Abstract


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Degree: Doctor of Education

College: Teachers College

Date: May 2016

Pages: 112

This policy study was designed to discover and analyze current school safety policies, practices, and procedures of Indiana public school districts and Indiana public charter schools. The impetus for this study was the increased media coverage of violence in schools, most notably the tragic events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut in December 2012.

This quantitative, survey-based research sought to explore in a scholarly manner what policies, practices, and procedures Indiana public and public charter schools have implemented to promote safety in a post-Sandy Hook society, and whether those steps are working. A survey was sent to those responsible for safety in Indiana’s public school districts and public charter schools to discover school safety realities taking place in schools around the state.

Data were collected from 183 respondents, 67.8% (n=124) of whom cited that they were the person responsible for safety at their public school district or at the public charter school. Of the 124 respondents, 113 identified themselves as being from traditional public school districts, while 11 identified themselves as being from Indiana public charter schools. Respondents also identified their gender, position within the school district or charter school, the location of the school district or charter school, and the enrollment of the school district or charter school.
Responses to the survey were primarily discussed within six main categories regarding school safety: policy issues, communication plans, law enforcement, security hardware, changes post-Sandy Hook, and obstacles to change.

Of the 124 respondents who identified themselves as the person responsible for safety in their traditional public district or public charter school, 50.8% \((n=63)\) and 45.2% \((n=52)\) believed their schools or school were safe or mostly safe, respectively.

Survey results showed that traditional public school districts are largely implementing safety measures at a higher rate than public charter schools. Single building entry points, mass communication systems, additional paid security at extra-curricular events, interior surveillance cameras, and buzzer entry systems were the most popular and most used strategies to support school safety. Districts and schools focused on the installation of buzzer entry systems, interior surveillance cameras, and training for faculty and staff as major changes post-Sandy Hook. Finally, 80.5% of respondents cited financial limitations as the top obstacle to implementing safety measures in their districts or schools.