This report presents findings on crime and violence in U.S. public schools, using data from the 2005–06 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS:2006). First administered in school year 1999–2000 and repeated in school years 2003–04 and 2005–06, SSOCS provides information about school crime-related topics from the perspective of the schools. Developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and supported by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools of the U.S. Department of Education, SSOCS asks public school principals about the frequency of incidents, such as physical attacks, robberies, and thefts in their schools. Portions of this survey also focus on school programs, disciplinary actions, and the policies implemented to prevent and reduce crime in schools.

SSOCS:2006 is based on a nationally representative stratified random sample of 3,565 U.S. public schools. Data collection began on March 17, 2006, when questionnaires were mailed to principals, and continued through May 26, 2006. A total of 2,724 public primary, middle, high, and combined schools provided usable questionnaires, yielding an unweighted response rate of approximately 78 percent. When the responding schools were weighted to account for their original sampling probabilities, the response rate increased to approximately 81 percent. A nonresponse bias analysis was performed because the weighted response rate was less than 85 percent, and the results indicated that nonresponse bias is not an issue for SSOCS:2006. For more information about the methodology and design of SSOCS, including how response rates were calculated and the details of the nonresponse bias analysis, please see Appendix B: Methodology and Technical Notes in this report. Because the purpose of this report is to introduce new NCES data through the presentation of tables containing descriptive information, only selected findings are presented below. These findings have been chosen to demonstrate the range of information available when using SSOCS:2006 data rather than to discuss all of the observed differences.

The tables in this report contain totals and percentages generated from bivariate cross-tabulation procedures. All of the results are weighted to represent the population of U.S. public schools. Comparisons drawn in the bulleted items below have been tested for statistical significance at the .05 level using Student’s t statistic to ensure that the differences are larger than those that might be expected due to sampling variation. Many of the variables examined are related to one another, and complex interactions and relationships have not been explored. Many substantively minor differences may be statistically significant because of the large sample size. Thus, only differences of 5 percentage points or more between groups are mentioned in the findings.