School Crime
2020

March 18, 2021

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 2020.

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,

David B. Rausch
Director

INTRODUCTION

This study presents information on characteristics surrounding crime in Tennessee schools, focusing upon public and private school systems, excluding colleges, universities and technical schools. The period covered in this study is from 2018 to 2020. This study was completed using data provided to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS).

- o This report is based on incidents submitted by law enforcement agencies.

- o Since the offense of Justifiable Homicide is not considered a crime, the offense is excluded from the study.

- o 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 assist law enforcement, policy makers, school administrators, and the public in developing strategies to reduce the amount of crime occurring at schools in Tennessee.

- o In an effort to expedite the collection of data, TBI transitioned from monthly data submissions to weekly submissions. As you review this report, you will see the steady impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on school crimes in Tennessee. Since March 8, 2020, the TBI Statistical Analysis Center has been maintaining a watchful eye on the weekly crime rates and continues to do so.

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 the location of the offense committed. Crimes perpetrated by offenders against victims who are not school students or staff and have no other relation to the school, i.e., a drug deal committed in a school parking lot or an assault involving multiple offenders and victims, would be examples of such situations.

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.

TIBRS DEFINED

The Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program is designed to collect data on every single crime occurrence and on each incident an 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 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 10 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

This 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 10, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16–17, 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 the following 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

- o From 2018 to 2020, 24,403 crimes were reported by Tennessee law enforcement agencies with a location code of School-Elementary/Secondary.
- o The overall number of reported offenses decreased 59.0% from 2018 to 2020.
- o Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense at 35.1%.
- o The month of February had the highest frequency of school crimes.
- o The largest percentage of School Crime offenses occurred between 12:00 pm and 2:59 pm at 30.5%.
- o Wednesday was the most frequently reported day of the week for school crimes.
- o The most common weapon type was Personal Weapons (hands, fist, feet, etc.) at 75.5%.
- o Females accounted for 52.7% of total victims and 46.9% of the victims were Male.
- o Males contributed to 60.3% of the offender total compared to 27.3% reported as Female. The remaining offenders were reported as having an Unknown gender (8.2%) or Missing (4.2%).

- Males aged 14-15 were the most reported offenders comprising a total of 27.7% followed by the age group category of 16-17 at 26.4%.
- Black or African American was the most reported offender's race (43.4%), followed by White at 42.3%.

GROUP A OFFENSES BY YEAR

The overall crimes reported in elementary and secondary schools decreased by 59.0 % from 2018 to 2020. Data shown on Table 1 displays a 63.7% decrease in Crimes Against Persons. Crimes Against Property, in comparison, decreased by 53.5% from 2018 to 2020. Within the same time frame, Crimes Against Society decreased slightly to 50.6%.

GROUP A ARREST CLEARANCES

TABLE 1: GROUP A OFFENSES CLEARED BY ARREST						
	CLEARED BY ARREST			PERCENT CHANGE		
CATEGORY	2018	2019	2020	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2018 to 2020
Crimes Against Persons Total	2,154	2,264	930	5.1%	-58.9%	-56.8%
Crimes Against Property Total	490	529	214	8.0%	-59.5%	-56.3%
Crimes Against Society Total	1,462	1,659	739	13.5%	-55.5%	-49.5%
TOTAL INCIDENTS CLEARED BY ARREST	4,106	4,452	1,883	8.4%	57.7%	54.1%

- Crimes Against Persons are those crimes in which victims are always individuals or law enforcement officers, 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 activity, e.g., Gambling, Prostitution, Drug Violations, etc.

The offense of Simple Assault accounted for the highest reported offense in 2020 at 35.1% followed by Drug/Narcotic Violations at 13.5%. Findings on data revealed that Theft from a Building decreased by 65.8% from 2018 to 2020. The overall number of Crimes Against Society decreased 50.6%. Drug/Narcotic Violations, in particular, decreased 54.0%. Further findings also revealed an 50.9% decrease in Weapon Law Violations. The increase of law enforcement personnel in schools could be attributed to the continued decrease in Weapon Law Violations.

ALL CLEARANCE TYPES

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. From 2018 to 2020, 14,118 of the 24,403 offenses were cleared. More specifically, 74.0% of school crimes were cleared by arrest and 26.0% were exceptionally cleared.

 An offense is cleared exceptionally when an element beyond law enforcement control prevents a physical arrest. All four of the following conditions 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 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.

CHART 1: SCHOOL CRIME - ALL CLEARANCE TYPES

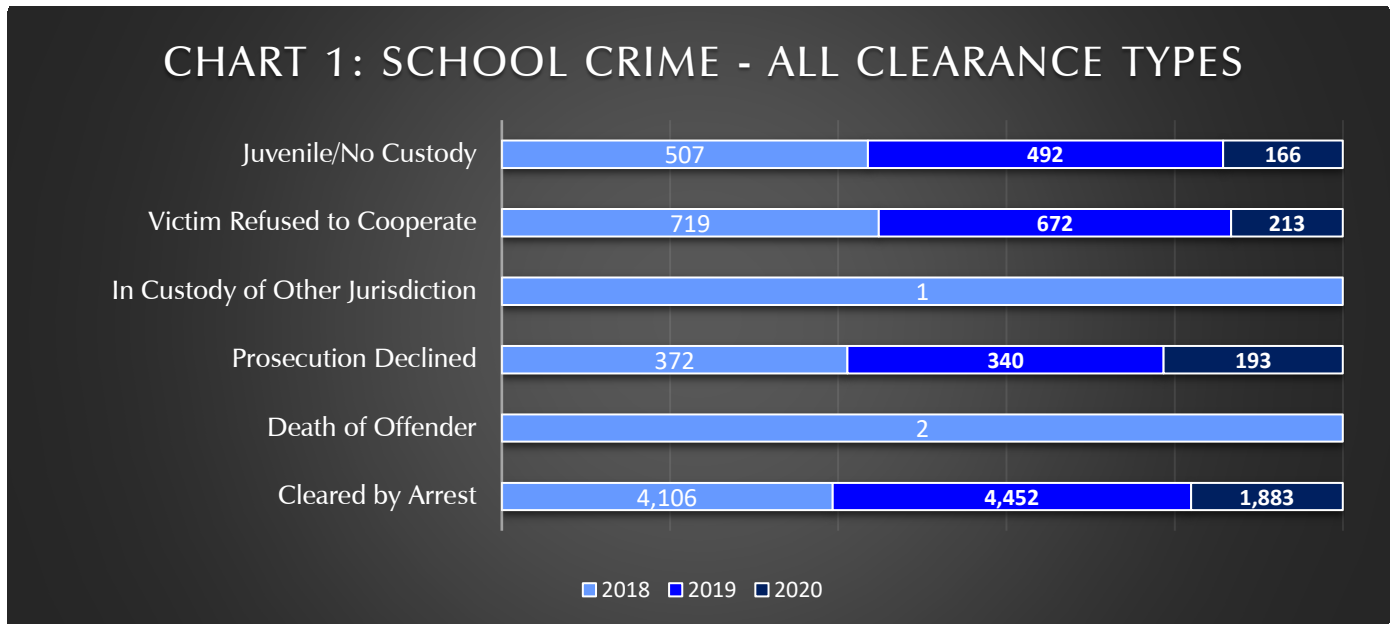|	2018	2019	2020
Juvenile/No Custody	507	492	166
Victim Refused to Cooperate	719	672	213
In Custody of Other Jurisdiction	1		
Prosecution Declined	372	340	193
Death of Offender	2		
Cleared by Arrest	4,106	4,452	1,883

Chart 1 breaks down arrests and the different reportable exceptional clearance types. Victim Refused to Cooperate was the most common exceptional clearance with 43.6% of all exceptional clearances during
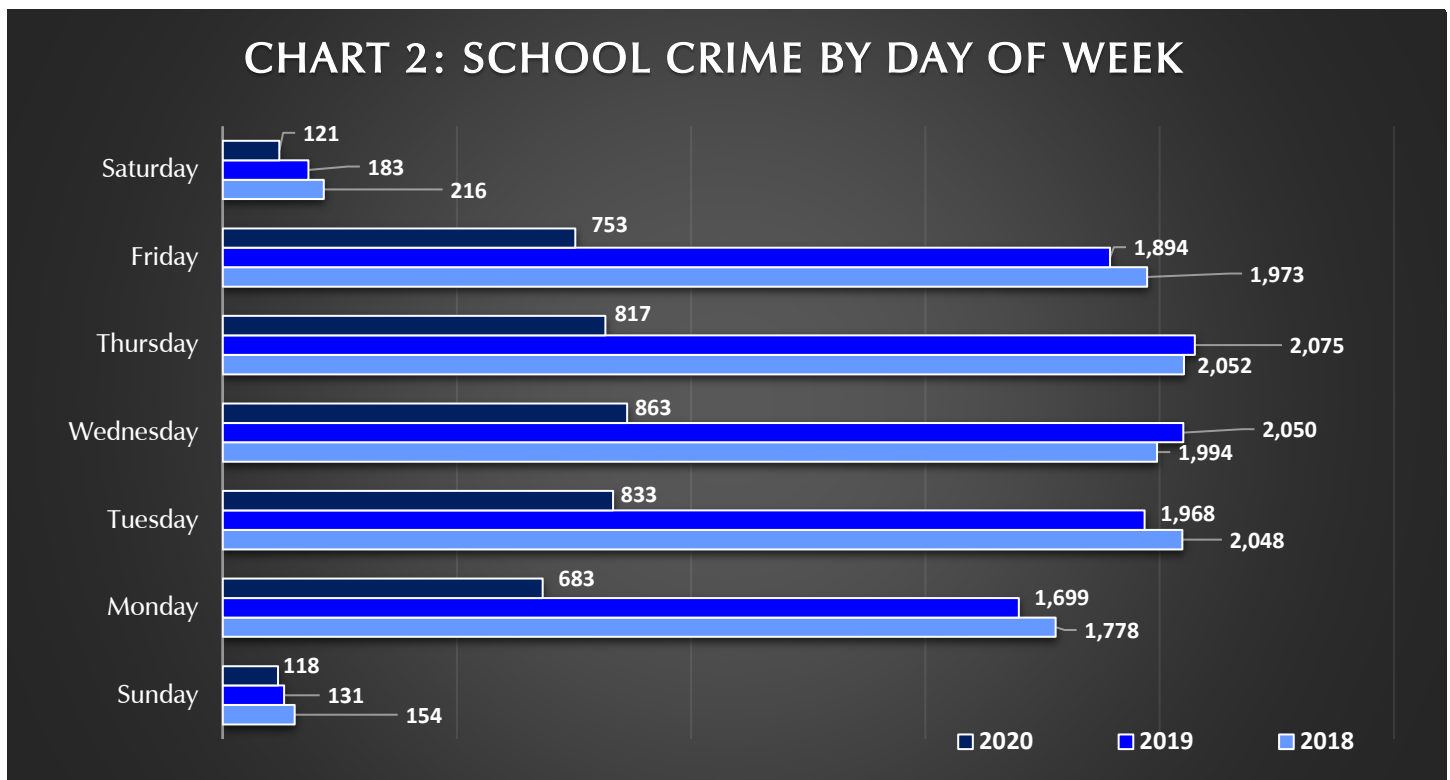
the three-year study period. Juvenile/No Custody accounted for the second highest reported at 31.7%.

Prosecution Declined accounted for 24.6%. Death of Offender and In Custody of Other Jurisdiction accounted for less than one percent of all reported types and therefore, are not included in Chart 1.

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

Wednesday accounted for the highest reported day of week in 2020 at 20.6%, followed by Tuesday at 19.9%. Additional findings revealed the number of reported offenses increased by 22.0% from Monday to Tuesday. Similarly, school crimes increased 10.2% from Monday to Friday.
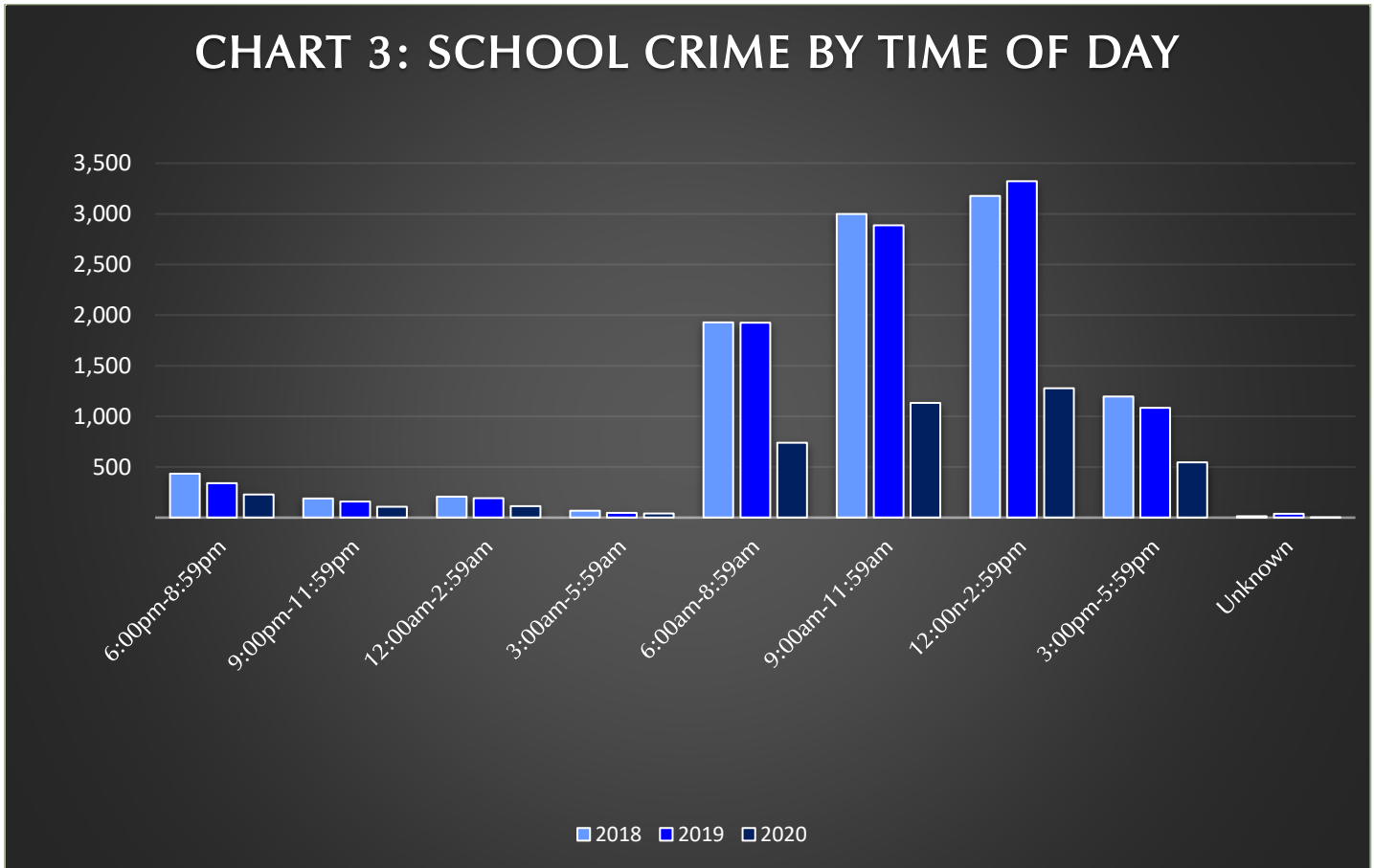
School crime predominately occurred during regular school days.

CHART 2: SCHOOL CRIME BY DAY OF WEEK

Day	2020	2019	2018
Saturday	121	183	216
Friday	753	1,894	1,973
Thursday	817	2,075	2,052
Wednesday	863	2,050	1,994
Tuesday	833	1,968	2,048
Monday	683	1,699	1,778
Sunday	118	131	154

For 2018 to 2020, Thursday (4,944, 20.2%) was the most common day of the week for school crimes, followed by Wednesday (4,907, 20.1%).

A combined total of 923 or 3.8% school crimes were committed on Saturdays and Sundays.

TIME OF DAY

CHART 3: SCHOOL CRIME BY TIME OF DAY

Further examination of 2020 data revealed the incident period of noon to 2:59 pm was the most common time for offense occurrences at 30.5%, followed by the period of 9:00 am to 11:59 am at 27.1%. Offenses were less likely to occur during the time frame of 3:00am—5:59 am, when schools are generally closed.

SCHOOL CRIME BY MONTH

For 2018 to 2020, February had the greatest number of reported offenses representing 13.6% of all offenses followed by the month of September at 10.8%. The months of June and July had the lowest number of reported offenses accounting for a combined 2.6% of the overall offenses. The impact of the pandemic in 2020 is obvious in Chart 6. With most schools closed in 2020 from mid-March through December, school crime dropped dramatically. Charts 4, 5, and 6 illustrate the sharp decline in incidents that occurred from March through December.

For 2020, it is not a coincidence that January and February were the highest months, as schools were still open. The highest months after the pandemic began were March (476, 11.4%), followed by October (392, 9.4%), and September (323, 7.7%).
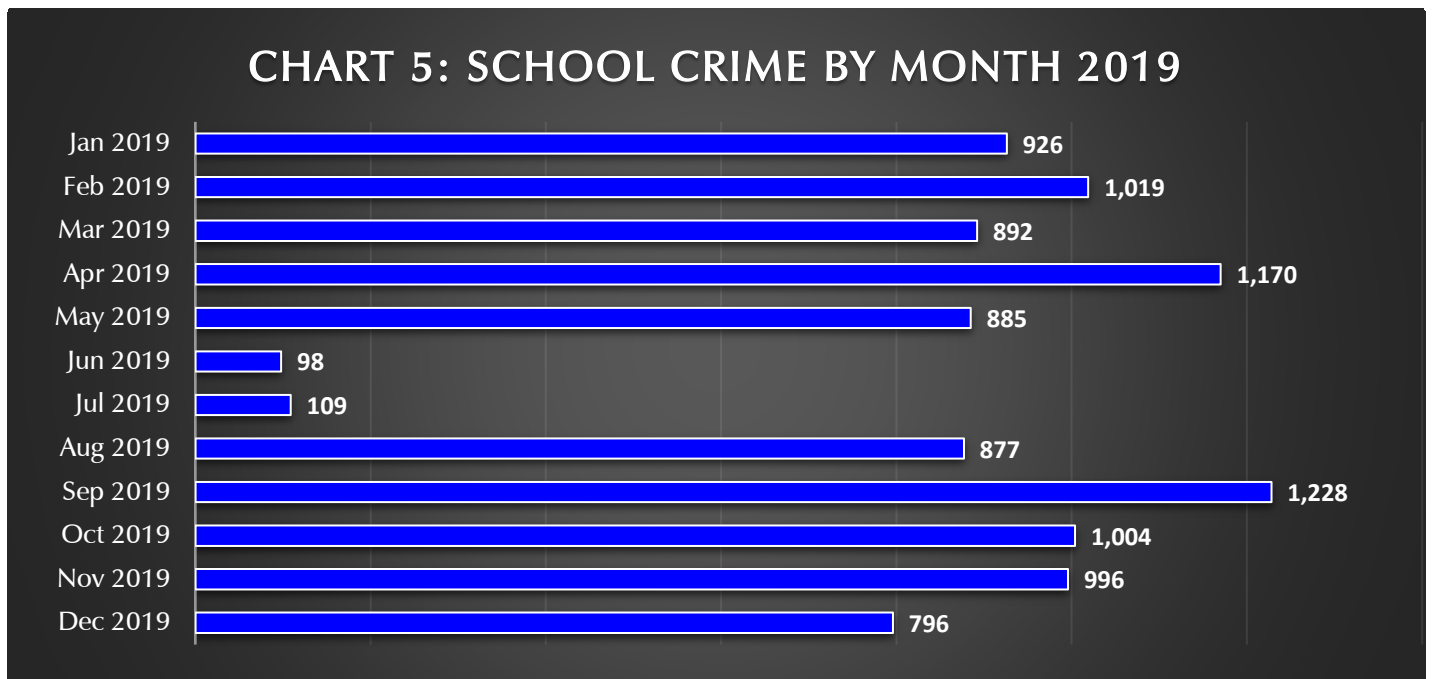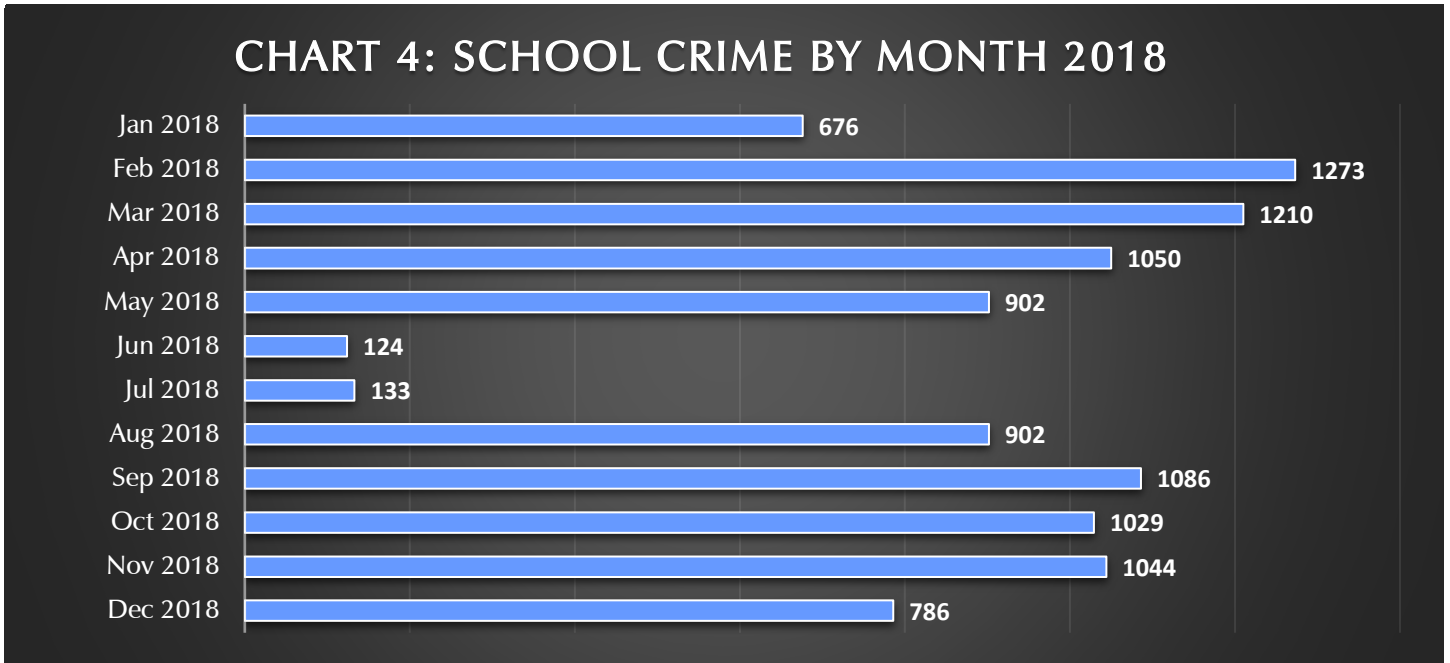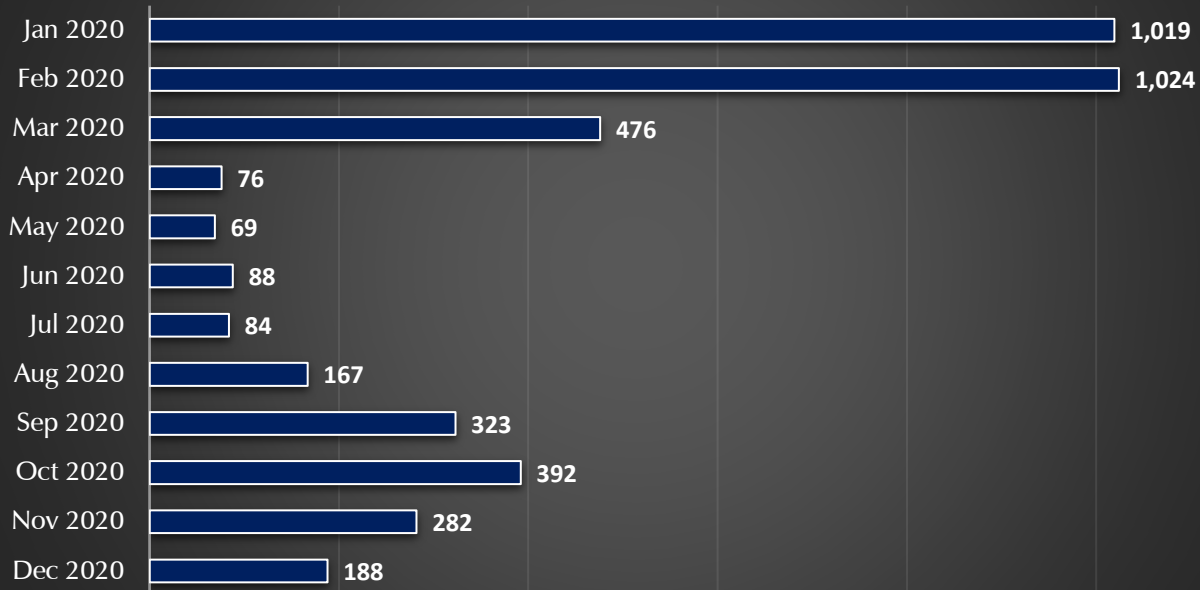
CHART 4: SCHOOL CRIME BY MONTH 2018

Month	Value
Jan 2018	676
Feb 2018	1273
Mar 2018	1210
Apr 2018	1050
May 2018	902
Jun 2018	124
Jul 2018	133
Aug 2018	902
Sep 2018	1086
Oct 2018	1029
Nov 2018	1044
Dec 2018	786

CHART 5: SCHOOL CRIME BY MONTH 2019

Month	Value
Jan 2019	926
Feb 2019	1,019
Mar 2019	892
Apr 2019	1,170
May 2019	885
Jun 2019	98
Jul 2019	109
Aug 2019	877
Sep 2019	1,228
Oct 2019	1,004
Nov 2019	996
Dec 2019	796

CHART 6: SCHOOL CRIME BY MONTH 2020

Month	Count
Jan 2020	1,019
Feb 2020	1,024
Mar 2020	476
Apr 2020	76
May 2020	69
Jun 2020	88
Jul 2020	84
Aug 2020	167
Sep 2020	323
Oct 2020	392
Nov 2020	282
Dec 2020	188

February had the greatest number of reported offenses representing 24.5% of all offenses followed by the month of January at 24.3%.

The months of May (69, 1.6%) and April (76, 1.8%) had the lowest number of reported offenses accounting for a combined 3.5% of the overall offenses. The impact of the pandemic becomes very obvious in Chart 6. With most schools closed in 2020 from mid-March through December, school crime dropped dramatically.

SCHOOL CRIME BY YEAR

Charts 7 and 8 illustrate the sharp decline in incidents that occurred from March through December. It is not a coincidence that January and February were the highest months, as schools were still open. The highest months after the pandemic began were March (476, 11.4%), followed by October (392, 9.4%), and September (323, 7.7%).
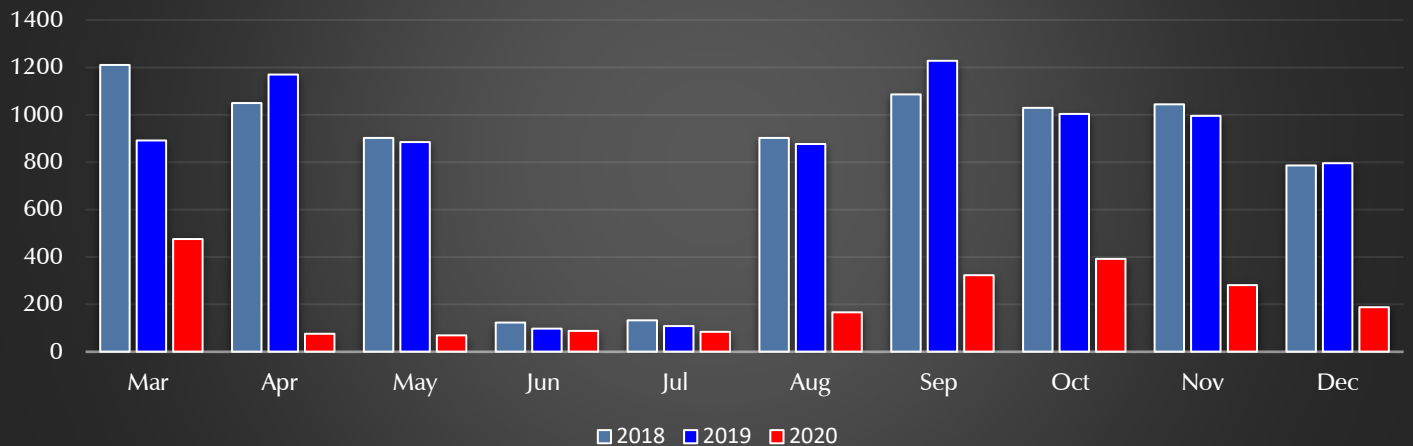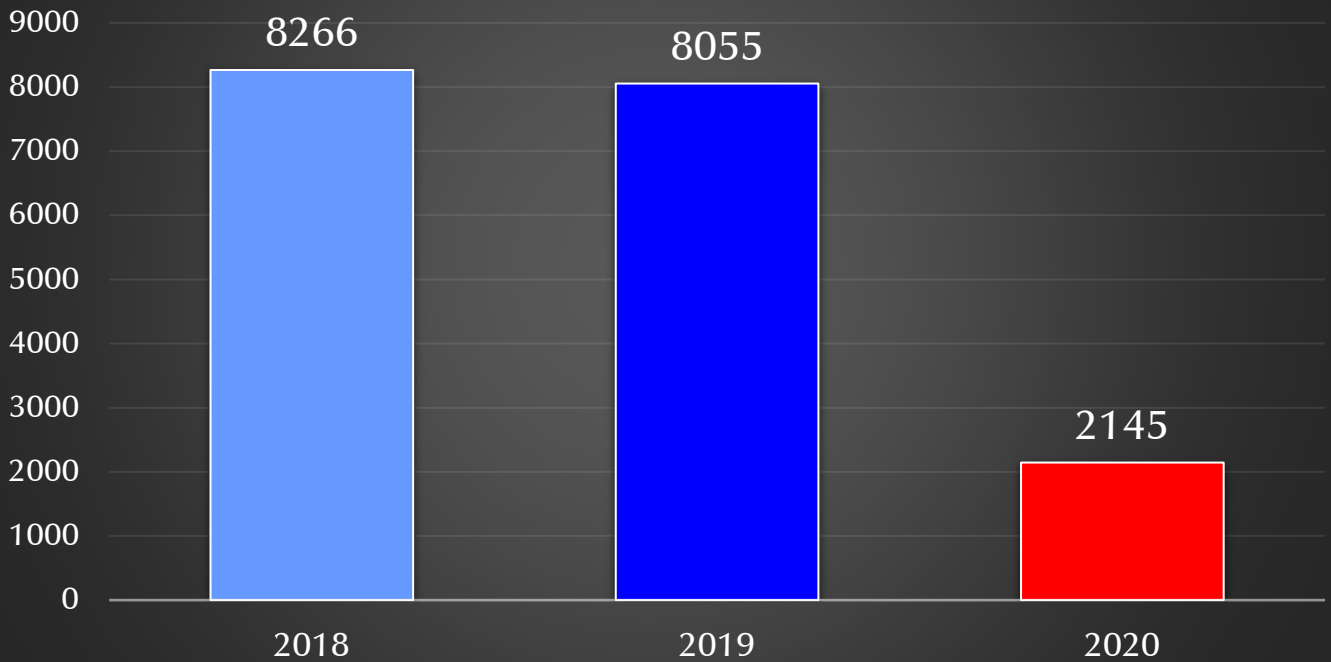
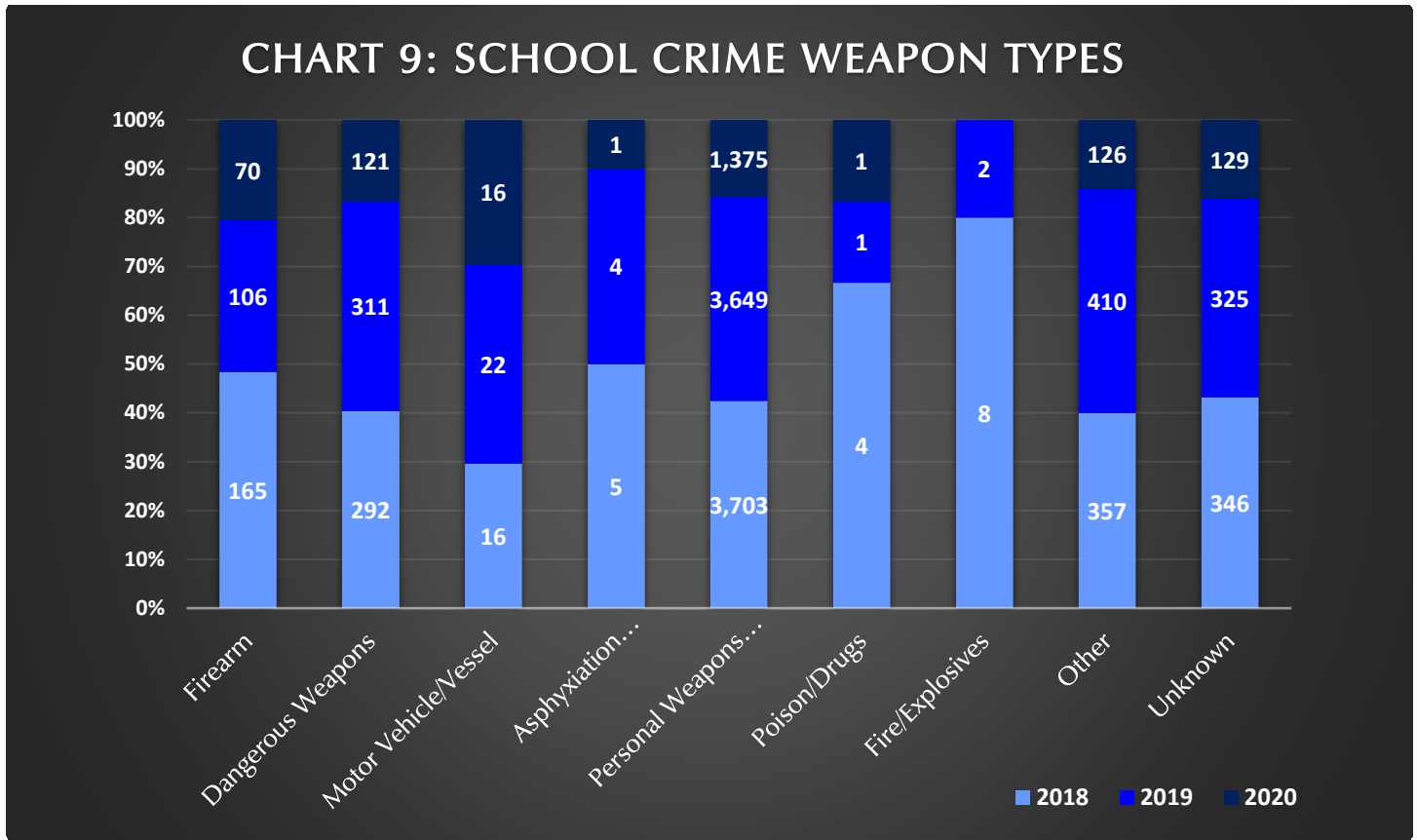CHART 7: MONTHLY, MARCH THRU DECEMBER 2018-2020

CHART 8: MARCH THRU DECEMBER TOTALS 2018-2020

The 2,145 school crime incidents occurring from March thru December is a **74.1%** decrease from 2018 and a **73.4%** decrease in 2019.

WEAPON TYPES

CHART 9: SCHOOL CRIME WEAPON TYPES

Of the 24,403 reported offenses, 47.4% involved a weapon. Since Simple Assault accounted for the highest reported offense type within the three-year time span, Personal Weapons (i.e. hands, fist, feet, etc.) comprised the largest portion of reported weapon types at 75.5%.

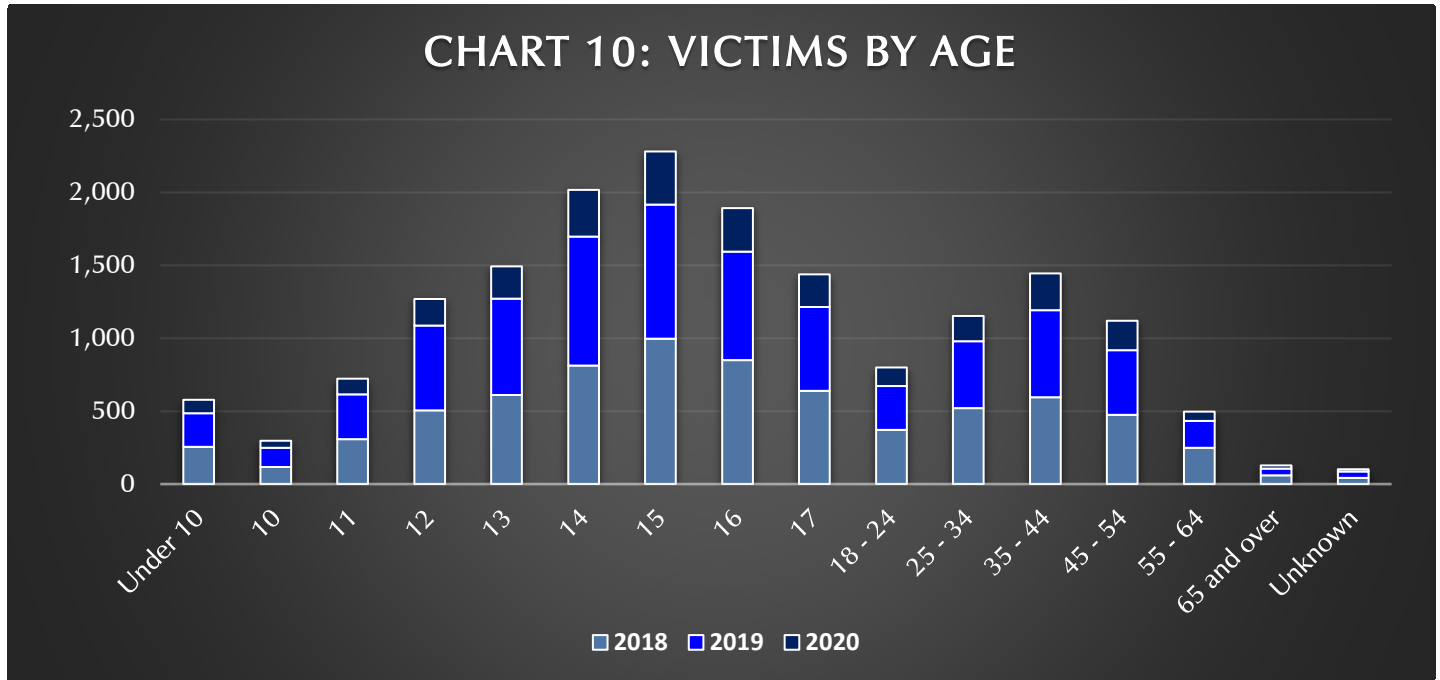The second most reported known weapon type was Other at 7.7%.

The majority of injuries were reported as None at 63.0%, followed by Apparent Minor Injury at 35.4%. The remaining injury types comprised less than one percent of reported injuries. Each of the remaining injury types represented 1.6%.
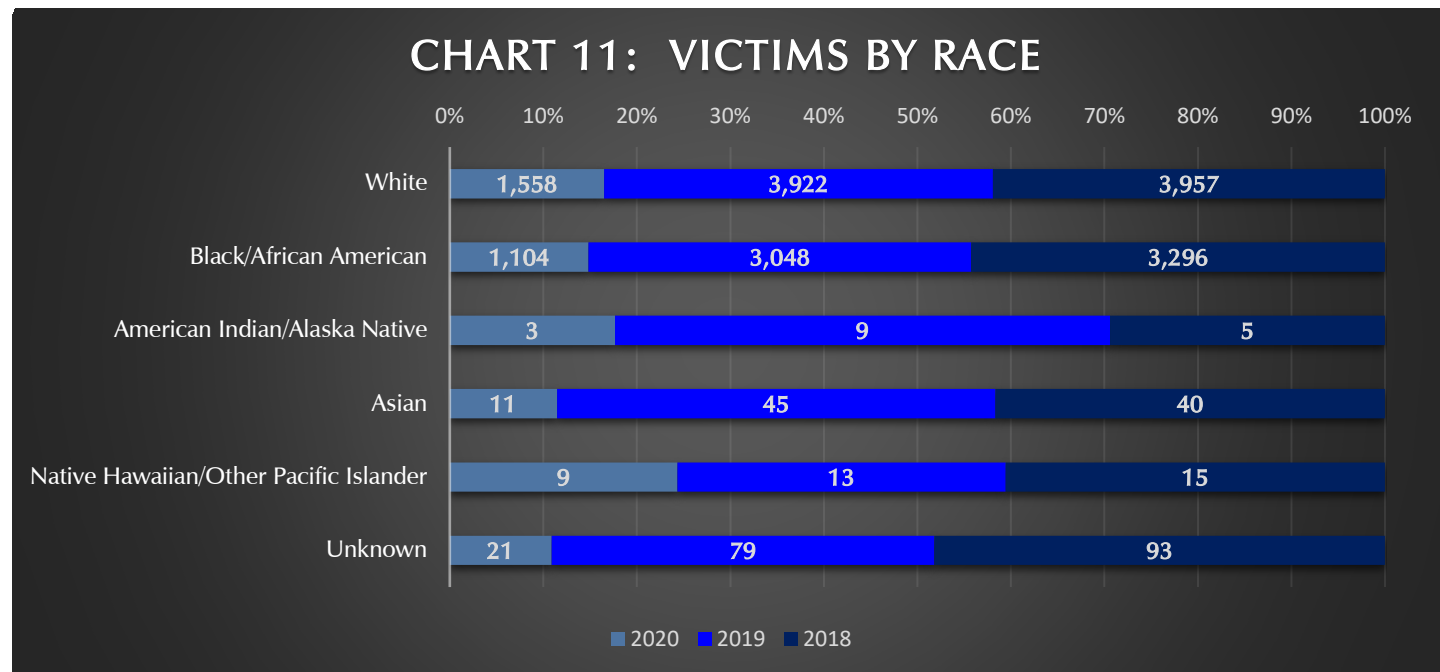
VICTIMS BY AGE

From 2018 to 2020, 17,228 victims were involved in a school crime. The overall number of school crime victims decreased 63.5%. Females accounted for 52.7% of total victims. Males, in comparison, accounted for 46.9%. 97 victims were classified as an Unknown gender within this timeframe. The most frequently
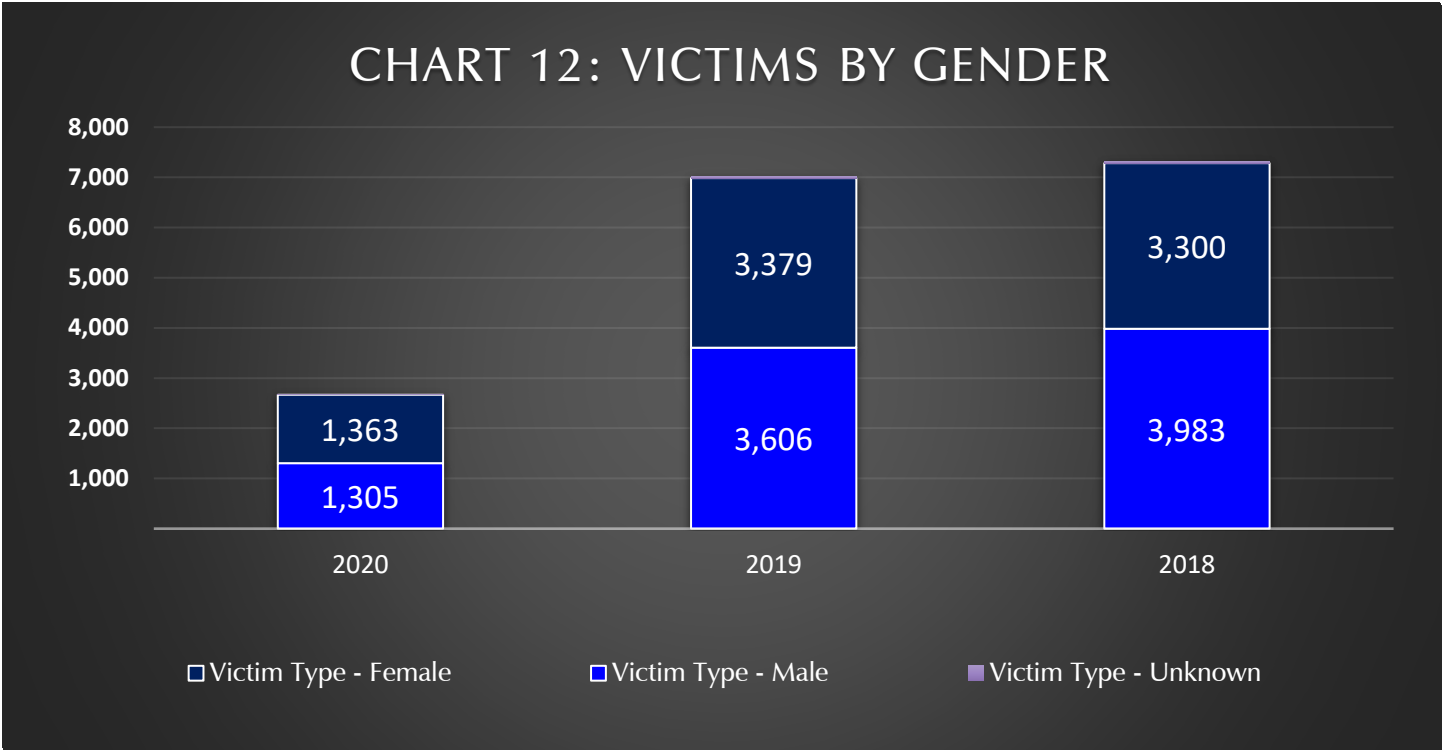
reported victim race was White (54.8%) followed by Black or African-American (43.2%). The remaining 2.0% of victims had a race of Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, or Unknown race and are not included in the chart below.

CHART 10: VICTIMS BY AGE

VICTIMS BY RACE

CHART 11: VICTIMS BY RACE

Race	2020	2019	2018
White	1,558	3,922	3,957
Black/African American	1,104	3,048	3,296
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	9	5
Asian	11	45	40
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	9	13	15
Unknown	21	79	93

VICTIMS BY GENDER

CHART 12: VICTIMS BY GENDER

Year	Victim Type - Female	Victim Type - Male
2020	1,363	1,305
2019	3,379	3,606
2018	3,300	3,983

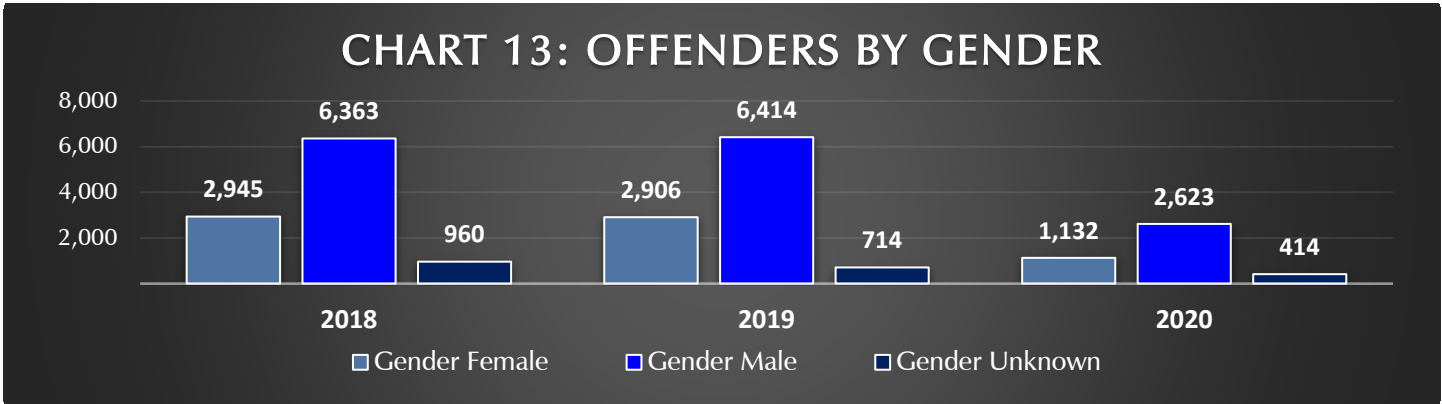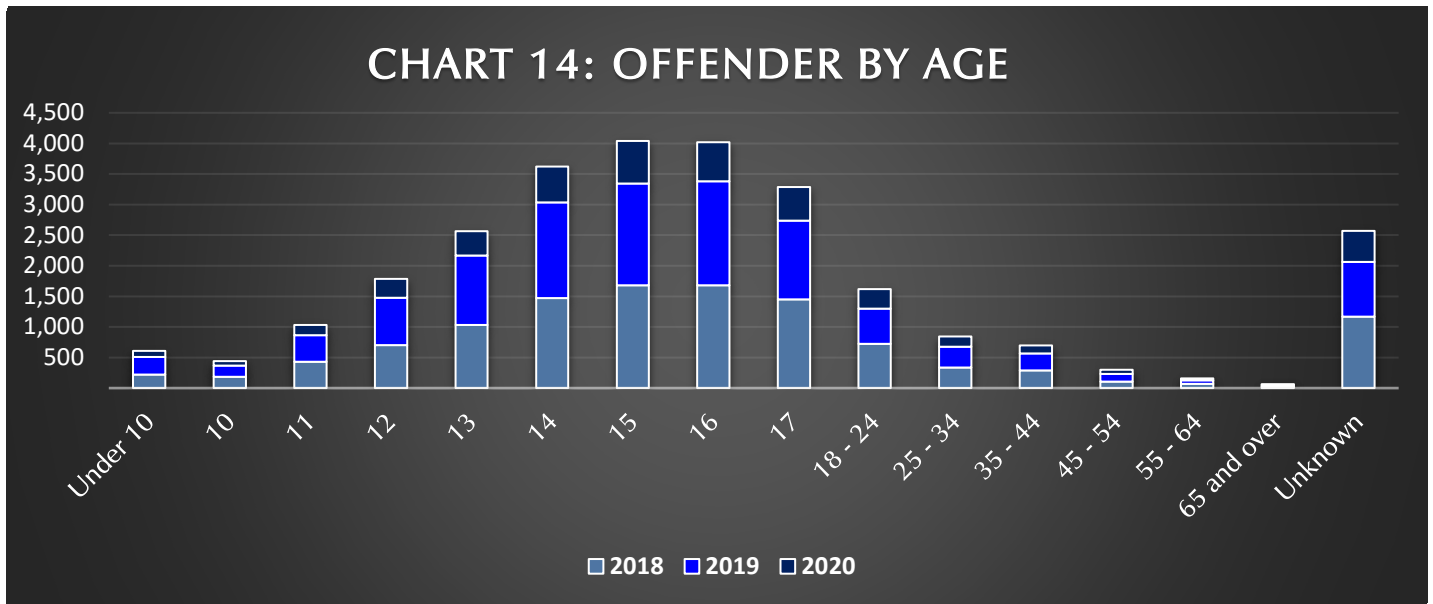Legend: ☐ Victim Type - Female ■ Victim Type - Male ■ Victim Type - Unknown

For 2018 to 2020, the most frequently reported Victim gender was Female at 52.7%. Male Victims comprised 46.9% of the total. There was a total of 0.4% of Victims reported with an Unknown gender.

OFFENDERS BY GENDER

From 2018 to 2020, 25,554 school crime offenders were reported. Males contributed to 60.3% of the offender total compared to 27.3% reported as Female. The remaining offenders were reported as having an Unknown Gender (8.2%) or Missing (4.2%).

CHART 13: OFFENDERS BY GENDER

Gender	2018	2019	2020
Gender Female	2,945	2,906	1,132
Gender Male	6,363	6,414	2,623
Gender Unknown	960	714	414

Legend: ☐ Gender Female ■ Gender Male ☐ Gender Unknown
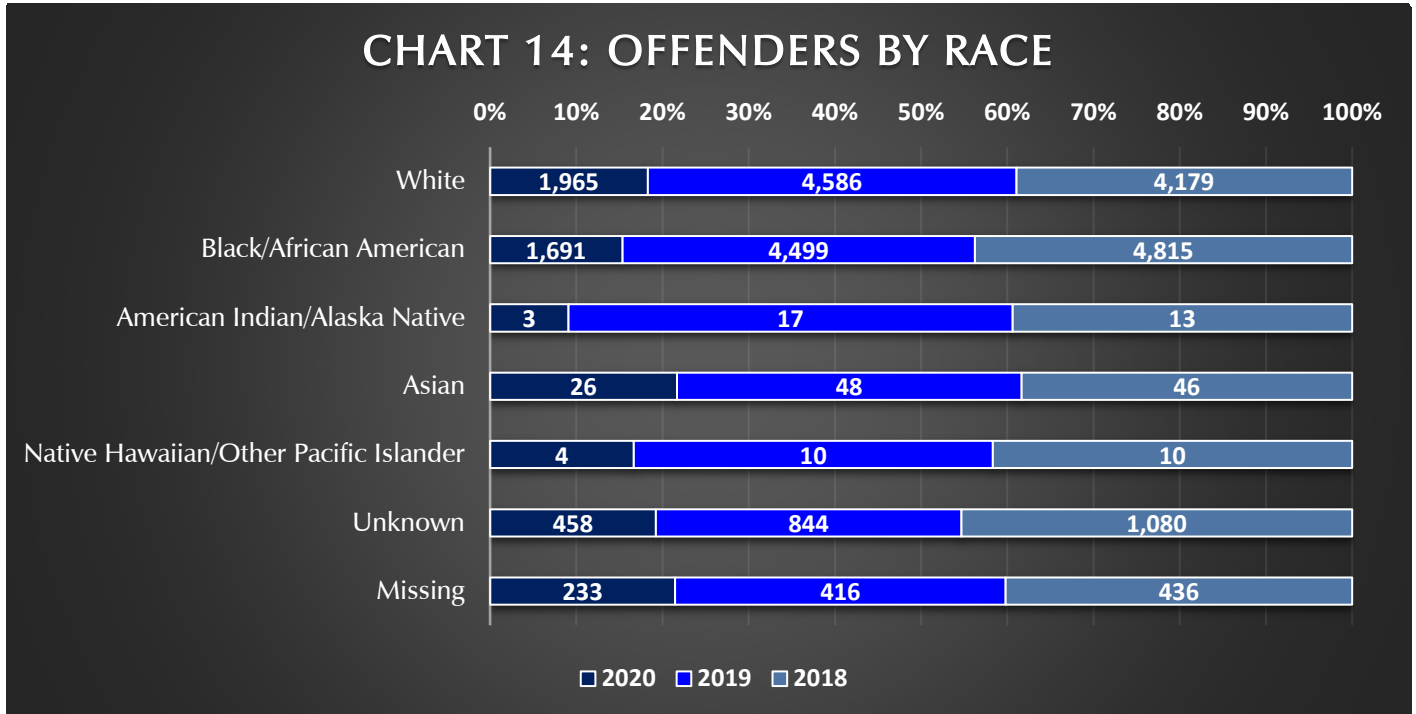
CHART 14: OFFENDER BY AGE

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

The age group category of 14-15 accounted for the highest offender age group at 27.7%, followed by the age group category of 16-17 at 26.4%. The category of Unknown accounted for 9.3%.

The Unknown category is reported 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.

OFFENDER BY RACE

CHART 14: OFFENDERS BY RACE

	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

Race	2020	2019	2018
White	1,965	4,586	4,179
Black/African American	1,691	4,499	4,815
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	17	13
Asian	26	48	46
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	4	10	10
Unknown	458	844	1,080
Missing	233	416	436

□ 2020 □ 2019 □ 2018

SUMMARY

From 2018 to 2020, 24,403 crimes were reported by Tennessee law enforcement agencies with a school location code of School- Elementary/Secondary. The overall number of reported offenses decreased 59.0%. Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense type at 35.1%. The month of February had the highest frequency of school crimes. The largest percentage of School Crime offenses occurred between 12:00 pm and 2:59 pm at 30.5% with Wednesday accounting for the highest reported day of the week for school crimes. The most common weapon type was Personal Weapons (hands, fist, feet, etc.) at 75.5%. Victim data revealed that females accounted 52.7% of the total victim counts. Males between 14-17 comprised the majority of offenders at 54.1%. Offenders in the age group 14-15 were the most frequently reported at 27.7% followed by the age group of 16-17 at 26.4%. Black or African American was the most reported offender's race (43.4%), followed by White at 42.3%.