

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for administering California's public education system at the state level. During fiscal year 1988-89, about 4.9 million students will attend California's public schools in 1,025 school districts. To address the problems of school crime and violence, the DOE will spend approximately \$14.7 million in state and federal funds, and estimates that the school districts will spend hundreds of millions of dollars more. Despite this tremendous financial commitment, the State's schools, students, and staff continue to be the target of crime and violence.

Although a provision in the California Constitution guarantees the right to safe schools, life on school campuses includes violent crimes, substance abuse, and property crimes. Crime and violence on school campuses exist for many reasons, including a continuation of the crime and violence in the community, ineffective administration at some of the schools, and a lack of leadership and direction by the State to ensure the safety of children. As a result, many children are denied an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, some students and staff suffer from stress, and schools are exposed to the legal and financial liabilities of failing to provide a safe environment.

State law requires that school districts report to the DOE statistics on crime committed at schools. In response to the law, the DOE established the School Crime Reporting Program. However, the reports submitted by school districts under the program are inaccurate because of the districts' inconsistent interpretations of the DOE's instructions, the differences in the districts' data collection techniques, the districts' fear of adverse publicity resulting from reports that show a high incidence of crime, and the DOE's inability to properly enforce the reporting requirements. Without accurate information on school crime, neither state and local governments nor schools and school districts can clearly identify problem areas and develop or revise strategies to address crime. If not addressed properly, the problems of school crime and violence will persist.

The Commission's report presents 12 recommendations related to addressing the problems of school crime and violence and ensuring the safety of schools. These recommendations include:

1. The Governor and the Legislature should enact legislation to encourage parent and community involvement in schools by providing parents and businesses with incentives, such as tax incentives.
2. The Governor and the Legislature should support the existing cooperative partnership between the DOE and the Office of the Attorney General by enacting legislation that would expand the partnership.
3. The DOE should provide leadership and direction to school districts for addressing the problems of substance abuse by adopting model curriculum standards for alcohol and drug abuse education that

incorporate the components of Los Angeles' Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program.

4. The Governor and the Legislature should enact legislation that would require an annual school safety plan for each school to ensure that the safety concerns of all school districts are addressed.
5. The DOE should require, as part of the curriculum for attaining teaching credentials and administrative credentials, training in safety, alcohol and drug prevention and intervention, youth gang prevention and intervention, legal responsibilities, and methods of handling disruptive activity on campus.
6. The Governor and the Legislature should statutorily establish a nongovernmental institute for school safety.
7. The Governor should designate a percentage of the discretionary state funds now available through the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the California Youth Authority, and the Federal State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to assist with implementing school safety programs.
8. The Governor and the Legislature should enact legislation that allows the DOE to mandate attendance by all school districts at the training workshops for the Standard School Crime Reporting Forms to ensure the accuracy of the information reported under the School Crime Reporting Program. Further, the legislation should provide for a penalty against districts that do not attend the workshops.
9. The DOE should develop and implement a system for monitoring the school crime reports for completeness and accuracy. Further, the Superintendent of Public Instruction should allocate sufficient funds to develop and implement this monitoring system.
10. The DOE should clarify its instructions for completing the Standard School Crime Reporting Form and should rename the form to clarify that one of the intents of the State School Crime Reporting Program is to measure the amount of social disorder on school campuses that disrupts the education of students.
11. The Governor and the Legislature should enact legislation that provides for criminal sanctions against principals and county superintendents of education who intentionally misreport data on the Standard School Crime Reporting Form.
12. The Superintendent of Public Instruction should assume an aggressive leadership role by placing a high priority on school safety.