



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

*All students prepared  
for post-secondary pathways,  
careers, & civic engagement.*

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# **UPDATE: Weapons in Schools**

**2019**

**Authorizing legislation:** [RCW 28A.320.130](#)

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## **Executive Summary**

State law (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 28A.320.130) requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to annually report to the Legislature the number of incidents in violation of RCW 9.41.280, which involves the possession of weapons on school premises, transportation systems, or in areas of facilities while being used exclusively by public or private schools. There is not a significant change in the data over time with the exception of a slight increase in handgun incidents, and a more significant increase for the “Firearms and Other Weapon” category in the 2017–18 school year. The data included in this report are from the 2017–18 school year.

## Background

The Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) was originally enacted on March 31, 1994, as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Public Law 103-227). The GFCA was reauthorized on October 20, 1994, as part of the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382), and again reauthorized as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110). The GFSA requires each state receiving federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds to have in effect a state law requiring school districts to expel from school for a period of not less than one year a student who was determined to have brought a weapon to school. The GFSA also requires that the state’s law allow the chief administering officer of the student’s school district to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case-basis.

Washington state enacted the Weapons In Schools legislation in 1994 in response to the federal GFSA requirement. The Weapons In Schools legislation was modified in 1997 to include “look-alike firearms,” allowing a school district to suspend or expel a student for up to one year if the student acts with malice as defined under RCW 9A.04.110 and displays an instrument that appears to be a firearm on public school premises, public school-provided transportation, or in areas of facilities that are being used exclusively by public schools.

The 2017–18 data were collected by OSPI as required by RCW 28A.320.130.

## Update Status

Incidents and Interventions	Weapon						
	Handgun	Rifle or Shotgun	Multiple Firearms	Other Firearms	Knife/Dagger	Other Weapon	Firearm & Other Weapon
Public K–12	51	6	1	60	1437	731	72
Private K–12	0	0	0	0	10	6	0
<b>School Interventions</b>							
Suspensions	14	4	0	43	1097	515	45
Expulsions	28	2	0	9	21	16	12

**Source:** Data are collected annually at the district level and reported to OSPI through the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).



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