



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Weapons in Schools 2026

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.

In the 2024–2025 school year, 1,883 incidents involving the possession of a weapon were reported by public and private schools in Washington State. Of those, 226 of these incidents involved the possession of a firearm.

In public schools, the 1,867 incidents involving the possession of a weapon resulted in 1,720 exclusionary interventions in the 2024–2025 school year (note: data on interventions is only reported by public schools). There was a 14% decrease in weapons incidents reported during the school year 2024–2025 compared to those reported in the school year 2023–2024. In the 2024–2025 school year, there was also a 16% decrease in suspensions and a 19% increase in expulsions reported compared to those reported in the 2023–2024 school year.

INTRODUCTION

The Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) was originally enacted on March 31, 1994, as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Public Law 103-227).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 GFSA 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 (ESEA) 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 laws 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.

UPDATE STATUS 2024–2025

Table 1: Weapons in School 2024–2025

Weapon Type	Incidents		Interventions*	
	Public K–12	Private K–12	Suspensions	Expulsions
Handgun	81	1	42	37
Rifle or Shotgun	1	0	1	0
Multiple Firearms	1	0	0	1
Firearm and Other Weapon	73	0	55	15
Other Firearms	67	2	58	6
Knife or Dagger	917	12	829	10
Other Weapon	727	1	649	17
Total	1,867	16	1,634	86

* Data on interventions is only available for public schools.

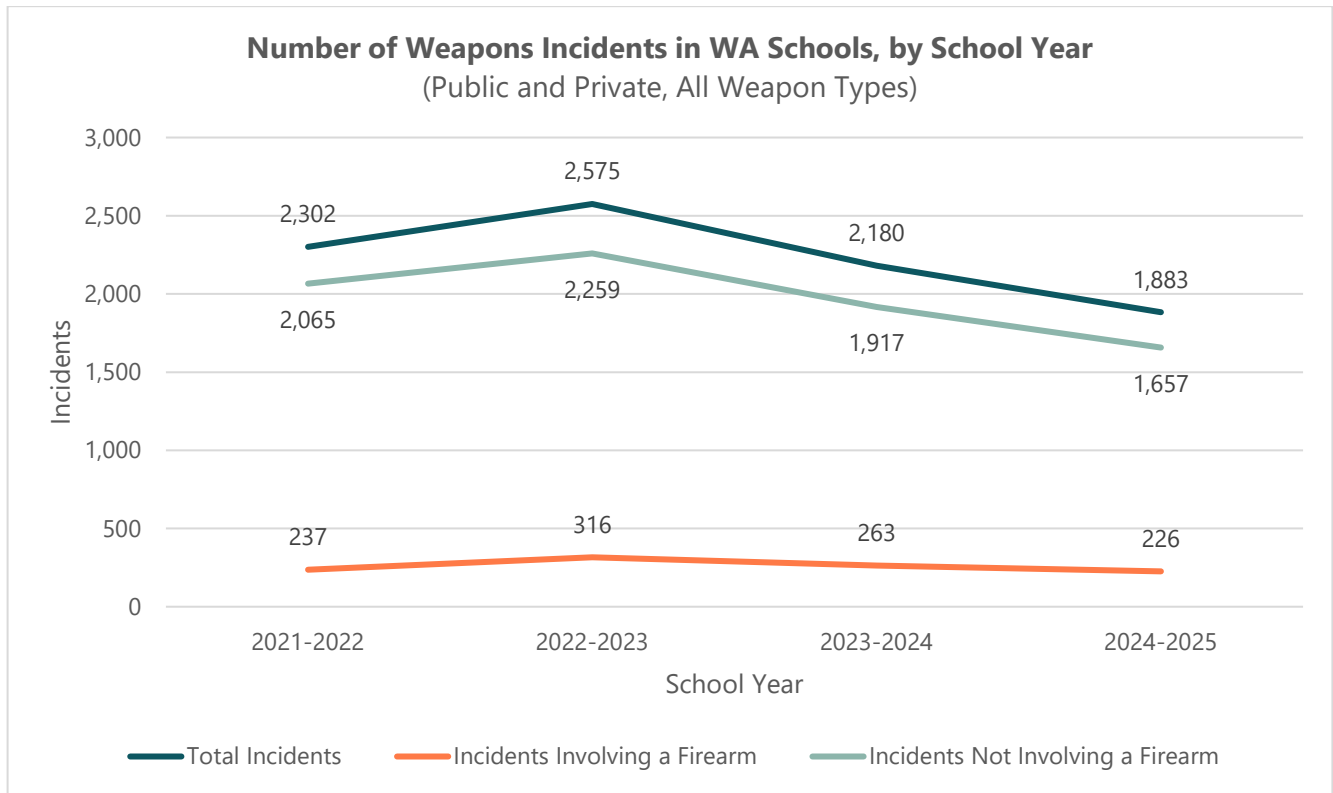
Source: Public school data is collected through the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS). Private school data is collected annually through the Education Data System (EDS).

Table 2: Weapons in Public Schools 1 Year Trend

	2023–2024	2024–2025	Difference	% Change
Incidents (public schools)	2,172	1,867	-305	-14%
Suspensions (public schools)	1,950	1,634	-316	-16%
Expulsions (public schools)	72	86	+14	+19%

Source: Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS)

Graph 1: Public and Private School Incidents, 3 Year Trend



Source: Public school data is collected through the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS). Private school data is collected annually through the Education Data System (EDS).

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Washington Statewide K-12 Safety Network, the partnership between the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) School Safety Center and the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) Regional School Safety Centers, have been actively working with districts to enhance school safety and student well-being since 2019. Through its nine Regional School Safety Centers, the network provides critical services including threat assessment training and coordination, suicide prevention, behavioral health support, and comprehensive school safety and emergency response planning. The work of the safety network initiatives promotes safer school environments through emergency planning, proactively addressing potential threats, and providing early interventions.

OSPI will continue to report yearly data to the Legislature.

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