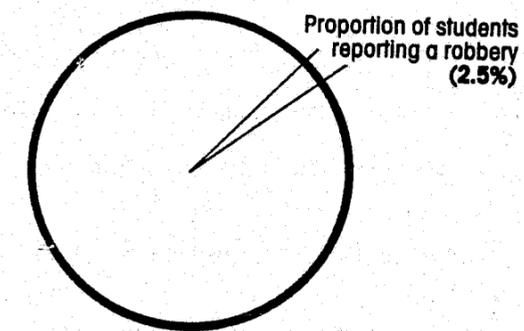


* In over 3 out of 4 assaults on teachers, the attackers were identified as students at the school.

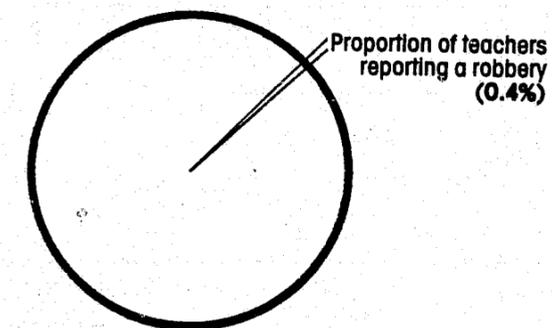


Students and Teachers as Victims of ROBBERY..... Just over 2 out of every 100 students reported being robbed and an even larger proportion reported that an attempt was made to rob them in a two month period, although a portion of these incidents were cases of extortion of money from younger students by older students. Less than 1 in 200 teachers reported a robbery. Among the major findings regarding robbery are the following:

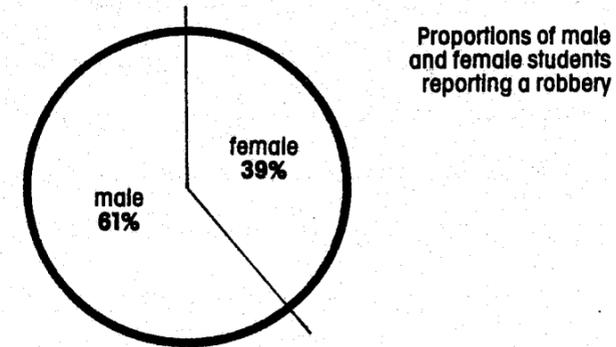
* Approximately 2.5 percent of students in grades 7 through 12 report being robbed in a two month period.



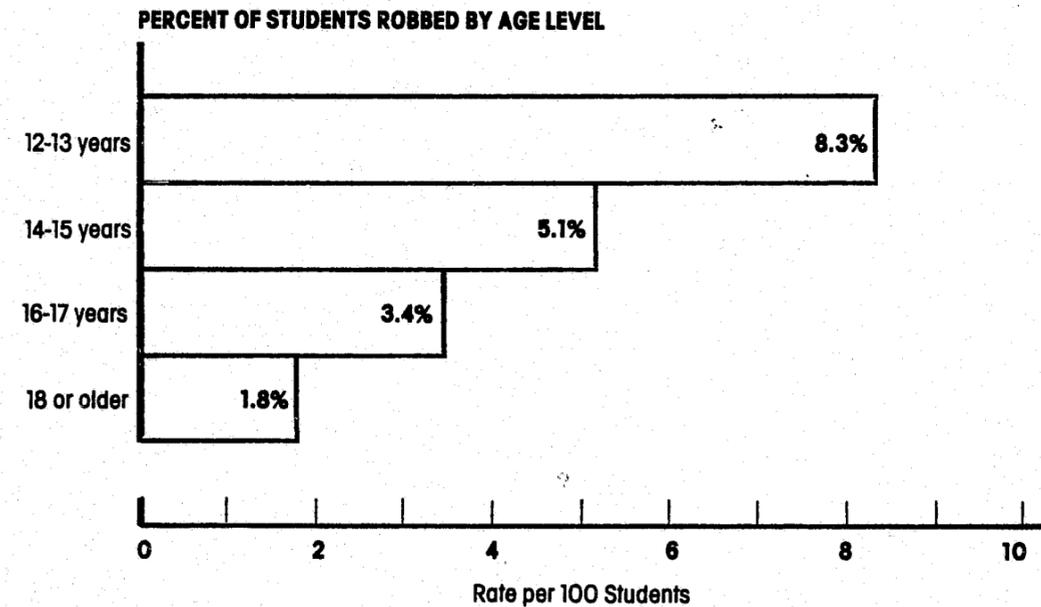
* Approximately 1 out of 200 classroom teachers report being robbed in a two month period.



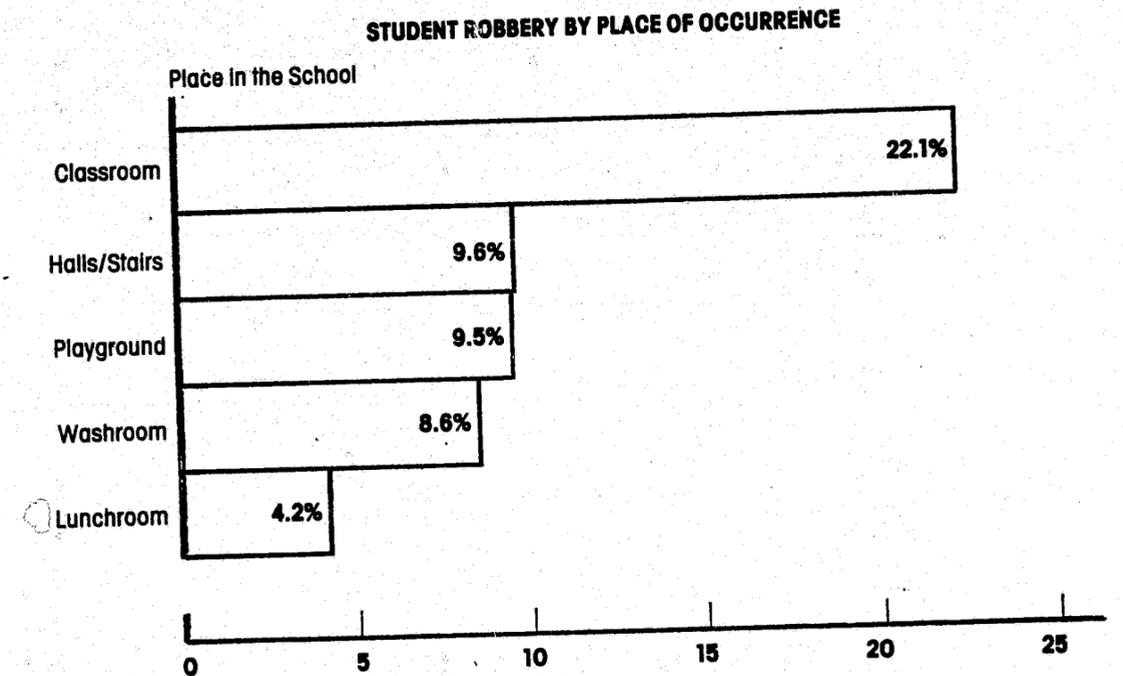
* Male students are almost twice as likely to report being robbed as are female students



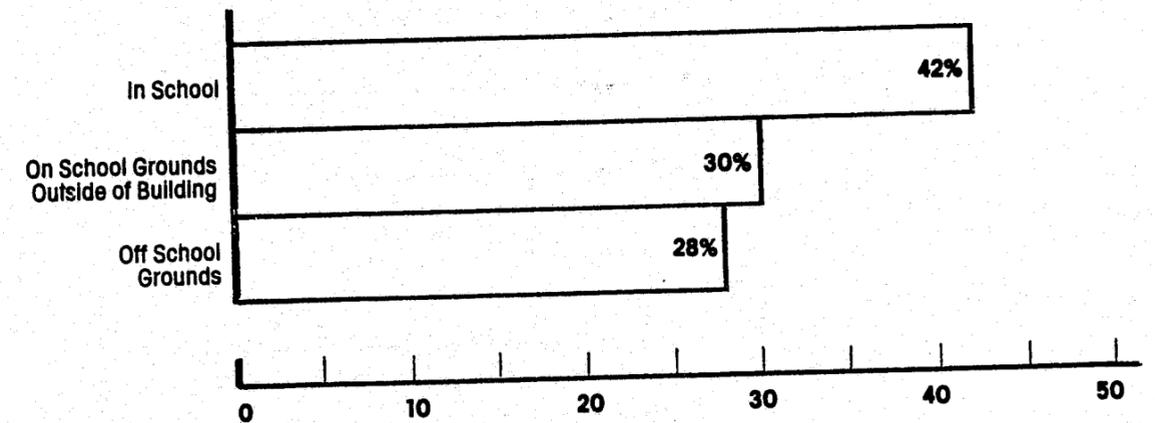
* The likelihood of a student being robbed is greatest for 12 and 13 year olds and steadily decreases with age (18 year olds report being robbed only one-fourth as often as 12 to 13 year olds).



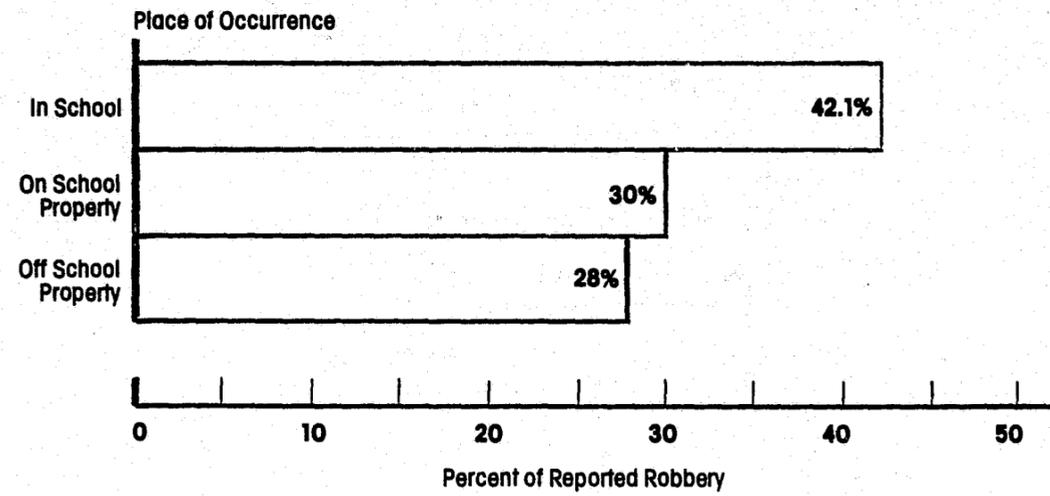
* In school, the most likely place for a student to be robbed is in the classroom.



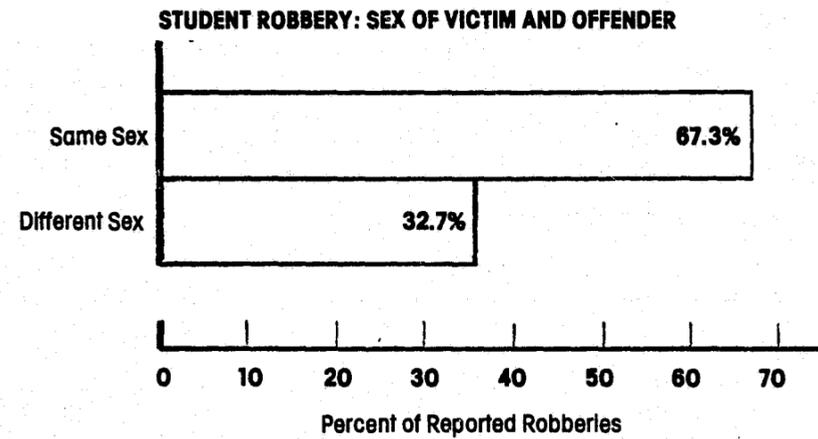
* Outside of school, about equal numbers of robberies take place on school grounds and while on the way to or from school.



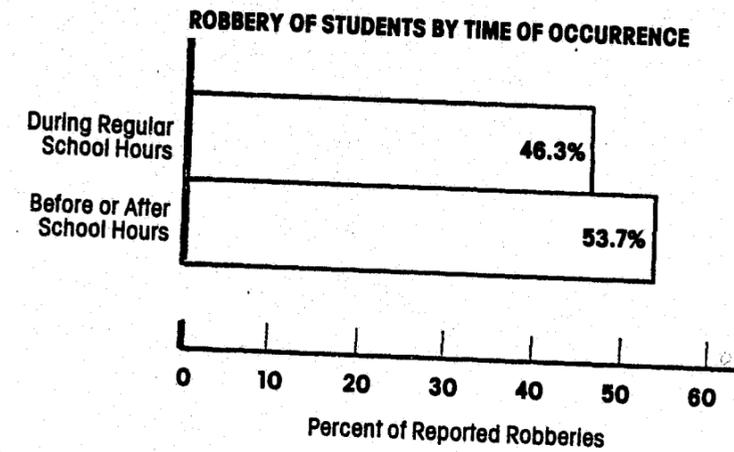
* Less than half of student robberies take place inside the school.



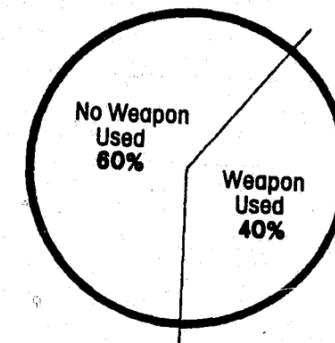
* In 2 out of 3 cases of student robbery, the victim and the offender are of the same sex.



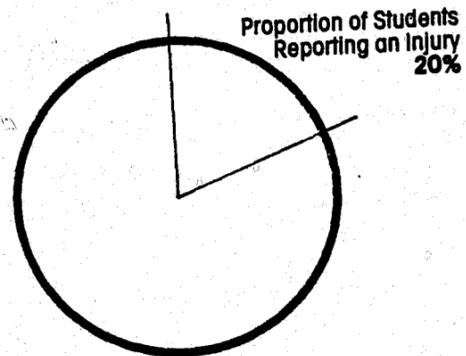
* Over half of the student robberies took place either before or after regular school hours



* In over half the cases of student robbery, no weapon was involved.

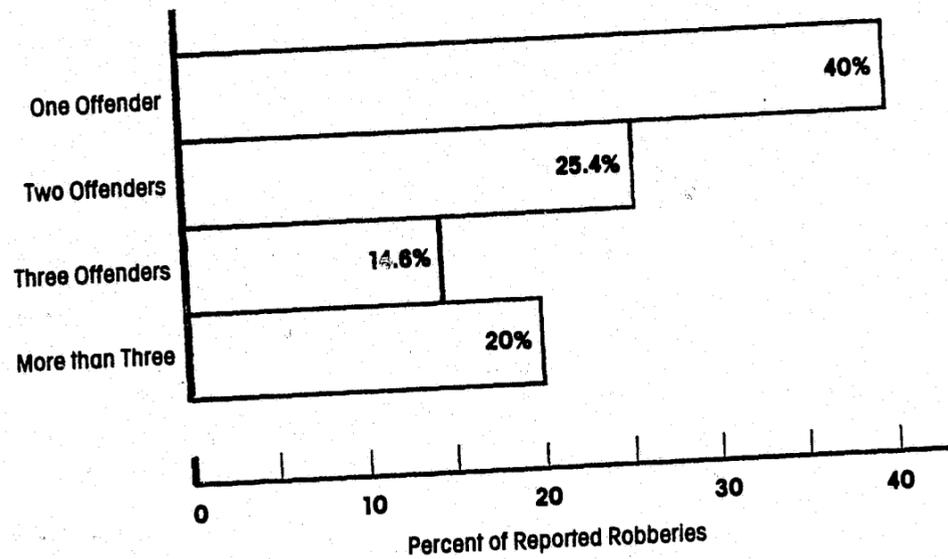


* In 1 out of 5 cases of student robbery, the victim reported an injury.

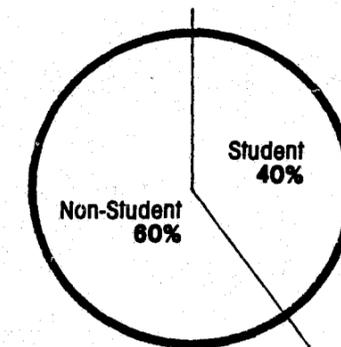


* In more than half the cases of student robbery, the victim was robbed by more than one offender.

ROBBERY OF STUDENTS BY NUMBER OF OFFENDERS INVOLVED

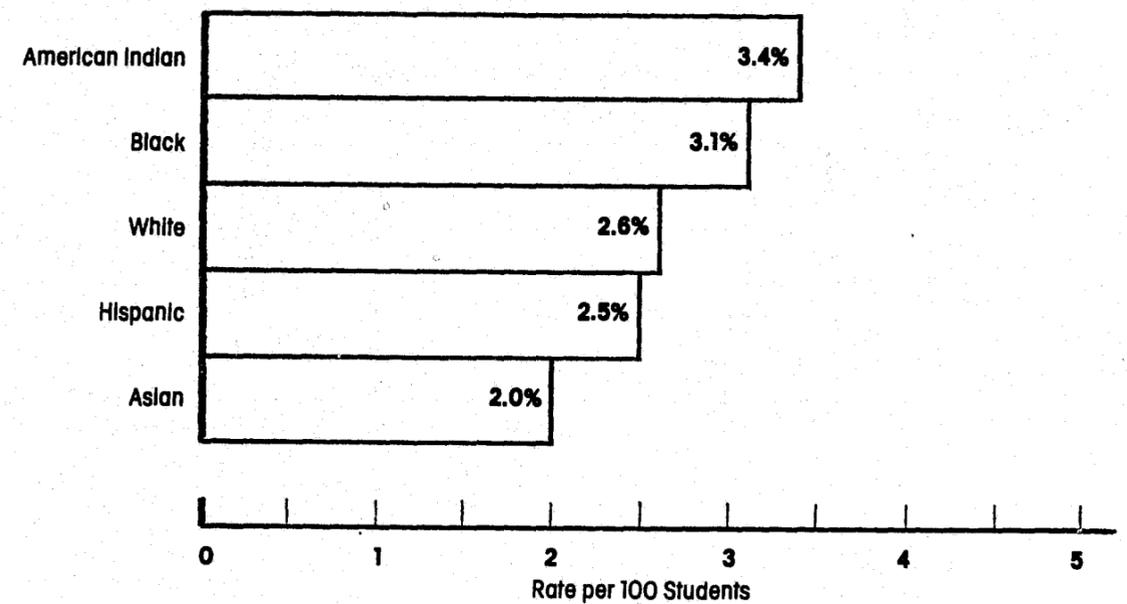


* In 4 out of 10 cases of student robbery, the offender was probably another student at the school.

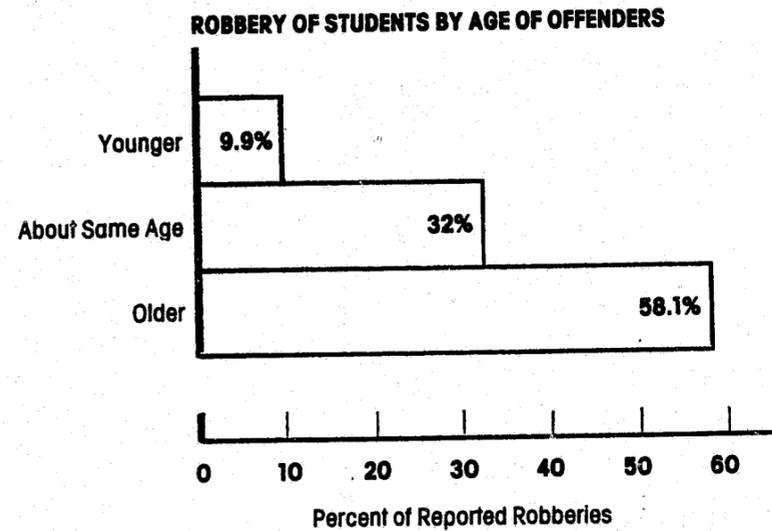


* The likelihood of being robbed is related to race. As with theft and assault, American Indian students have the highest victimization rate, followed by black, white, hispanic and asian students, in that order.

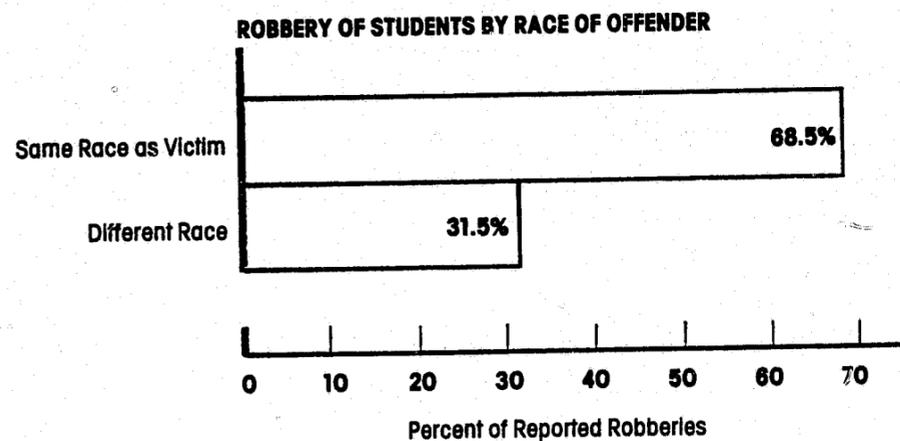
PERCENT OF STUDENTS ROBBED BY RACE



* In over half the cases of student robbery, the offenders were older than the victim.



* In over half the cases of student robbery, the offender and the victim were of the same race.

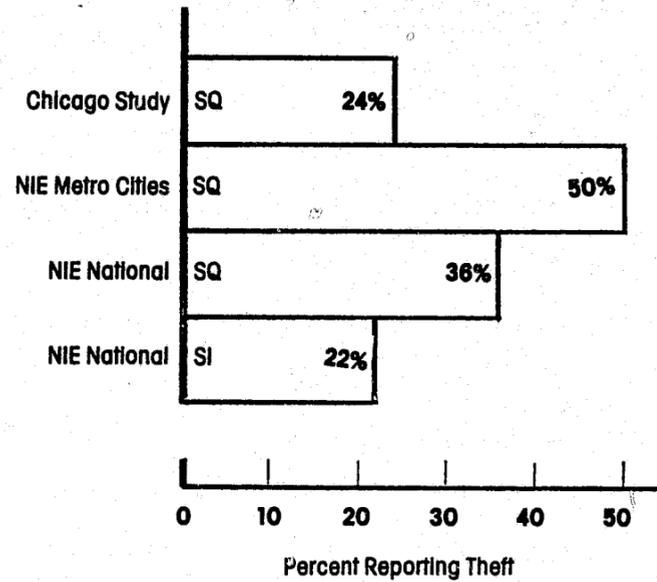


COMPARISON OF CHICAGO STUDY DATA WITH NATIONAL DATA

THEFT from Students... Theft from students is a common occurrence in the nation's schools. An estimated 24 out of 100 Chicago school students in grades 7 through 12 have something stolen from them worth more than one dollar in a two-month period. According to the national (NIE) data, about 11 out of 100 secondary school students (junior and senior high school) have something worth more than one dollar stolen from them in a one-month period (or 22 percent in a two-month period). The 22 percent rate is based on student interview information. If the information obtained from student questionnaires is used, 36 out of 100 students throughout the country experience theft in a two-month period. If only data from metro cities (over 250,000 population) is used, about half of secondary school students are victims of theft in a two-month period. This information is illustrated on the next page.

Reported theft by Chicago students using questionnaire data is lower than theft reported nationally by students who filled out similar questionnaires. Reported theft by Chicago students is significantly lower than theft reported by students in metro cities. The National Institute of Education also obtained information on thefts from students using interviews, and the theft rate for students nationally, according to interview data is slightly lower than the reported Chicago rate based on questionnaire data. In its report to the Congress, NIE chose to use interview data in reporting student victimization rates for theft, assault, and robbery, because they felt the rates obtained from questionnaires were too high.

**INCIDENCE OF THEFT FROM STUDENTS IN A TWO MONTH PERIOD:
A COMPARISON OF CHICAGO AND NATIONAL DATA**

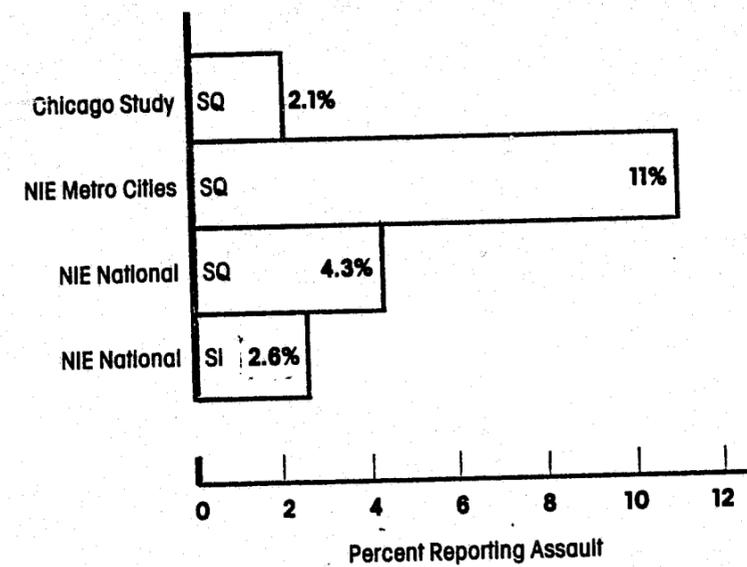


SQ=Student Questionnaire
SI=Student Interview

ASSAULT Upon Students.... Approximately 3 out of 100 (3.3%) of Chicago students in grades 7 through 12 reported being physically attacked either in school or on school grounds, or on the way to or from school, in a two month period. Since over 1 in 3 of the reported assaults took place outside of the school environment, primarily while on the way to or from school, the actual student assault rate in the school environment is about 2 out of 100 students (2.1%). According to the national (NIE) study, about 1.3 percent of secondary school students nationally reported being attacked at school in a typical month or 2.6 percent in a two-month period. The NIE rate is based on student interviews. If the national rate of student assault is based on information obtained from

questionnaires, about 4.3 percent of secondary school students report such attacks. If questionnaire data from metro cities is used, about 11 percent of students nationally, who attend large urban schools, are attacked in a two-month period. This information is illustrated below.

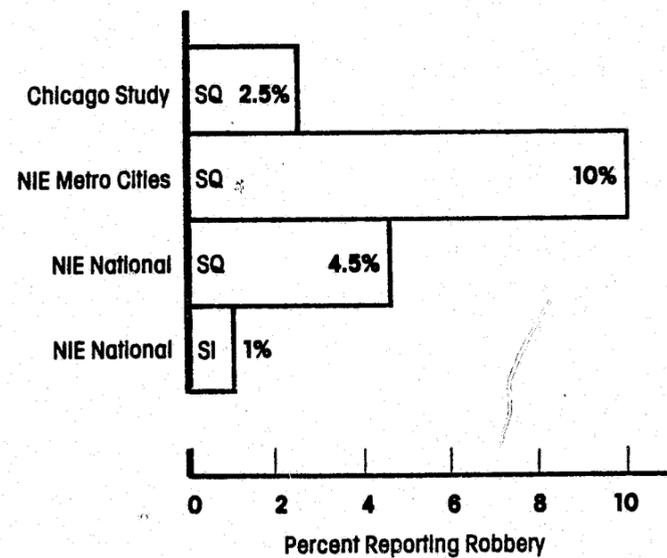
**INCIDENCE OF ASSAULT ON STUDENTS IN A TWO MONTH PERIOD:
A COMPARISON OF CHICAGO AND NATIONAL DATA**



SQ=Student Questionnaire
SI=Student Interview

ROBBERY of Students... Approximately 2.5 percent of student in grades 7 through 12 in the Chicago schools reported being robbed during a two-month period. The national (NIE) study found that about one half of one percent of secondary school students across the nation are robbed during a one-month period, or 1 percent in a two-month period. This student robbery rate is based on information from interviews. If information obtained from questionnaires is used, about 4.5 percent of students in secondary schools nationwide reported being robbed in the same time period. If questionnaire data is used to compute robbery rates only for metro cities, about 10 percent of students reported being robbed. This information is illustrated below.

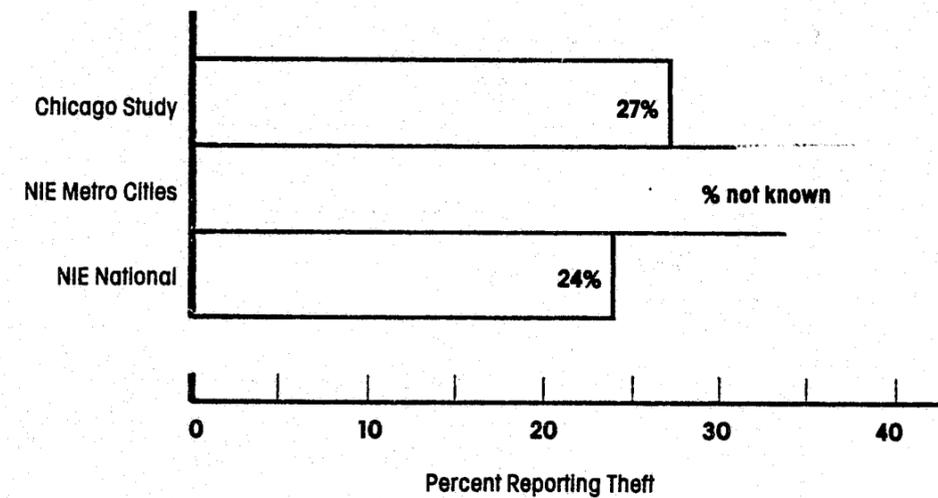
**INCIDENCE OF ROBBERY FROM STUDENTS IN A TWO MONTH PERIOD:
A COMPARISON OF CHICAGO AND NATIONAL DATA**



SQ=Student Questionnaire
SI=Student Interview

THEFT from Teachers... Chicago school teachers reported having something stolen from them at a slightly higher rate than Chicago students. About 27 out of 100 teachers (26.8%) reported having something stolen from them in a two-month period. Nationally, according to the NIE study, about 12 percent of secondary school teachers reported theft in a one-month period, or 24 percent over two months. Also, the NIE study reported that teachers have higher risks of becoming victims of theft in larger cities. This information is illustrated below.

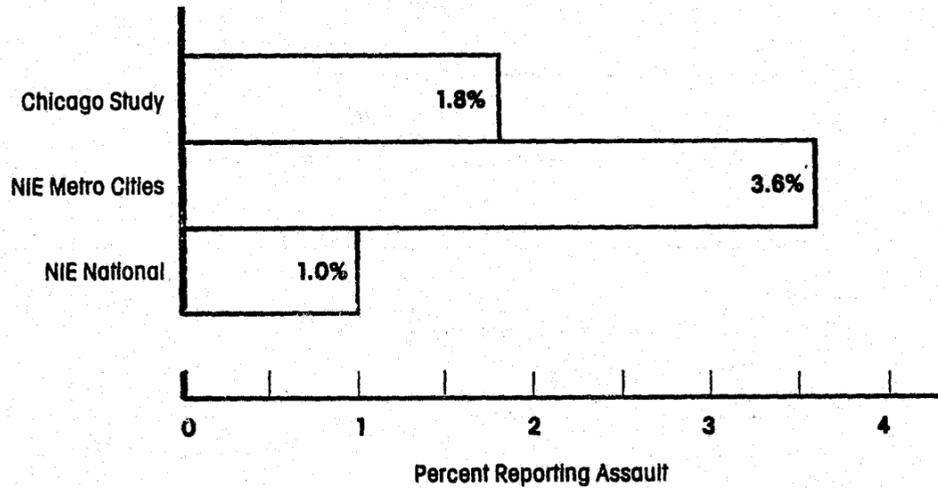
**THEFT FROM TEACHERS IN A TWO MONTH PERIOD:
A COMPARISON OF CHICAGO AND NATIONAL DATA**



All data from Questionnaires

ASSAULT Upon Teachers... Approximately 2 out of 100 (1.77%) Chicago teachers reported being victims of an assault in a two-month period. The NIE national study found that about one-half of one percent of secondary school teachers across the country are physically attacked in school in a one-month period, or 1 percent in two months. The NIE study also found that assaults upon teachers increase with the size of the community, being highest for large metro cities. This information is illustrated below.

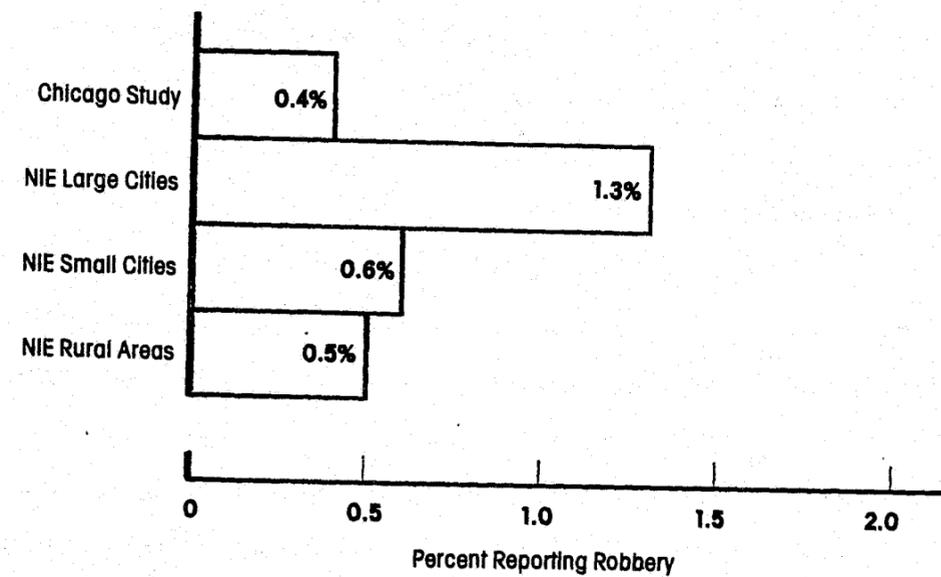
**ASSAULTS ON TEACHERS IN A TWO MONTH PERIOD:
A COMPARISON OF CHICAGO AND NATIONAL DATA**



All data from Questionnaires

ROBBERY of Teachers... A little less than one-half of one percent of Chicago teachers (0.4%) reported being robbed in school during a two-month period. Nationally, the NIE study found that a little more than one-half of one percent of secondary school teachers nationwide were victims of a robbery in a one-month period, or just over 1 percent in a two-month period. Once again, the NIE study found that robbery rates for teachers are a function of the size of the community, with the highest rates in large urban areas and the lowest rates in rural areas. This information is illustrated below.

**ROBBERY OF TEACHERS IN A TWO MONTH PERIOD:
A COMPARISON OF CHICAGO AND NATIONAL DATA**



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations of STUDENTS...

Students involved in the survey were asked to make recommendations in response to the question, "What can be done to reduce school-related crime and violence?" Regardless of grade level, the most frequent student responses had to do with more supervision and strict discipline. This included strict enforcement of rules and regulations, increased use of suspension, expulsion, and prosecution, and the placement of "troublemakers" in special classes or special schools.

The Recommendations of TEACHERS...

Teachers involved in the survey, whether teaching in elementary or high school, also recommended stricter discipline and firmness as the best response to school-related crime and violence. The teachers were more likely to criticize both the school system and the criminal justice system than were the students.

The Recommendations of PRINCIPALS...

Principals involved in the survey were in agreement with students and teachers in stressing strict discipline and rule enforcement. The principals frequently emphasized the importance of strong support and a clear cut discipline policy from the Board of Education. A large percentage of the principals recommended more autonomy for principals with respect to disciplinary actions, coupled with firmer support from the Board of Education and the central office.

The Recommendations Chapter...

Chapter VII of the Chicago Safe School Study report is concerned with the recommendations of students, teachers, and principals, as well as recommendations from the Safe School Study Citizens Advisory Commit-

tee, and the principal investigator. Interested readers are referred to this section of the report.

SUMMARY

The Chicago Safe School Study report summarizes the salient findings of a crime victimization study involving students and teachers. It focuses on personal crimes such as theft, assault, and robbery which take place in and around the school. Students in grades 7 through 12, and teachers at all grade levels are victims of personal theft with great frequency. Based on the survey it is estimated that about 62,000 students and 6700 teachers have something stolen from them in a two-month period. It is also estimated that about 8200 students and 440 teachers are physically attacked in a two-month period, and that about 6200 students and 100 teachers are robbed in a two-month period.

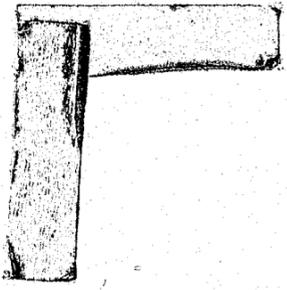
There is a subjective dimension to school-related crime--fear and anxiety. Almost 3 out of 100 students say they are concerned with their personal safety all of the time, and 9 out of 100 students say that they rarely or never feel safe in school. Based on student responses, it appears that street gangs contribute substantially to student fears.

With some exceptions the younger the student the more likely he or she is to report both victimization and fear of being victimized. Both males and females experience theft with equal frequency, but males are much more likely to report being physically attacked or robbed. Race is also a factor. American Indian students report the most victimization and the most fear of being victimized. Black students are more likely to report being robbed than white or hispanic students, but Asian and Hispanic students are more likely to report being assaulted

than black or white students. Other factors which influence the likelihood of victimization are the time the student has been attending the school, the size of the school, and the location of the school.

Most major urban school systems find crime to be a problem. But in comparing 1980 student victimization rates with 1976-77 rates as determined by a national survey, Chicago students appear to be victims of crime less often than students in other large urban school systems.

Any crime in our schools is "too much" crime. The incident rates obtained from this study should send a clear signal to the community and to policymakers. A safe and secure environment is a prerequisite to learning, and cannot be dismissed as a side issue or a minor problem when it involves such large numbers of students and teachers.



END