



**2014-2016**

# **SCHOOL CRIME**



**Tennessee Bureau of Investigation**  
CJIS Support Center



**Bill Haslam**  
Governor

## **TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

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**Mark Gwyn**  
Director

June 7, 2017

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 2016.

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 the state continues to maintain such a successful 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 2014 through 2016. 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 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, arrestee characteristics, offense characteristics, victim characteristics and victim to offender 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, Kidnapping/Abduction, Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, Forcible Fondling, Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Intimidation, Stalking, Incest, Statutory Rape, Commercial Sex Acts, and Involuntary Servitude.

## Quick Facts

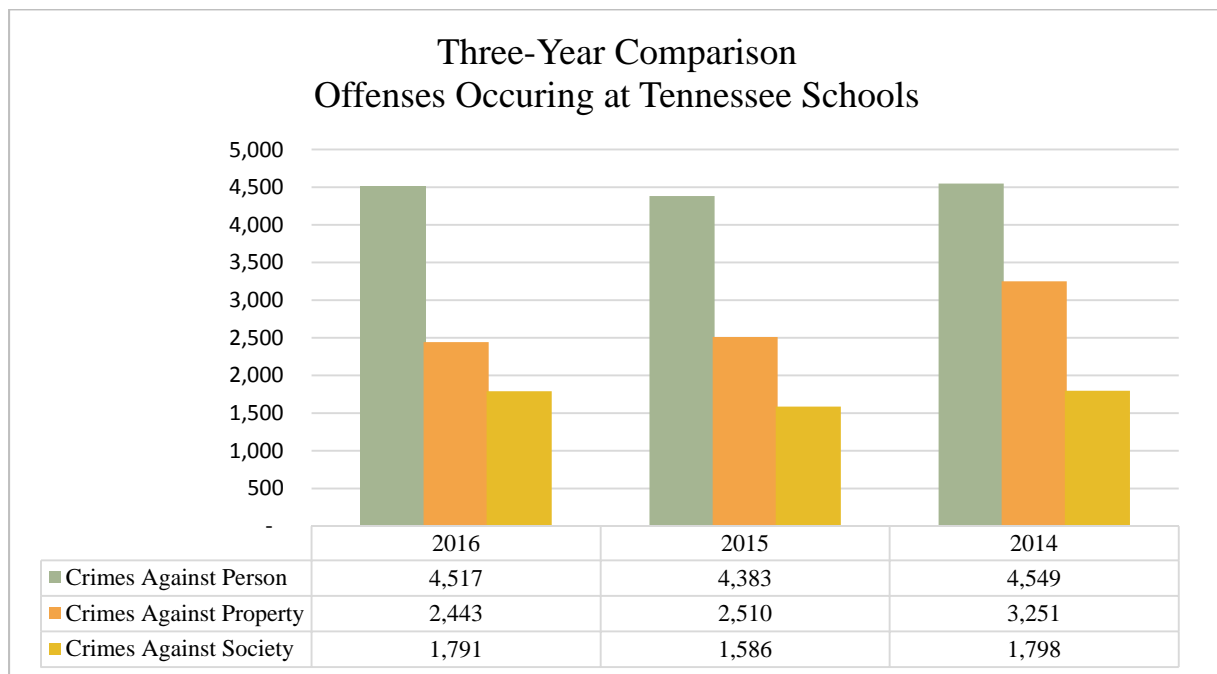
- ❖ From 2014 to 2016, a total of 26,828 offenses that included 19,145 victims were reported by Tennessee law enforcement agencies with a school location code.
- ❖ Overall, the number of offenses occurring in school decreased 8.8% from 9,598 offenses in 2014 to 8,751 offenses in 2016.
- ❖ Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense (35.7%).
- ❖ The month of September had the highest frequency of school crimes.
- ❖ The largest percentage of School Crime offenses occurred between 12:00 pm and 2:59 pm.
- ❖ Friday was the most frequently reported day of week for school crimes.
- ❖ The most common weapon type was Personal Weapons (hands, fist, feet, etc.) at 81.6%.
- ❖ Females accounted for 52.4% of total victims and 47.1% of the victims were Male.
- ❖ Males contributed to 57.8% of the offender total compared to 24.4% reported as Female. The remaining offenders were reported as having an Unknown gender (6.9%) or Missing (10.8%).
- ❖ Males aged 13–15 were the most common arrestee (42.4%) when analyzing arrestee age and gender demographics.
- ❖ White males were the most common arrestee (50.0%) when analyzing arrestee race and gender demographics.
- ❖ From 2014 to 2016, 40.2% of school crime offenses were cleared by arrest and 8.7% were exceptionally cleared.



## School Crime Offenses

School crime reported in Tennessee elementary and secondary schools has shown a steady decline over the past three years. Over this study period, reported crime in Tennessee schools decreased 8.8% from 9,598 offenses in 2014 to 8,751 offenses in 2016. More specifically, each of the three TIBRS Group A categories have shown a year-to-year decline in reported offenses. Reported Crimes Against Property offenses saw the most significant decrease at 24.9% from 2014 to 2016. Crimes Against Persons (0.7%) and Crimes against Society (0.4%) both showed a slight decrease.

- ❖ Crimes Against Persons are those crimes in which victims are always individuals, e.g., Murder, Forcible 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 activity, e.g., Gambling, Prostitution, Drug Violations, etc.



Simple Assault was the most common offense reported during this time frame accounting for 35.7% of the 26,828 overall offenses, a decrease of 2.7% from 2014 to 2016. Theft from a Building had the next highest frequency with a total of 4,186 offenses (37.9%) a decrease from 2014 to 2016. Drug/Narcotic Violations offenses decreased 0.7% over this time frame, but still accounted for 12.4% of the total offenses happening at Tennessee schools in 2016.

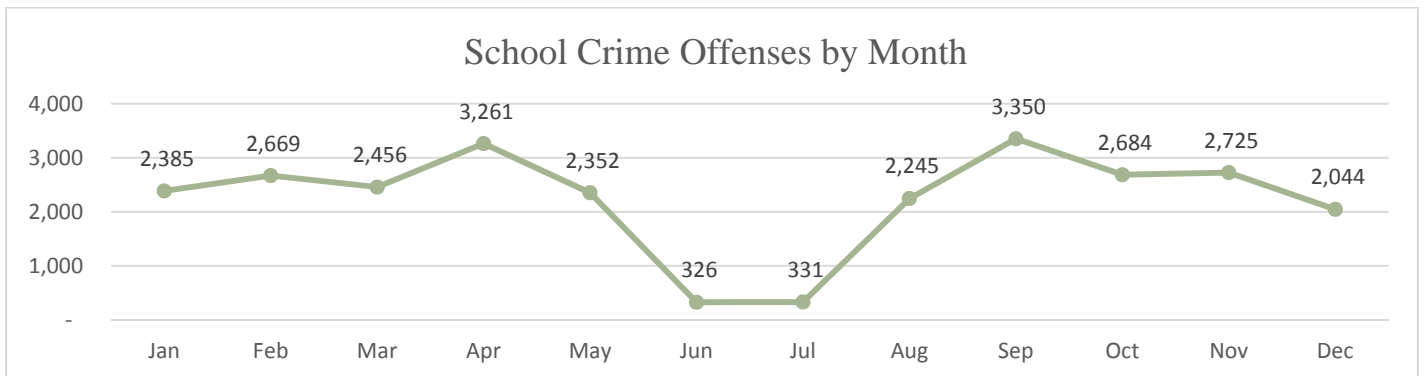
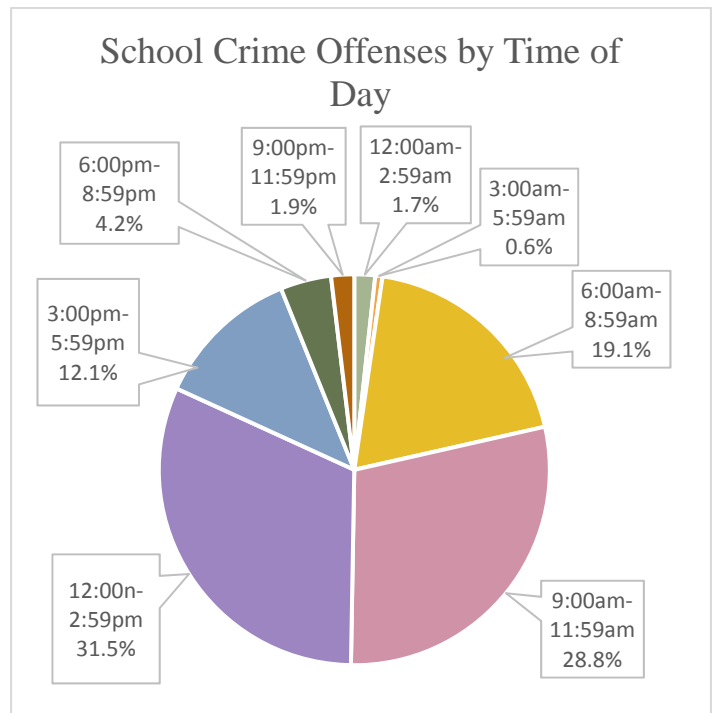
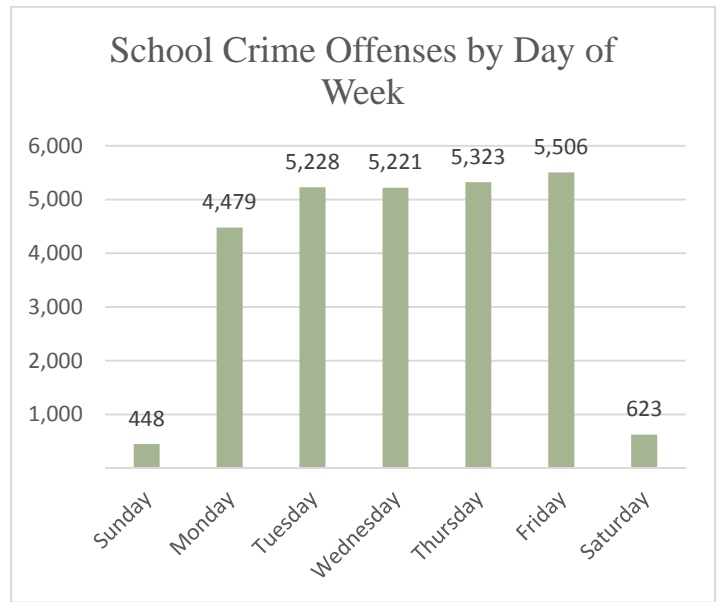


## School Crime Offenses

Thursday and Friday resulted in the greatest number of offenses reported with 40.4% of offenses occurring over the two days. Friday had a slight lead over Thursday with 5,506 offenses. Sunday and Saturday had the lowest number of reported offenses with a combined total of 1,071 offenses.

The incident time frame of noon to 2:59 pm was the most common time for offense occurrences at 31.5%, followed by the time frame of 9:00 am to 11:59 am with 28.8%. Simple Assault was the offense that occurred most often during both time frames.

September had the greatest number of reported offenses representing 12.5% of all offenses followed closely by April at 12.2%. The months of June and July had the lowest number of reported offenses accounting for a combined 2.4% of the overall offenses. This may be due to the fact that the majority of schools not being in session during these months.



## School Crime Offenses

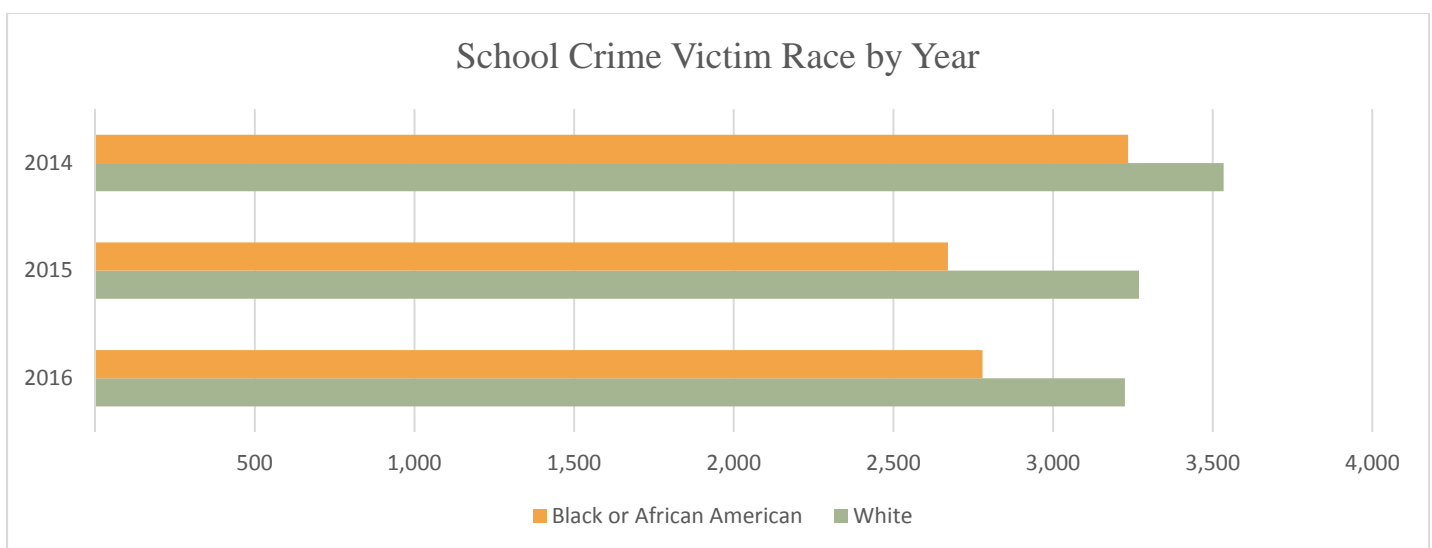
Of the 26,828 reported offenses, 45.1% reported a weapon being involved. The largest percentage of weapons used in offenses at Tennessee schools was Personal Weapons (i.e. hands, fist, feet, etc.) accounting for 81.6% of offenses where a weapon was used. The second most often reported weapon category was Dangerous Weapons (i.e. knife/cutting instrument, blunt object) at 7.0%.

Weapon Types Involved in School Crime Offenses	
Weapon Type Category	Number of Offenses
Firearm	339
Dangerous Weapons	846
Motor Vehicle as Weapon	29
Asphyxiation/Strangulation	8
Personal Weapons	9,872
Poison/Drugs	6
Fire Explosives	20
Other/Unknown	985

Up to five injury types may be reported with offenses requiring an injury entry. The majority of injuries were reported as None with 60.4%. The second most frequent injury that was reported was Apparent Minor Injury at 38.1%. The remaining injury types comprised less than one percent of reported injuries.

## School Crime Victims

From 2014 to 2016, a total of 19,145 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 decreased 12.0% from 2014 to 2016. Females accounted for 52.4% of total victims and 47.1% of the victims were Male. There were a total of 93 victims with an Unknown gender. The most frequently reported victim race was White (52.4%) followed by Black or African-American (45.4%). The remaining 2.3% of victims had a race of Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, or Unknown race.

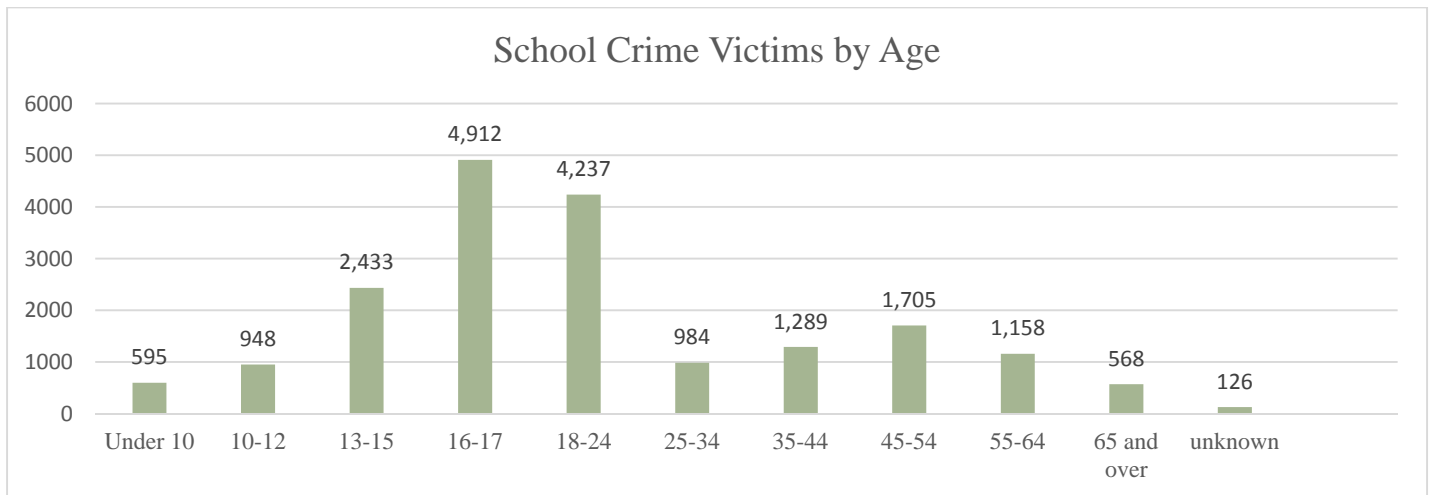


Please note: Adding only given figures for Black or African-American and White victims will not give an overall total.



## School Crime Victims

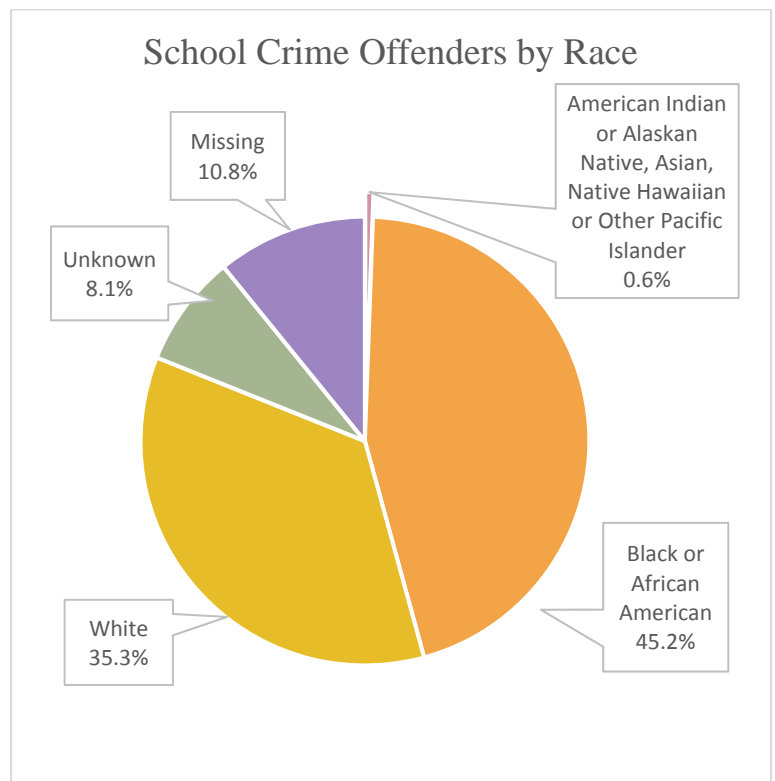
The 16-17 year old age category had the highest percentage of victims (25.9%) followed by the 18-24 year old category (22.4%). There were seven victims identified in the Neonate and Baby age categories. Victims with an age of Unknown accounted for 1.0% of the victim total.



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

## School Crime Offenders

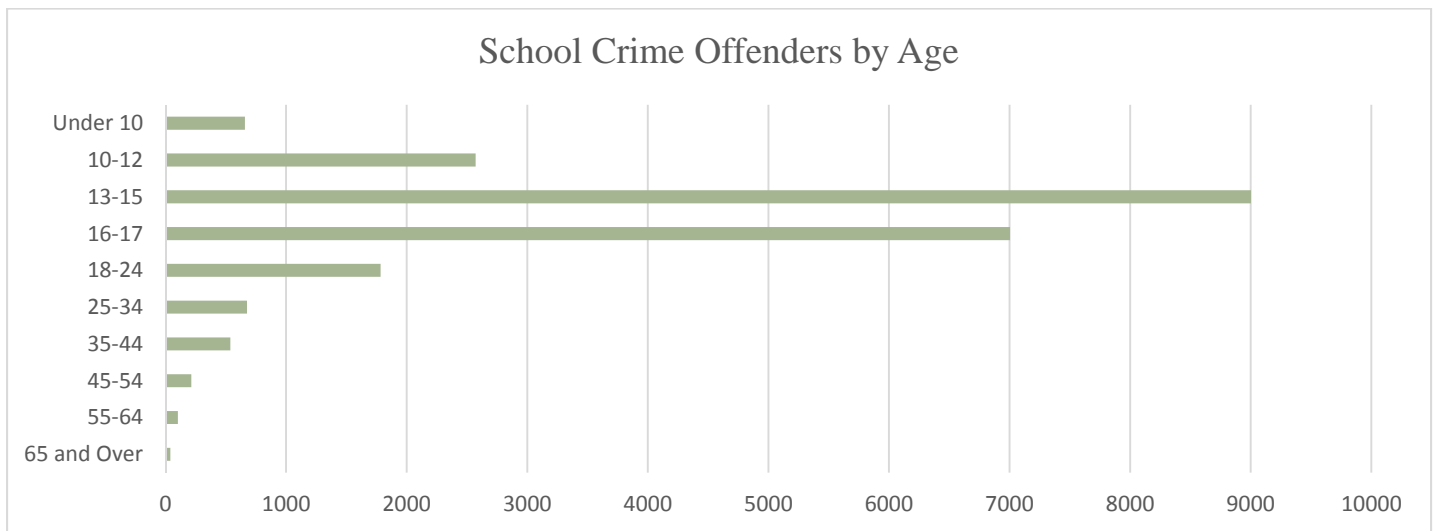
A total of 28,305 school crime offenders were reported in 2014 through 2016. Males contributed to 57.8% of the offender total compared to 24.4% reported as Female. The remaining offenders were reported as having an Unknown gender (6.9%) or Missing (10.8%). The most frequently reported offender race was Black or African-American (45.2%) followed by White (35.3%). Offenders with an unknown race comprised 8.1%. 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

Offenders under the age of 18 accounted for 68.0% of school crime offenders. The 13–15 (39.9%) and 16–17 (31.0%) age categories had the largest percentage of offenders. An Unknown age was reported for 20.2% of the offenders. The Unknown category should be 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.



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

## School Crime Arrestees

There are three types of arrests that are captured in the TIBRS program: On View, Summoned/Cited, and Taken into Custody.

- ❖ On View arrests occur when the offender is taken into custody at the scene without a warrant or previous incident report
- ❖ Summoned/Cited occurs when the offender is not taken into custody but a summons or citation is issued
- ❖ Taken Into Custody occurs when the offender is arrested based on a warrant and/or previously submitted incident report

During this study period, 10,504 arrests were made. Summoned/Cited arrests accounted for 53.9% of the total arrest types followed by On View arrests with 31.5%. There were only 1,535 Taken Into Custody arrests for a school crime from 2014 to 2016.

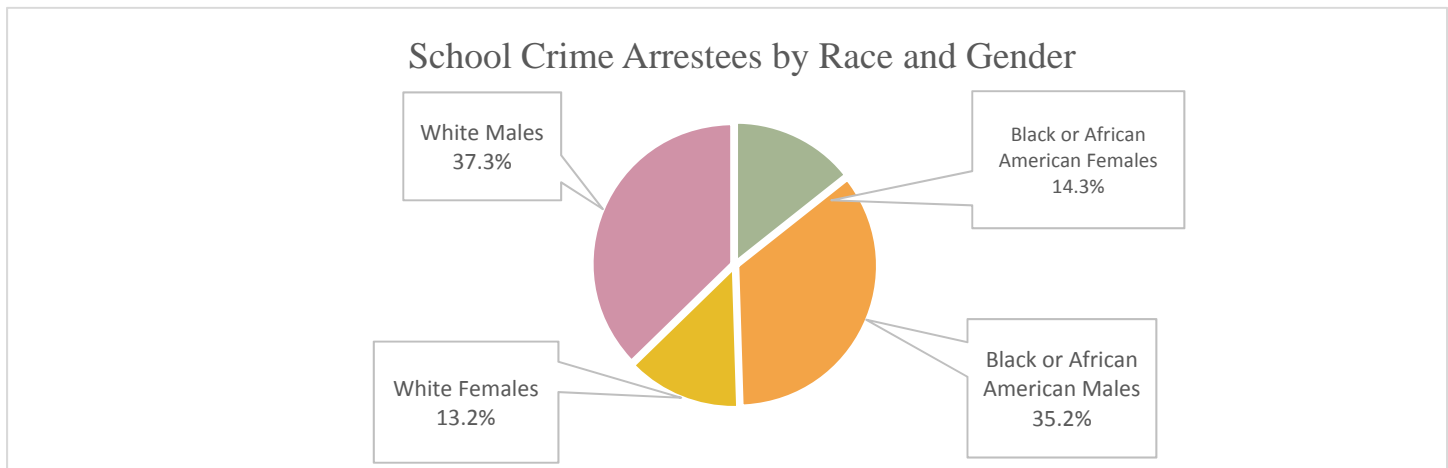


## School Crime Arrestees Continued

The number of arrestees decreased over the three-year study period by 9.5% from 3,724 arrestees in 2014 to 3,368 arrestees in 2016. Males comprised the greatest majority of arrestees at 72.5% as compared to the 27.5% for Female arrestees. Arrestees under the age of 18 accounted for 88.2% of all arrestees with Males, age 13–15, being the most common arrestee (42.4%) when analyzing age and gender demographics. There were two male arrestees with an age of Unknown within the time period of the study.

School Crime Arrestees by Age		
Age	Male	Female
Under 10	187	24
10–12	769	287
13–15	3,114	1,342
16–17	2,609	932
18–24	677	160
25–34	137	63
35–44	61	58
45–54	33	16
55 and Over	22	7

White was the most common arrestee race (50.0%) followed by Black or African-American (49.0%). Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native accounted for less than 1% of school crime arrestees. There were 33 arrestees with an Unknown race. White Males were the most common arrestee (51.0%) when analyzing race and gender demographics followed closely by Black or African American Males (48.1%).



## School Crime Juvenile Arrestees

When reporting an arrestee under the age of 18, agencies are required to report the disposition of the arrestee. The information to be reported in this category relates to law enforcement disposition of juveniles (age 17 or younger only) who are taken into custody or arrested. Whereas an adult is usually held for prosecution for a charge or is released for future handling in court, however, a juvenile, depending on the seriousness of the offense and the offender’s prior criminal record, may be warned by the police and released to parents, relatives, friends, or guardians. Juveniles may also be referred to the probation department or some other branch of juvenile court; to welfare agencies; to other law enforcement agencies; or in the case of a serious offender, to criminal or adult court by transfer from juvenile court.

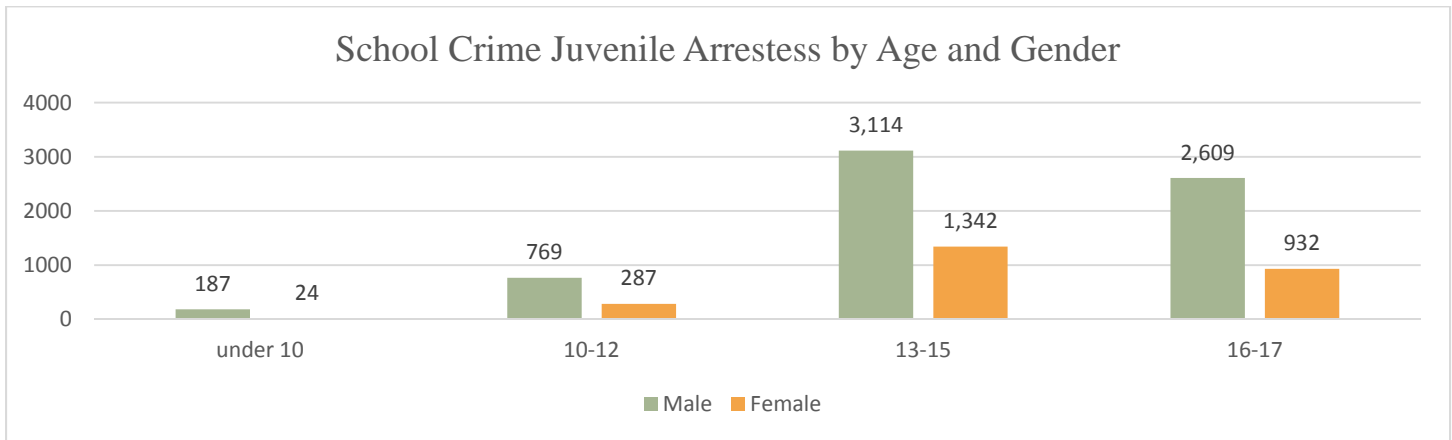


The juvenile disposition types are:

Handled within the Department: used when the juvenile is released to the parents with an oral warning only.

Referred to Other Authorities: used when the juvenile is turned over to juvenile court, probation, welfare agency, other police agency, or criminal or adult court.

During this study period 65.4% of juvenile arrestees were Referred to Other Authorities while the remaining 34.6% were Handled within the Department. Of the 9,264 juvenile arrestees, 72.1% were male and 27.9% were female. Black or African-American juveniles accounted for 49.1% of juvenile school crime arrestees followed by White juveniles at 50.0%. Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native juveniles made up less than one percent of juvenile arrestees. There were 33 juvenile school crime arrestees with an Unknown race. The 13-15 age group had the most arrestees accounting for 42.4% of all juvenile arrestees followed closely by the age group of 16-17 year olds at 38.2%.



### School Crime Incident Clearances

There are two ways to clear an offense. The offenses can be Cleared by Arrest or Cleared by Exceptional Means. An offense is cleared exceptionally when an element beyond law enforcement control prevents a physical arrest. From 2014 to 2016, 40.2% of school crime offenses were cleared by arrest and 8.7% were exceptionally cleared. Victim Refused to Cooperate was the most common exceptional clearance with 56.5% of all exceptional clearances during this time period.

