Northern Virginia
Comprehensive Gang Assessment
2003 - 2008

Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force

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Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force
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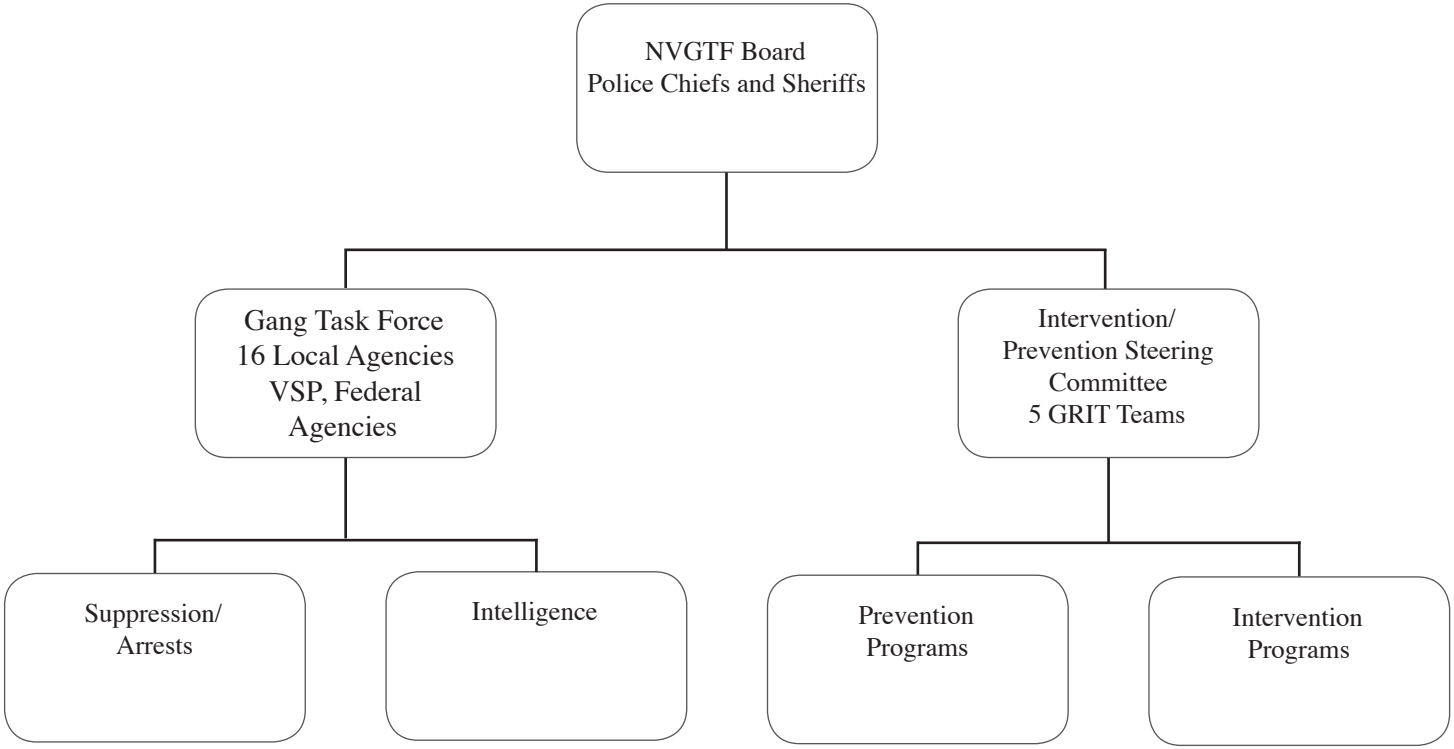

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Introduction

This report presents highlights and selected tables from a comprehensive regional gang assessment that was conducted in phases over a three-year period beginning in early 2006. The project was funded by a U.S. Department of Justice grant awarded to the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force (NVRGTF), which in turn sub-contracted with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) to complete the research.

NVRGTF is a multi-jurisdictional partnership, comprised of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, that was formed in 2003 to combat gang activity in Northern Virginia.[1] The goals of the Task Force encompass a multi-pronged strategy of enforcement, education, intervention and prevention that are based on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model, a template for reducing youth gang violence that is the product of decades of federally-sponsored gang research.

The OJJDP model outlines a collaborative, multi-faceted approach that begins with a data-driven effort to collect quantitative and qualitative information, across a broad range of subject areas, to help a community more fully understand the dimensions of its gang and at-risk youth problem. Defining the problem is a critical first step, laying the foundation for empirically driven prevention and intervention strategies that may be implemented later. Since the OJJDP model envisions an initial and continuous assessment process, an important objective of the Northern Virginia gang study is to create baseline metrics for monitoring the changing nature of the region's gang problem; for tracking trends in illegal and disruptive incidents occurring on school grounds; for inventorying programs and services currently available in Northern Virginia to help young people make better choices with their lives, and for evaluating the success of programs that may subsequently be adopted to address specific anti-gang issues. The assessment is conceived not as an end point, but as a starting point from which social service agencies, faith-based organizations and other providers in the community can take the information that has been generated by the study and use it to inform an on-going dialogue on how best to respond to the gang problem.

The Northern Virginia study is the first assessment, nationally, where research of this nature extends across an entire region; in this case, a 1,300 square mile area that contains four counties, five cities, seven towns, and more than 40 named places — in short, a physical landscape more congruent with gang movement and activity on the ground.

1 The Task Force membership consists of the chief law enforcement officers from: Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and Fauquier counties; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park; and the towns of Dumfries, Herndon, Leesburg, Vienna and Warrenton; and of representatives from: the Virginia State Police; Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Northern Virginia Gang Assessment: An Essential Next Step In The Region's Gang Reduction Strategy

Northern Virginia's comprehensive gang reduction strategy has evolved in stages over the past half decade. Following its formation in late 2003, the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force focused primarily on gang suppression and education, two components of the OJJDP model that, historically, have served as first lines of attack when youth street gangs emerge in a community as a serious public safety threat. During its start-up years, the Task Force:

- Expanded the number of participating law enforcement agencies from seven to fourteen member jurisdictions, significantly enlarging its geographical base of operations;
- Developed a regional gang intelligence database to support criminal investigations across multiple jurisdictions;
- Provided expertise to local police departments in setting up gang units;
- Developed standardized protocols (e.g. common definitions, recording procedures, etc.) for reporting gang incidents and for tracking gang trends, locally and regionally;
- Solidified partnerships with federal law enforcement agencies (FBI, ATF, DEA, ICE, U.S. Marshals Service), the Virginia State police and local gang units; and
- Facilitated implementation of the GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program in selective Northern Virginia public schools to alert middle and high school students of the dangers of gang involvement.

Once the operational infrastructure for addressing the gang problem regionally was in place, emphasis within the Task Force shifted to mobilizing the expertise, capabilities and resources it had assembled into an aggressive, coordinated, broad-based assault on youth street gangs in Northern Virginia. During this phase, the Task Force:

- Used crime mapping, gang sweeps and other aggressive enforcement tactics to target gang leaders and "hot spots";
- Promoted state legislation to increase criminal penalties for gang participation;
- Shared gang intelligence with the U.S. Attorney's Office and local prosecutors pursuing criminal cases; and
- Instituted comprehensive gang training for responding police officers, School Resource officers, court probation officials and community organizations.

In 2006, a third phase in the region's gang reduction strategy commenced. It was ushered in by the creation of a parallel multi-jurisdictional structure, under the direction of the Task Force Board of Directors, to focus on prevention and intervention, components of the OJJDP model that are designed to keep young people from joining or remaining in a gang. During this phase, the Task Force:[2]

- Formed a Steering Board — comprised of Court Servicing Unit directors from Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties and from the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church— to guide prevention and intervention strategies for the region;
- Supported formation of Gang Response Intervention Teams (GRIT), proactive, multi-agency, multi-disciplinary groups created in each jurisdiction to deal with community issues arising from the presence of youth street gangs in their neighborhoods;

2 This enumeration of activities refers primarily to Task Force sponsored initiatives. Many jurisdictional prevention and intervention activities (e.g. gang summits, gang awareness and outreach programs, etc.) are occurring locally as well.

- Expanded the number of gang prevention coordinators, from two positions regionally to five, to develop, coordinate and implement gang prevention, intervention and community outreach programs within each of the nine major jurisdictions of Northern Virginia.

- Provided intervention, prevention and education (IPE) services, (e.g. mental health, case management, recreational opportunities, mentoring, employment counseling, etc.) to at-risk and gang-involved youth, 12 to 21 years of age;

- Funded IPE counselors throughout Northern Virginia to act as a bridge connecting youth and their families with programs and services available to them;

- Produced public service announcements in English and Spanish for print, radio and television aimed at keeping young people out of gangs; and

- Commenced a comprehensive regional gang assessment, based on the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model, to lay an empirical foundation for moving the region's gang reduction strategy forward.

The gang assessment represents a logical next step in the Task Force's phased implementation strategy. Under the OJJDP model, good information lays the groundwork for better decision-making. It is perceived by OJJDP as an indispensable tool for mobilizing the broader community around common goals and courses of action; for targeting services effectively, efficiently and where they can achieve the most good; and for monitoring the impact of programmatic initiatives on gang-related trends. Increasingly required by OJJDP as a pre-requisite for receiving federal grants, the gang assessment was undertaken to further strengthen and advance gang prevention and intervention programs within the region.

What Comes Next

As outlined in OJJDP technical manuals, a gang assessment consists of two distinct stages: data compilation, which is what this report represents; and evaluation and priority setting, which commences after the data gathering requirements are completed.[3] By design, a comprehensive gang assessment is descriptive, not prescriptive. It is a compilation of baseline metrics, trend data and other quantitative and qualitative gang-related information to guide decision-making. It is not a blueprint for reducing gang crime, or a set of priorities and recommendations. These require evaluative judgments that have yet to be made in Northern Virginia, and can only be made by community leaders representing multiple disciplines who thoroughly understand the assessment findings and who are in a position to shape community consensus around solutions to address identified problem areas.

In Northern Virginia, it is the Steering Board, established by the Task Force in 2006 to guide prevention and intervention strategies for the region, that will review and analyze the findings contained in this report and, based upon this evaluation, make specific recommendations to the Task Force on what strategies, priorities and programmatic initiatives, they believe, should be pursued to reduce gang involvement and crime in Northern Virginia.

3. Institute for Intergovernmental Research, *OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model: A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem*, June 2002 and *OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model: Planning for Implementation*, June 2002.

Demographic Profile Of The Region

Located across the Potomac River from the nation's capital, Northern Virginia is a populous region that has been transformed by the economic growth and prosperity of the Washington metropolitan economy, by sustained population increases and by a prolonged and massive wave of immigration. A complex blend of urban and suburban characteristics, it is home to one of the most affluent, highly educated, and ethnically diverse populations found anywhere in the United States. Five aspects of the region's demographic profile, in particular, have implications for youth street gangs.

- **Sustained Population Growth** Much has changed in Northern Virginia over the past half century, but there is one constant: relentless population growth. Today, Northern Virginia is home to 2.1 million people, which makes it more populous than a quarter of American states and 304 (of 331) metro areas nationwide. Although population growth is slowing as the decade draws to a close, Northern Virginia is still on pace to surpass net gains of the past two decades when annual population increases averaged more than 35,000 a year.

  Big numbers always have a bottom line. For Northern Virginia, more population translates into more young people between the ages of 10 and 25 years of age, the base years for gang participation. Particularly for those localities experiencing significant population increases, this could lead to increases in gang membership and activity comparable in scale to the overall population growth. Studies have shown that one of the strongest predictors of crime trends is the number of 15 to 30 year olds in a population. All things being equal, when the number of 15 to 30 year olds goes up, crime numbers go up as well. When the percentage of 15 to 30 year olds in the population increases, crime rates go up. [4]

  Seventy-five percent of the net population increase in Northern Virginia during the first seven years of the decade has been concentrated along the outer-rim of the region in Prince William and Loudoun counties and in Manassas and Manassas Park. This is the locus of new population growth, where it will remain for decades to come.

- **Population Mobility and Turnover** Northern Virginia has some of the highest population mobility and turnover rates in the country, with people constantly moving in and out of local jurisdictions. In the inner-core (in the City of Alexandria and Arlington County), about half of the population (45%) turns over every five years. And it's been this way for more than three decades. Along the outer-ring suburbs, where growth pressures today are most intense, the population dynamic is less a revolving door and more a wide open door through which thousands of newcomers continually enter.

  When population flows are of the magnitude found in Northern Virginia, they can have significant implications for the formation, movement and composition of neighborhood youth street gangs. Gangs are not stable social entities. They are constantly changing. They come and go, reshape themselves, rename themselves, recompose, increase and decrease in size, dissolve and reform. As families and friends leave one neighborhood for another, individual gang members usually travel with them. They can be living one place today, another place tomorrow, either retaining or abandoning ties with a social or gang network they left behind. The incessant movement of people, one of the region's most salient demographic characteristic, makes it imperative that local jurisdictions in Northern Virginia continue to work together regionally to combat gang crime. It's the only way law enforcement can effectively fight this moving target.

4 Alfred Blumstein and Richard Rosenfeld, *Factors Contributing to U.S. Crime Trends* in Understanding Crime Trends: A National Research Council Workshop Report, 2007

- **Massive Immigration** No event looms larger in the modern history of Northern Virginia than the massive wave of immigration that ended the last century and began the 21st. Immigrants, numbering a half million, now make up fully a quarter of Northern Virginia's population, up from 21 percent in 2000. Forty percent of Northern Virginia's population growth over the past three decades has come from increases in foreign born, with roughly one of every eight foreign born living in the region coming from El Salvador, based on the 2000 Census. Salvadorans are the largest immigrant group in every Northern Virginia jurisdiction except one, the City of Manassas, which during the 1990s experienced a massive influx of Mexicans.

  Most researchers who study gangs agree that immigration has been associated with the formation and spread of gangs in the United States for much of its history.[5] Northern Virginia is no exception to the rule. A link can be drawn to the emergence of Asian street gangs in Northern Virginia following the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Immigration also has played a major role in the rise and proliferation of Hispanic gangs in the region: most notably, following the mass exodus from war-torn Central American countries during the early 1980s and continuing to this day. But the gang problem in Northern Virginia is more complex than a myopic view that perceives the issue solely or predominantly as a by-product of immigration. Bloods, Crips and numerous homegrown cliques are also part of the gang equation. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of gang members in Northern Virginia were born and raised in the United States and have lived their entire lives in this country. Some have family roots going back generations, while others are American-born offspring of first and second-generation immigrants. They run the gamut of possible demographic combinations. Gang membership is a complex demographic mosaic, with immigration, poverty, dysfunctional families and many other factors contributing to the mix.

- **Demographic Inversion** Eighty percent of the population growth in America today is coming from increases in what is generally referred to as its minority population — Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians, etc. Northern Virginia is on similar racial and ethnic trajectory. It is this trajectory, interacting with broader demographic and market forces in Northern Virginia, that has created a "demographic inversion" that is giving shape to a new, more diverse, complex and evolving metropolitan landscape.

  The most dramatic and vivid manifestation of the demographic inversion in Northern Virginia is the movement of tens of thousands of immigrants and minorities to the outer suburbs that began slowly in the 1980s and then, tsunami-like, picked up speed and tremendous volume as the decade of the 90s and subsequent years progressed — abruptly, almost overnight, reversing long-standing settlement patterns that had characterized suburbia for more than a half century.

  Census numbers track the breath-taking speed of the changes taking place. During the first seven years of the decade, a period when Prince William County experienced the largest growth spurt in its history, increasing by an estimated 80,000 (based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates) — 94 of every hundred new people added to its population, was a person of color — Hispanic, African-American, Asian, etc. — an estimated 75,000 of the 80,000 net population gain. And the same dynamic has been occurring in Manassas and Manassas Park, which although they have experienced considerably smaller population increases, have witnessed comparable percentage swings. Prince William County

5 Walter B. Miller, *The Growth of Youth Gang Problems in the United States: 1970–1998*, April 2001; Scott H. Decker and Barrick Van Winkle, *The History of Gang Research* in Arlen Egley Jr., Cheryl L. Maxson, Jody Miller and Malcolm W. Klein, *The Modern Gang Reader*, Third Edition, 2006; James Diego Vigil, *A Rainbow of Gangs: Street Cultures in the Mega-City*, 2002.

is now a few percentage points away from becoming majority-minority. 48 percent minority, second highest in the region behind only Manassas Park, which last year became the first locality in Northern Virginia history to cross the "majority-minority" threshold.

Public schools, which are on the front lines of the demographic transition, are leading the way, with public school enrollment in Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park going from more than 70 percent white in 1995 to less than 40 percent thirteen years later.

Outer suburbs that perhaps never dreamed of becoming entry points for immigrants, or could conceive becoming majority-minority before their more urbanized neighbors to the north — are now finding themselves coping with new demographic realities.

- **The Economy** The Washington Metropolitan area, of which Northern Virginia is a thriving sub-region, has one of the strongest regional economies in the nation, despite the current recession. Reams of statistics aren't required to appreciate the societal benefits of plentiful job opportunities; of low unemployment; of good schools and public services; of quality neighborhoods; of well-funded, professional police departments; and of the beneficial role intangibles like these can play in helping to reduce crime. A strong, vibrant economy with abundant job opportunities and low unemployment rates, which this region historically has had, is a powerful antidote to the formation and spread of youth street gangs.

Larger Crime Context In Northern Virginia

One by-product of Northern Virginia's strong regional economy and enviable demographic profile is relatively low levels of crime compared to places of comparable population size. Crime rates in Northern Virginia fall substantially below national averages and dramatically below levels found in urbanized metros of the United States where street gangs pose a serious threat. Low crime may be a less well-known feature of the social landscape in Northern Virginia, but it is a noteworthy factor contributing to the success the region is having in thwarting youth street gangs.

Under the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, the FBI annually compiles statistics for seven specific criminal offenses, known as PART I offenses, which are subdivided into two broad categories: *Violent Crimes Against Peopl*e which include murder and negligent homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault; and *Property Crimes* which include burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.

How The Region Compares Nationally

- **Violent Crimes against People** Northern Virginia experiences about a third the number of violent crimes against people - homicides, rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults - as would be expected based on national crime rates published annually in the FBI's *Crime in the United States* series. The national crime rate in 2007 was 467 violent offenses per 100,000 population. In Northern Virginia, the figure was 141. In Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, the rates were 103 and 91 respectively, one-fifth the national average. No Northern Virginia locality exceeds the national average. With few minor variations, this is the basic pattern that can be observed when comparing violent crime rates in Northern Virginia with national statistics over the past five years.

- **PART I Offenses** A similar picture emerges when comparing national and regional PART I crime rates, which represent a grouping of seven UCR offenses into one summary measure. In 2007, the national crime rate for PART I offenses was 3,730 crimes per 100,000 population.[6] In Northern Virginia, the figure was 1,988, or slightly more than half (53%) of the number that would be expected based on national trends. Every Northern Virginia jurisdiction falls below the national PART I rate.

- In 2007, Northern Virginia had:

  - One-third the number of homicides;
  - One-fifth the number of aggravated assaults;
  - Less than half (45%) the number of rapes, robberies and auto thefts;
  - One-fourth the number of burglaries; and
  - About two-thirds (70%) the number of larcenies.

While yearly fluctuations can increase or decrease some of the individual crime ratios, the conculsion remains the same: Northern Virginia is a comparatively safe place to live with substantially fewer serious crimes than occurs in most, if not all metro areas of comparable size.

Another piece of the larger social context is the generally positive direction of crime trends over the past decade. Northern Virginia has been riding a wave that nationally has seen serious (PART I) crime rates in the United States drop fifteen of the past sixteen years, hitting a three-decade low in 2007. Many of the national trends are mirrored in patterns observed in Northern Virginia.

6 The FBI releases annual crime figures for the nation in late September.

Trends In Overall Crime

- Not only does Northern Virginia fall well below national crime rates but, in recent years, it too has seen its crime rates drop to some of the lowest levels in modern times. Two summers ago, in releasing its annual crime figures for 2006 to the public, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria both announced that serious crime rates in their jurisdictions had dropped to their lowest levels in 40 years. And both inner-core jurisdictions had PART I crime rates above the regional average.

- In 2007, the regional PART I crime rate dropped yet again, by a half a percentage point, to 1,988 offenses per 100,000 population, the lowest PART I crime rate recorded during the six year reporting period. Between 2003 and 2007, the number of PART I crimes in Northern Virginia dropped from 47,829 a year to 41,468, a 13 percent drop in number and 17 percent drop in rate, with each successive year recording a decrease.

- In 2008, the trend line tilted slightly upward, reversing the downward cycle as the impacts of a deep national recession began taking effect.

- Statistics compiled from thirteen local police departments show PART I crimes increasing by about 6 percent in Northern Virginia in 2008, due to a significant spike in larcenies which rose by 10 percent, from 31,380 reported cases in 2007 to 34,582 cases in 2008. That's the bad news; the good news: while property crimes in Northern Virginia were moving up, violent crimes against people, both the number and the rate, continued dropping, reaching their lowest levels of the past five years, due primarily to reductions in the number of robberies and aggravated assaults.

- Despite a recent upturn in 2008, the overall PART I crime trends for the region remain positive. Of seven offenses that comprise the PART I index, five are down significantly from rates recorded in 2003:

    - Aggravated assaults are down 23 percent;
    - Robberies are down 16 percent;
    - Burglaries are down 17 percent;
    - Larcenies are down 10 percent;
    - Motor vehicle theft are down 39 percent; and
    - Violent crimes against people are down 17 percent.

- The only exceptions are homicides and forcible rapes, both of which have small baseline numbers which, while they may exhibit wide percentage swings from one year to the next, they generally fluctuate within fairly consistent and comparatively low numerical ranges (from 25 to 50 homicides and 200 to 300 rapes per year regionally).

Unlike some places in the United States where crime rates are sky high and gang numbers (membership, cliques and crimes) are of an order of magnitude vastly greater than those found here, the response of law enforcement in Northern Virginia is not diverted by an endless string of daily outbreaks, either of a general crime nature or gang-related, that can require a constant redeployment of over-stretched resources to address them. This is another structural asset, an element of social control, that the region has going for it.

Gang-Related Crime In Northern Virginia

A primary objective of the gang assessment is to provide empirical data that can help answer fundamental questions about the nature and extent of gang crime in the region and in each of the nine counties and cities that comprise it: what crimes are gang members committing; how has this changed over time, and in what ways; where are the crimes located, and how much of the overall crime problem can be attributed to gangs?

Following are the gang crime metrics. They were compiled from information furnished by 13 police departments which are members of the Task Force: the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park; and the towns of Dumfries, Herndon, Leesburg and Vienna. NVRGTF collects crime statistics from local police departments for 15 specific offenses, with totals provided for both overall and gang-related incidents.

PART 1 OFFENSES	OTHER REPORTED OFFENSES
- Criminal Homicide	- Simple Assault
- Forcible Rape	- Vandalism
- Robbery	- Weapons Offenses (Carrying/Possessing)
- Aggravated Assault	- Drug Offenses (Possession/Sale/Use/Manufacturing)
- Burglary – Breaking/Entering	- Disorderly Conduct
- Larceny/Theft	- Graffiti
- Motor Vehicle Theft	- Stolen Property/Related Crimes

What Crimes Are Gangs Committing

- There were 10,208 reported gang-related crimes in Northern Virginia over the six-year period beginning in 2003 and ending in 2008. By no means does this figure represent the totality of crimes committed by youth street gangs. Rather, it is the number that was documented for 15 specific offense categories for which gang-crime statistics are compiled.

- On average, this equates to about 1,700 gang-related crimes per year, or slightly less than five incidents per day, one of which is a serious PART I offense and four of which are less serious violations, such as drug offenses, graffiti and simple assault.

- Differences exist between youth street gangs and the general population in the types of crime they commit. Historically, gangs have been associated with violent crimes against people, drugs, weapons, simple assaults and graffiti, whereas the general public is more likely to engage in property crimes. Review of gang-related crime statistics in Northern Virginia mirrors the commonly observed gang pattern, with graffiti (which includes destruction of property and vandalism) accounting for almost half of all reported gang crime in Northern Virginia, drug offenses and simple assaults accounting for about 9 percent each of the total, and aggravated assaults and weapons violations accounting for 6 percent each of the total. Four of five reported gang-related crimes in Northern Virginia involve one of these five offenses.

- Graffiti, the data suggest, is pretty much a daily occurrence. There were about 5,200 reported graffiti cases over the six-year period, an average of two to three incidents regionally per day.

Trends In Gang-Related Crime

- Like the overall crime index, the trend line for PART I gang-related crime in Northern Virginia moved downward for most of the period under study, with a modest upturn in 2007 to a plateau that has held steady through 2008.

- Using 2004 as a base, since this is the first full year that some local police departments began compiling gang statistics, reveals that of the seven criminal offenses that make up the serious crime index none of the categories except rape (which has small baseline numbers), recorded more gang crimes in 2008 than was documented five years earlier. All of the 2008 crime totals were lower. Following is a breakdown, by offense, of the percentage changes in gang-related crime between 2004 and 2008.

  - Serious PART I offenses .....down 17 percent
  - Violent crimes against people .....down 12 percent
  - Aggravated assaults .....down 4 percent
  - Larcenies .....down 20 percent
  - Robberies ..... down 32 percent
  - Burglaries..... down 18 percent

- Graffiti is the only offense category among the 15 that the NVRGTF tracks that showed a marked increase. Whether the increase is indicative of more gang activity or is a function of citizens responding more quickly when graffiti appears cannot be determined. One police officer interviewed for the assessment believes it is the latter, stating: “There are more people that know about it and that’s why it’s going up. It’s always been there. In fact, I think it is going down, but I don’t have any way to prove that.”

- It is hard to know from data collected during the assessment what, if any impact, the slowdown of the regional economy will have on gang activity moving forward. While the number of gang-related PART I crimes increased 29 percent from 2006 to 2007 (a net increase of 69 crimes, due mainly to a jump in larcenies and aggravated assaults), the PART I gang crime totals for 2007 and 2008 are still relatively low by historical standards. There’s no evidence in the trend line to suggest any setback in the region’s crime-fighting efforts.

Gangs Responsible For A Significant Percentage Of Violent Crimes

Despite positive gang crime trends, the presence of gangs on the streets remains a serious public safety threat, due to the violent nature of crimes they commit.

- Violence is integral to gang culture and its centrality is reflected in Northern Virginia’s gang crime statistics. Half of all gang-related

PART I offenses are violent crimes against people (homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault), a ratio that is substantially above what is found among the population at large where property crimes, by a wide margin, outnumber acts of violence.

- There were 17,785 violent crimes against people in Northern Virginia committed over the past six years, an average of about eight violent crimes per day. Five percent of these violent crimes were classified as gang-related (N=909).

- Of the 248 homicides in the region over the same time period, sixteen (6.5%) were committed by a member of a youth street gang. Each year, there are two to three gang homicides.

- Seven percent of all reported aggravated assaults in Northern Virginia are gang-related, which is probably an underestimate of the actual number since many assault cases go unsolved. If closure rates are factored into the calculation, the percentages associated with gang assaults could rise higher.

- Physical assaults by gang members occur on almost a daily basis in Northern Virginia. In all, there were 1,844 reported assaults (i.e., includes homicides, rapes, robberies and simple, sexual and aggravated assaults) in which a gang member was the assailant, an average of six incidents per week. Although the study did not collect information on victims, the overwhelming majority of these crimes generally involve gang-on-gang violence.

- Seven percent of weapons offenses are gang-related.

- A perennial question that is often heard is: how much of the crime problem in Northern Virginia can be attributed to street gangs? Based on the 15 offenses for which gang-crime statistics are tabulated, gangs are responsible for approximately 2 percent of overall crime in Northern Virginia and five percent of the violent crimes. In considering these percentages, it is important to recognize that there are many unknowns when it comes to quantifying the percentage of crimes that are gang-related. Among the unknowns: we don't oftentimes know who committed a crime, only that a crime has occurred. We don't always know if a person who is picked up for a crime is a member of a gang, or if the crime was committed for personal reasons or on behalf of the gang, the statutory requirement for committing a gang-related offense. And we don't have reliable data on how often a responding police officer fails to recognize or document a crime as a gang event when it should be. These are only a few of the real world constraints impacting the estimates.

Gang Arrests

Arrest statistics, compiled from activity reports submitted semi-annually by the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force as part of its federal reporting requirements, show the types of crime gang members in Northern Virginia are charged with when arrested by the police. The data represent only a portion of the total number of gang member arrests taking place in Northern Virginia each year: namely, those in which the Task Force is directly involved, either acting on its own or as part of a joint operation conducted with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. Arrests made by officers from Fairfax County, Arlington County or any of the other local police departments acting under their own authority, without Task Force participation, are not included in this tabulation.

- From July 2003 through the end of 2008, the Task Force arrested 952 gang members, an average of 3.4 gang members per week.

- Trends in annual gang-related arrests, as reflected in Task Force statistics, reveal steadily decreasing numbers. Gang arrests totals for the past two years, in 2007 and 2008, are about half what they were in 2004 through 2006 when the NVRGTF was first becoming operational.

- The list of charged offenses reveals the broad range of crimes gang members in Northern Virginia are committing, from violent felonies to misdemeanors. The offenses are consistent with crime patterns generally associated with youth street gangs nationally: narcotics violations, assault and batteries, malicious wounding, destruction of property (graffiti), firearms violations, concealed weapons, as well as homicide, conspiracy to commit murder and a long list of lesser violations.

- Twenty percent of the arrests made by the NVRGTF over the five and a half year period have gang participation charges added on, a law enforcement tool that is being used with greater frequency in Northern Virginia to increase the penalties for gang-related crimes.

- Another important tool in the law enforcement arsenal are Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) referrals, in which street-level enforcement, working hand-in-hand with ICE officials, are arresting, charging and deporting gang members who are in the country illegally. More than 40 percent of the gang members arrested by the NVRGTF since its formation have been charged with an ICE violation, although the numbers and percentages in recent years have dropped precipitously.

Active Gangs In Northern Virginia

Nobody knows the exact number either of gangs or of young people who consider themselves members of them. Gangs are fluid entities, with small cliques coming and going, membership fluctuating, territories shifting, and leadership roles continuously changing. This is the nature of youth street gangs.

- That being said, police departments are extremely knowledgeable about gangs operating in their communities and have estimated the number of gang members in Northern Virginia at 5,000 and the number of gangs and cliques at 80 to 100.

- MS-13 is the largest gang in Northern Virginia with an estimated membership of 3,000. MS-13 can be found in all parts of the region, and is the most active gang in the majority of the larger jurisdictions. Four other gangs with a significant regional presence are 18th Street, Southside Locos, Bloods and the Crips, which can be found in all counties, and in many of the towns and cities as well.

- An analysis of the location of gang crimes reveals that while there are areas of concentrated criminal activity, gangs have become a ubiquitous presence in Northern Virginia. Whereas 15 years ago most gang activity was centered inside and in the vicinity of the Beltway, now gang activity can be found spread throughout the entire region, literally everywhere people live and congregate.

Among the highlights gleaned from interviews conducted with people identified as among the most knowledgeable in the region on the subject of gangs are the following:

- Reliable data on the demographic makeup of Northern Virginia's gang population does not exist and perhaps cannot be compiled. What can be stated based on conversations with many of the most knowledgeable people in the region is that while a majority of gang members in Northern Virginia may be of Hispanic background, gang members come from all walks of life and from every conceivable demographic designation: male and female; urban and suburban; poor and affluent; native born and immigrant; Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian; from most nationality backgrounds and from every type of home environment. All demographic groups are represented, although obviously not in equal proportions. Like medical probabilities associated with having a stroke, studies have found that the likelihood of a young person joining a gang varies based on exposure to known risk factors. Risk factors are the causal determinant, not national

ancestry, gender or any of the other demographic attributes a young person may possess. Any association that can be made to demographic background comes primarily from differences that selected groups experience in their exposure to peer group, family, personal, school, neighborhood and individual risk factors.

- There is a national trend toward more "hybrid" gangs that is happening in Northern Virginia as well. One local police officer described the process well: "Several years ago, MS was strictly El Salvadoran. Then it went from strictly El Salvadoran to Honduran and Guatemalan, strictly Central American. Now, you see Mexicans, blacks and other ethnic groups. To me that can be attributed to the schools. The bulk of the younger MS-13 is born here; the older MS-13 are coming from El Salvador. But the ones in the schools, who grew up with these guys say, 'He's cool; we're cool.' In my opinion, down the road, I think the races are going to keep blending and blending, especially with your larger cities."

- While, historically, there has been limited evidence of significant transnational or interstate linkages between gang members in Northern Virginia and organizations in Los Angeles, Chicago, El Salvador and other prominent gang locations, Northern Virginia, daily, draws people from all parts of the nation and world. It has some of the highest population growth, migration and mobility rates in the United States. With these population streams come a steady flow of newcomers, including, it can safely be assumed, gang members from some of the better-known gang capitals of the world. According to gang detectives interviewed as part of the assessment, gang migration, by its very nature, creates social and criminal linkages between gang members in Northern Virginia and those from other places, posing a latent threat that requires constant vigilance.

Newspaper accounts of gang crimes, graffiti on the walls, and the personal exposure many people and their children have to the presence of gangs in their neighborhoods can lead residents to assume that youth street gangs may be gaining a firmer foothold here. The findings of this study suggest a different story line: a region that has not been losing ground in the battle against gangs, but rather has achieved notable success in thwarting them, in containing their spread and in suppressing the number of crimes they commit. This is the basic conclusion that can be drawn from an analysis of six years of gang-related crime statistics in Northern Virginia and from interviews with the most knowledgeable people in the region who have been dealing with the issue, the police, gang detectives, prosecutors, judges, probation officers, local politicians, school administrators, human service officials and community activists.

Gang Member Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 50 present, former and associate gang members to learn about why they joined a gang; about their relationship with family, peers, teachers and police; about their exposure to "at-risk" factors; about their participation in criminal activity; and about what they believe can be done to improve their lives. The research design was based on a non-probability sample of current and former gang-involved juveniles and adults that was stratified to include representation from all counties and cities in the region. It should be noted that few gang interview projects nationwide have sample sizes larger than 50, due to the same set of financial and methodological constraints operative in this research project (i.e., unknowns related to the sample population and to the demographic composition of gang members residing in Northern Virginia). Among the findings are the following:

- About one-half of those interviewed professed membership in one of the region's three most prevalent gangs: 18th Street, MS-13 and Southside Locos. Half were juveniles and half were adults. Eighty-eight percent were male and 12 percent female. One-quarter were

black; nearly two-thirds were Hispanic; and the remaining 12 percent were of other backgrounds. Four of five interviewees were born in the US, with nearly one-half of this group born to Central American parents. Half of the interviewees lived in households where their father was absent from the home by the time they reached age 10.

- Ninety-two percent of those interviewed admitted to joining a gang, with three-fourths of those doing so by age 14, and one-quarter having done so by age 12.

- Criminal conduct reported among those interviewed began among those 13 and younger, grew to its highest rates among those 14 to 16 years old, and then tapered off among 17 year olds, with gang members age 16 or younger perpetrating more than four-fifths of the gang crimes described in the interviews.

- Gang rivalry and retaliation comprised a significant number of gang violence incidents, which included turf battles and interpersonal conflicts.

- Drug sales and offenses involving weapons comprised a minimum number of gang offenses.

- Contrary to popular belief that "gangs are for life" and that once you're in a gang you don't get out, the findings suggest that gang membership, at least in this geographical setting, is more tenuous and temporary than assumed and that the penalties for exiting the gang may not be as severe as generally portrayed.

- The interviewers found that gang members have friends and peers outside of gangs. When asked to rate who their best friends were, gang members seldom identified fellow gang members. Interviewees reported spending more time "hanging out" with non-gang friends than with members of their gang.

- Interviewees suggested that, as gang members, they liked the feeling of belonging and the perceived respect they received from being in a gang, but usually did not form strong and lasting friendships within the gang. Most interviewees suggested fellow gang members could not be trusted and said they knew gang membership had no future.

- The fact that three-quarters of interviewees knew kids who successfully exited gangs, many without any punishments, is an important finding. Together with information about the stronger nature of their non-gang associations, this finding should hearten professionals about the worth of prevention and intervention activities that bolster healthy (non-gang based) friendships, that provide conflict resolution skills, and that deliver mechanisms for dealing with negative peer pressure.

Self-Reported Gang Members In The Schools

Just as there are factors in someone's life that increase the likelihood of heart disease and those that guard against it, there are risk and protective factors in a young person's life — from community, school, family and peer influences — that can either increase or decrease the likelihood that they will engage in delinquent or criminal behavior. A secondary analysis of a Communities that Care youth survey administered to a sample of 13,000 public school students reveals dramatic differences between self-reported gang members and the general student population in terms of positive and negative influences in their lives and in terms of the harmful behaviors in which they engage.

Risk And Protective Factors

Of the 24 risk factors measured with the Communities that Care survey, self-reported gang members were more vulnerable on every measured dimension, with half to 80 percent of them having elevated scores on each of the individual community, family, school and peer influences. Self-reported gang members have, on average, twice as many risk factors as those in the general student population (elevated risk on 14 of 24 factors, on average, compared to 7 of 24 for the general student population).

- Almost 50 percent more self-reported gang members had elevated risk factor scores that indicate the early initiation of antisocial behavior and association with antisocial peers than those in the general population.
- Almost 40 percent more self-reported gang members had elevated risk factor scores that indicate the early initiation of drug use, the presence of attitudes favorable towards drug use, and a situation in which their peers are using drugs.
- Almost 40 percent fewer self-reported gang members had elevated protective factor scores indicating the presence of social skills, and there were comparable percentage differences related to their views on whether it is wrong to fight, steal, cheat and be dishonest.
- Almost 40 percent of self-reported gang members had attitudes favorable towards antisocial behavior.

Harmful Behaviors

The survey revealed that significantly greater percentages of gang members engage in substance abuse, delinquent or illegal acts and aggressive behavior than those in the general student population.

- The most frequently used substances reported by both self-reported gang members and those in the general population are alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. About 18 percent more self-reported gang members reported having five or more drinks in a row during the past two weeks (a total of 32.3 percent); or drinking alcohol (47.9 percent), smoking cigarettes (27.6 percent), or using marijuana (26.1 percent) in the past 30 days.

Data indicate that self-reported gang members are far more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors or be suspended. Youth reporting gang membership were significantly more likely than the overall student population to report:

- Selling drugs: seven times more likely (25.9 percent) than all respondents (3.5 percent);
- Ever being suspended: five times more likely (31.3 percent) than all respondents (6.4 percent).

In every case, self-reported gang members were more likely to report aggressive behavior, as well as being a victim of violence or aggression:

- Attacking someone to harm them: five times more likely (11.9 percent) than all respondents (0.7 percent);
- Taking a gun to school: 17 times more likely (31.6 percent) than all respondents (3.9 percent);
- Taking a weapon to school: eight times more likely (31.6 percent) than all respondents (3.9 percent).

Experiences of victimization included the following:

- Being threatened or injured: over four times as likely (36.7 percent) than all respondents (8.6 percent);
- Being attacked by someone: three times as likely (46.1 percent) than all respondents (15.3 percent).

In 2001, 5.6 percent of public school students reported ever being in a gang. Four year later, that figure had dropped to 3.1 percent, but then increased slightly in 2008 to 4.1 percent.

Community Scan Of The Schools

Schools are uniquely positioned to observe gangs taking root and the behavioral consequences that invariably follow for individuals, the classroom environment and surrounding neighborhoods. Schools, arguably, are the best community resource for the early detection of, prevention of, and intervention into youth gang problems. The primary purpose of a community scan of the schools is to check for warning signs of problems that may be surfacing among school-aged youth in a community, such as a troubling rise in suspensions and expulsions or an increase in weapons, drugs, gang activity, fights, and other illegal and disruptive incidents occurring on school grounds, all of which can be indicative of a growing or potential gang presence.

The gang assessment looked at five years of school safety information using on-line data from the Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR). Recently developed by the Virginia Department of Education, the SSIR site contains statistics on more than 90 discipline, crime and violence (DCV) offenses that are reported for every public school in Virginia.[7] Public school divisions must verify and submit this information to the Virginia Department of Education in compliance with federal and state law. SSIR is a massive database, not easily accessed and processed, but it contains a wealth of information on physical violence, weapons, illegal drugs, gang activity, and expulsions and suspensions in the schools. This information, hitherto unavailable, can be utilized to monitor where trouble in the schools may be brewing. Below are highlights from a review of five years of school safety information (2003-'04 through 2007-'08 school years) for Northern Virginia public schools.

Physical Violence In The Schools

- In 2003, there were 5,600 reported cases of physical violence in Northern Virginia public schools, most of them involving relatively minor fights and skirmishes but a sizeable number consisting of assault and battery charges. Last year, there were 3,400 cases, a 40 percent drop in number and a 44 percent drop in rate from five years earlier. Each successive year, for the past five years, the tally has gone down, decreasing from 18.1 offenses per 1,000 enrollment in 2003 to 10.2 in 2007. Fights are down 43 percent and assault and batteries down 30 percent.

- While acts of physical aggression take place at all grade levels, the largest per capita rate occurs in the middle schools, which on a per capita basis experience twice the volume as do high schools: 31 physical violence offenses per 1,000 enrollment in the middle schools, compared to 17 offenses in the high schools and 6 offenses in the elementary grades (based on five-year average calculations).

- Serious violent crimes that make the headlines — homicide, sexual assaults, malicious wounding, and the use of explosives — are extremely rare and isolated events. In the five years covered by the

7 The Virginia Department of Education urges caution when drawing comparisons based on school safety information, due to variations among school systems and individual neighborhood schools in student policies and guidelines and how they report disciplinary offenses. While all public schools in Virginia operate under the same set of statutory requirements and VDOE guidelines, each school division has authority to establish its own student policies, guidelines, priorities and enforcement practices that can influence reported SSIR statistics. Another source of variation is differences in how individual principals and classroom teachers choose to handle specific offenses. For example, while one may report the display of gang colors as a gang-activity offense, another may classify the infraction as a dress-code violation. While one, operating under a zero-tolerance policy on fighting, may classify the throwing of a few hard punches as a physical assault; another may label it a disorderly conduct offense—same behavior, but different classification. A School Resource Officer (SRO) in Northern Virginia, when asked during the assessment to interpret school disciplinary trends, drew attention to potential institutional and human biases that can influence school disciplinary statistics: *"No Child Left Behind has many good things in it. But when you start labeling schools negatively, these people are PhD's. They're not dummies. They know how to make the numbers work if they are going to be labeled negatively as a result of the statistics."*

It is important to keep these considerations in mind when reviewing school discipline, crime and violence data presented in this report, and when comparing one school or division's statistics with another.

study, there were no homicides in Northern Virginia public schools, no rapes or forcible sexual assaults, no use of explosive devices, only five aggravated sexual battery cases (usually intentional touching of a minor), and 24 malicious woundings, all without a weapon.

Gang Activity In The Schools

- Over the past five years, there have been 1,012 reported gang incidents in Northern Virginia public schools and 1,156 individual students charged with gang activity. This is an average of 200 gang incidents and 230 student offenders per year, or about one incident per school day region wide. SSIR data does not identify specific offenses. It could be threatening behavior, graffiti written on school property, display of gang symbols, wearing of gang apparel and jewelry, gang recruitment; or, it could be a multiple charge situation in which assault and battery and gang activity get simultaneously reported to the VDOE.

- The regional totals recorded in 2007 — 154 reported gang incidents with 203 student offenders — were the lowest in four years.

- While most reported gang activity, historically, occurs within the region's high schools, one trend that appears to be emerging is an increase in gang activity in the middle schools. Whereas in 2004 and 2005, middle schools accounted for about one of five reported gang offenses in the public schools, last year the ratio had climbed to 35 percent, up five percentage points from the year before. As the gang offense rate in the region's high schools has been steadily decreasing in recent years, it has been slowly rising in the middle schools.

Illegal Drugs In The Schools

- Last year, there were 911 illegal drug offenses reported to the state, an average of 2.9 student offenses per 1,000 enrollment. Although there have been yearly fluctuations in reported cases, most notably in 2005 when there were 155 more student drug cases than the year before, the trend has been steadily creeping downward, with the last two years, 2006 and 2007, reaching low points in the number of reported drug cases regionally and in the overall drug offense rate.

- The downward trend applies to most major drug categories: the possession and use of Schedule I and II drugs (down 26% for 2003), of alcohol (down 22%), and of inhalants (down 49%).

- The only exception to the positive direction of drug trends was a rise in the sale and distribution of Schedule I and II drugs. Schedule I are controlled substances such as heroin, marijuana, LSD, PCP and crack cocaine that have no safe, legal, or accepted use. Schedule II are narcotics, stimulants and depressants that have acceptable medical uses but are illegal without a prescription. About half of the reported drug offenses in Northern Virginia public schools are for possession, use, sale or distribution of a Schedule I or II drug. Last year, there were 79 reported sale and distribution cases, up from 41 cases in 2006. Sale and distribution are criminal offenses leading to an automatic expulsion. It is the only drug-related offense category deemed by the Virginia Board of Education of sufficient gravity to be placed among the offense codes used to determine, under No Child Left Behind requirements, whether a school should be designated a "Persistently Dangerous" school. No Northern Virginia public school, it should be noted, comes close to meeting the persistently dangerous threshold.

Weapons In The Schools

- Guns make big headlines when brought onto school property or to a school sponsored event but SSIR data reveals that they are a rare event in Northern Virginia public schools. There were only 17 reported cases over the five-year period, an average of three or four isolated episodes per year. In all, there were 95 "dangerous" weapon offenses reported during the five-year period, with almost 40 percent of them occurring in 2003. The trend in dangerous weapon violations, while up in 2007, has generally been dropping.

- While the number of dangerous weapon offenses has been declining, the number of weapons violations overall has been increasing slightly, from 521 reported offenses in 2003 to 563 in 2007. Possession of other type of weapons — e.g., knives, tasers, stun guns, razor blades, box cutters, fireworks, firecrackers, screw drivers, stink bombs or any object a student may use to threaten or inflict harm on another person — are up 8 percent in the aggregate from 2003.

Student Suspensions And Expulsions

Like a blood pressure gauge, suspension and expulsion statistics give a reading on conditions in the schools; on the number of young people being disciplined for disruptive, threatening and even illegal behavior on school property. They are surrogate measures that are employed nationwide for monitoring at-risk youth and their behavior. Another use of the statistics is to pinpoint vulnerable schools, places where academic achievement, school safety indicators, and other measures of student performance may indicate a greater preponderance of at-risk or gang-affiliated youth.

Fundamental and important questions that a community scan of the schools seek to answer are: How many students are getting into trouble at school? How many are being suspended and expelled? What are the trends? Are the numbers increasing or decreasing? Is there evidence of a worsening condition that could have roots in a growing gang presence?

- A review of five years of expulsion and suspension data for the eight public school divisions and more than 420 neighborhood schools in the system reveals no evidence of a worsening or deteriorating condition. On the contrary, most of the leading indicators point in the opposite direction, to a significant reduction in the rate of student expulsions and suspensions.

- There are many ways to look at school expulsion and suspension statistics, but two indicators, in particular, are revelatory: the number of unique individuals who get suspended or expelled each year and the number of actual occurrences. SSIR data reveals that in a class of 100 students, there will be about four to five individual students who at some point during the school year will be expelled or suspended. And there will be seven to eight instances during the year when an expulsion or suspension occurs (with some students suspended more than once). These are system-wide averages for Northern Virginia public school based on an analysis of five years of disciplinary data. The actual numbers range from a low of 21,654 expulsions and suspensions in 2003 to a high of 24,363 in 2004 (and in 2005); and from a low of 13,353 unique individuals expelled or suspended in 2007 to a high of 15,170 in 2005.

- Looking at the SSIR date in this way provides a measure of improvement in the disciplinary trends. The suspension and expulsion rates — for both the number of occurrences and for the number of unique individuals in Northern Virginia public schools — have dropped each of the past four years, reaching a five-year low during the 2007-08 school year. From an average rate of almost five suspended or expelled students (4.8) per 100 classroom size in 2004, the rate has dropped to four students.

- Regional and school division averages, it must be emphasized, can mask huge internal variation in the frequency and trends of expulsions and suspension among neighborhood schools. While the

gang assessment did not examine this issue, there are schools in the region with suspension and expulsion rates that are substantially above the regional average, and many times above the rates of other schools.

High School Dropout Rates

- Nearly 7 percent of Northern Virginia public school students in the Class of 2008 dropped out during their high school years, according to recently released information from the Virginia Department of Education. This is the first graduating class for which statistics of this nature have been compiled, tracking individual students from the day they enter the system until the day they graduate, transfer or drop out. Region wide, Hispanics were among the most likely to fail to finish, with 22 percent dropping out. The dropout rate for blacks in Northern Virginia was 9 percent, for whites 2.6 percent and for Asians 2.9 percent.

Community Resources For Gang Members And At-Risk Youth

As the final piece of the OJJDP Model, the assessment team conducted an inventory of existing community programs currently in place regionally and in each of the separate NVRGTF jurisdictions, identifying nearly 700 programs that serve or could serve the needs of at-risk youth, or provide alternatives to youth gang membership.

- Analysis of the Community Resources Inventory (the name given to a regional database prepared during the gang assessment) confirmed that Northern Virginia offers its residents an expansive range of services to help those in need, including programs specifically identified by OJJDP as beneficial for at-risk youth, such as counseling, employment and job training, job placement, education and vocational training, mentoring, recreational opportunities, after-school programs, youth development programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and similar supports.

- Most community resources were designed for use by the general public. Of the 670 service listings in this inventory, only 35, or about 5 percent, focused specifically on gang-involved youth.

- Although both were suggested by community leaders interviewed during the assessment as necessary options for the population at risk of gang involvement, no trade schools and few opportunities for on-the-job training and apprenticeships were identified in this analysis.

- The importance of cultural and linguistic appropriateness of programs cannot be overemphasized in our highly multicultural region. Additionally, programs must be located where participants are able to access them.

- While the OJJDP Model stresses the importance of agencies working together regionally to control and eradicate the effects of gangs, less than one-half of one percent of programs analyzed identified collaborative, multi-agency sponsorship. The analysis also did not uncover many programs or services that are organized or offered on a regional basis, although these have a promising role in gang prevention.

- Finally, many programs have requirements, such as academic performance or the absence of a criminal record, which can prevent at-risk youth from utilizing services that they most need. Academic achievement can be an elusive goal for at-risk youths, especially those for whom English is not a native language or whose families may have limited formal education and less commitment to the importance of education for a child's success in later life.

How Has The Region Managed To Keep A Lid On The Gang Problem

When responding to the question of how Northern Virginia has managed to keep a lid on its street gangs while other places are finding it more difficult, an obvious place to turn for most of the explanation are factors listed below.

The Role Of A Strong Regional Economy

A strong economy, along with inherent structural assets such as the region's unique demographic base and investments made in quality schools and public services, helps to explain the low overall crime rates in Northern Virginia and the success the region has had in containing a gang problem that, in other settings, has metastasized into a more virulent and destructive presence. In addition to the impact it has on personal and household incomes, it reduces pockets of concentrated poverty that can become breeding grounds for youth street gangs. A healthy, vibrant economy with abundant job opportunities and low unemployment rates is a powerful antidote to the formation and spread of youth street gangs.

Law Enforcement: Getting Out Front Of The Gang Problem And Keeping The Pressure On.

A second factor that has contributed greatly to the region's success is the role of law enforcement. Long before others in Northern Virginia were aware of, or perhaps willing to acknowledge publicly that there were street gangs in their communities, law enforcement recognized that a serious threat to public safety was emerging and reacted aggressively, getting out front of the issue before it could become entrenched, drug-based and more violent. They did it by adopting organizational and administrative structures, cooperative multi-jurisdictional agreements and information systems (e.g., establishing local gang units, the NVRGTF, intelligence databases, etc.) to fight an increasingly mobile gang population. Utilizing the full arsenal of anti-gang legal and policing measures available to them (e.g., gang participation statutes, ICE referrals, gang sweeps, and "boots on the street"), these law enforcement initiatives have proven highly effective in containing and, in fact, reducing gang crime in Northern Virginia. This is a story line that ran through the gang assessment, particularly during interviews with community leaders where there was general agreement that police departments in Northern Virginia, working with the NVRGTF, have done an exceptionally good job in keeping a lid on youth street gangs, despite a massive wave of immigration, new migration streams and other conditions that could easily have led to a worsening of the situation. Indeed, there is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that many gang members from Northern Virginia are moving or driving to Prince George's and other Maryland counties, into the District of Columbia or further south and west into Virginia to avoid dealing with police departments that are unrelenting in their efforts to keep gangs under control and which make it their business to stay abreast of what is happening.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

An important component of the region's anti-gang strategy is federal, state and local collaboration in investigating and prosecuting gang crimes. This collaboration takes many forms, involving a broad spectrum of federal and state partners — the FBI; the U.S. Attorney's Office; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Department of Homeland Security; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the U.S. Marshals Service; the Virginia State Police — and the use of numerous federal and state statutes (racketeering, firearms, narcotics, immigration, money laundering, etc.) to dismantle gang networks. Federal, state, and local law enforcement partnerships have become a standard feature in the region's arsenal used to fight gang crime, producing demonstrable results.

Strong Political Leadership

Political leadership, particularly the long-standing efforts of Congressman Frank Wolf on behalf of the NVRGTF, has played a critical role in securing funding and in putting in place a collaborative framework for dealing with

gangs. One of the major components of the region's success in dealing with gangs has been its ability to address the problem multi-jurisdictionally and comprehensively. Congressional leadership has been instrumental in bringing these multi-jurisdictional partnerships into being; in funding them operationally; and in encouraging and financially supporting a comprehensive approach to gang reduction that involves suppression, intervention and prevention, which decades of research have shown is the best and only way to achieving lasting results.

Elected officials at the local level deserve credit for the leadership role they too have displayed. They have contributed by elevating gangs to a major public policy priority, by supporting anti-gang initiatives, by funding social programs to help troubled youth, and by educating the entire community — the schools, faith-based organizations, the private sector, mental health agencies, libraries, soccer coaches, anyone coming into contact with at-risk youth — on the role everyone can play in helping to protect young people from the attractions and dangers of a gang lifestyle. All of these initiatives are making a difference in Northern Virginia today. The message of the region's locally-elected leadership is powerful and it is being heard: everyone has a role to play and it is only in working together and by addressing the gang problem holistically can the problem be solved.

And, lastly, recognition must be given to members of the Virginia General Assembly, who have responded aggressively to the gang threat in Virginia by enacting anti-gang statutes dealing with gang definitions, intelligence databases, participation, recruitment, threats, intimidation, criminal activity, graffiti, congregating, and activities occurring on school grounds, to mention but a few. These legislative enactments have enhanced the criminal penalties for gang-related activities and increased the legal and law enforcement tools available to local communities for dealing with criminal gang networks.

Northern Virginia has achieved recognition nationally for its success in containing youth street gangs. Without political leadership from every level of government — congressional, state and local — the outcome in Northern Virginia, we can confidently assume, would be less favorable. Strong and enlightened political leadership has made a difference.

Educating The Community About Gangs

Noteworthy and also warranting special mention are the job that the courts and law enforcement, in particular, have performed in educating local residents on what they can do to help reduce the presence of gangs on our streets. It is hard to overestimate the influential role that education and training have had in helping to contain the gang threat in Northern Virginia. The value of this function is immeasurable. Since its inception, members of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, alone, have conducted training for more than 14,000 regional law enforcement officials, school resource officers, community activists, local officials, service providers, and other individuals. The courts, primarily through their court servicing units, gang prevention coordinators and probation officers have also played a major role in reaching out to the community, working closely with the full gamut of people and organizations involved with gangs, from youth who have gotten into trouble with the law, to their parents, concerned citizens, neighborhood associations and the whole panoply of organizations and service providers that operate within their communities. Through gang summits, neighborhood gang awareness meetings, public service announcements, face-to-face counseling sessions with worried parents and troubled youth, and countless other coordination, prevention and intervention activities, they are working to keep people informed and to better equip them to deal with the challenges street gangs pose. The results in Northern Virginia speak for themselves.

Legal Tools Used To Deal With Gang Members

The gang participation statute, not on the books when the Task Force began operations, is a tool prosecutors use to increase penalties for gang-related crimes. Individuals who commit crimes who are legally determined to be a gang member can be sentenced to a felony charge under this law. Twenty

percent of the arrests made by the NVRGTF include gang participation charges. Although the statute is used with varying degrees of success across jurisdictions, a number of police and prosecutors said it was an important tool in the anti-gang arsenal.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE, formerly the INS) laws are another widely used set of legal tools that have enabled law enforcement in Northern Virginia to deport illegal aliens and legal permanent resident aliens who commit gang crimes. About 40 percent of the gang arrests made by the NVRGTF over the past half decade involve immigration violations.

Role Of The Schools

Northern Virginia schools are on the front lines in dealing with contemporary social problems that young people face and, in this regard, have done a laudable job helping to reduce the influence of gangs in young people's lives, on school grounds and in the community. They do this in many ways, but particularly noteworthy are zero tolerance polices, combined with the presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) in the high schools and in many middle schools of Northern Virginia, that have proven highly effective in recognizing, and responding to, displays of a gang presence. Combined with a whole series of academic enrichment, after-school and other supportive programs, school administrators, teachers, SROs and parents are working together to keep Northern Virginia's schools safe, and to try to channel young people into rewarding and productive activities. The success of these efforts show, and are reflected in relatively few, mostly minor incidents of gang activity occurring in the schools each year.

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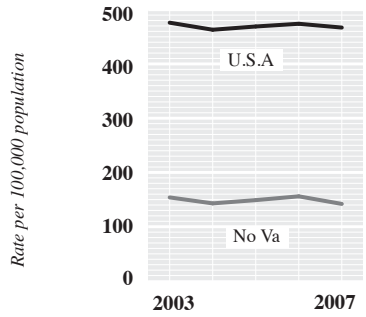
I. Gangs And Gang Crime In Northern Virginia

Table 1

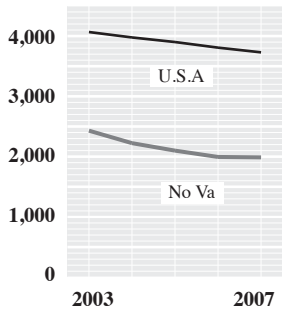
How Northern Virginia PART I Crime Rates Compare with National Averages: Five Year Trend

Based on Crime Rates Per 100,000 Popuation

Violent Crimes Against People



All PART I Crimes

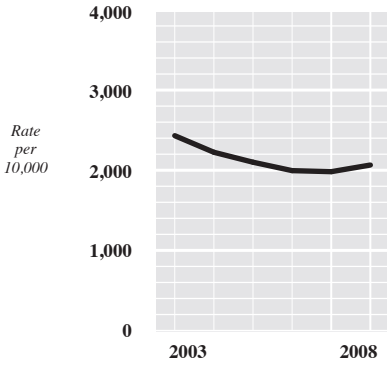


	2003			2004			2005			2006			2007		
By Type of Crime	**USA**	**NoVa**	**Percent National Average**	**USA**	**NoVa**	**Percent National Average**	**USA**	**NoVa**	**Percent National Average**	**USA**	**NoVa**	**Percent National Average**	**USA**	**NoVa**	**Percent National Average**
Violent Crimes Against People	**476**	**154**	**32**	**463**	**143**	**31**	**469**	**149**	**32**	**474**	**156**	**33**	**467**	**141**	**30**
Homicide	5.7	1.8	32	5.5	1.3	24	5.6	2.3	40	5.7	2.4	43	5.6	1.9	34
Rape	32.3	12.8	40	32.4	10.8	33	31.8	13.5	42	31.0	10.9	35	30.0	12.9	43
Robbery	143	66	46	137	63	46	141	62	44	149	73	49	148	65	44
Aggravated Assault	295	73	25	289	68	23	291	71	24	288	70	24	284	61	22
Property Crimes	**3,591**	**2,277**	**63**	**3,514**	**2,081**	**59**	**3,432**	**1,951**	**57**	**3,335**	**1,839**	**55**	**3,264**	**1,847**	**57**
Burglary	741	220	30	730	199	27	727	187	26	729	217	30	723	186	26
Larceny	2,417	1,823	75	2,362	1,659	70	2,288	1,582	69	2,207	1,456	66	2,178	1,504	69
Auto Theft	434	234	54	422	223	53	417	183	44	398	165	41	363	157	43
All PART I Crimes	**4,067**	**2,431**	**60**	**3,977**	**2,224**	**56**	**3,901**	**2,100**	**54**	**3,808**	**1,995**	**52**	**3,730**	**1,988**	**53**

NOTE: PART I crimes consist of seven specific offenses that the FBI collects in its Uniform Crime Reporting Program. They are grouped under two broad categories: violent offenses against people which include murder and negligent homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault; and property offenses which include burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.

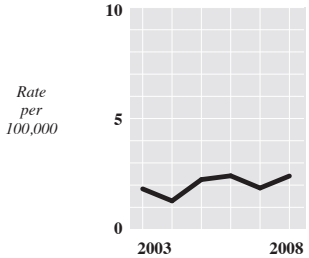
Table 2
Trends in Serious (PART I) Crimes - By Type of Offense
Northern Virginia 2003-2008

SERIOUS CRIME INDEX



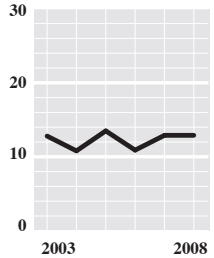
	Number	Rate
2003	47,829	2,431
2004	44,732	2,224
2005	42,890	2,100
2006	41,138	1,995
2007	41,468	1,988
2008	44,138	2,088
% Change (2003-2008)	-7.7	-14.1

Homicide



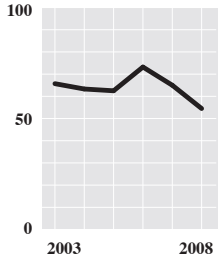
	Number	Rate
2003	36	1.8
2004	26	1.3
2005	46	2.3
2006	50	2.4
2007	39	1.9
2008	51	2.4
% Change (2003-2008)	41.7	31.8

Forcible Rape



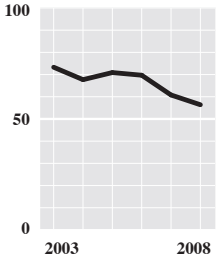
	Number	Rate
2003	252	12.8
2004	218	10.8
2005	275	13.5
2006	224	10.9
2007	269	12.9
2008	273	12.9
% Change (2003-2008)	8.3	0.8

Robbery



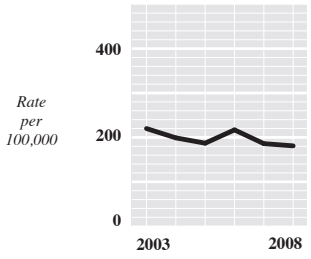
	Number	Rate
2003	1,292	66
2004	1,272	63
2005	1,276	62
2006	1,510	73
2007	1,353	65
2008	1,165	55
% Change (2003-2008)	-9.8	-16.1

Aggravated Assault



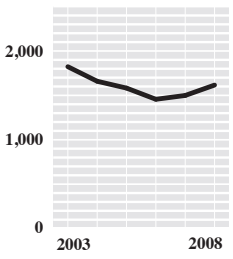
	Number	Rate
2003	1,442	73
2004	1,361	68
2005	1,448	71
2006	1,438	70
2007	1,268	61
2008	1,198	57
% Change (2003-2008)	-16.9	-22.7

Burglary



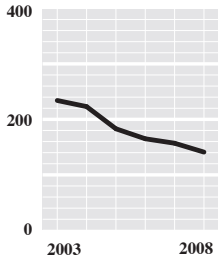
	Number	Rate
2003	4,322	220
2004	3,996	199
2005	3,815	187
2006	4,479	217
2007	3,882	186
2008	3,869	183
% Change (2003-2008)	-10.5	-16.7

Larceny



	Number	Rate
2003	35,876	1,823
2004	33,370	1,659
2005	32,301	1,582
2006	30,028	1,456
2007	31,380	1,504
2008	34,582	1,636
% Change (2003-2008)	-3.6	-10.3

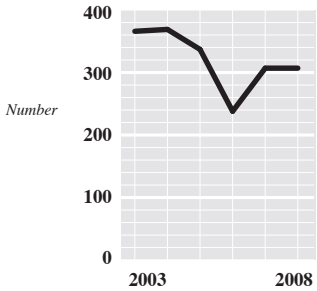
Motor Vehicle Theft



	Number	Rate
2003	4,609	234
2004	4,489	223
2005	3,729	183
2006	3,409	165
2007	3,277	157
2008	3,000	142
% Change (2003-2008)	-34.9	-39.4

Table 3
Trends in Serious PART I Gang-Related Crimes - By Type of Offense
Northern Virginia 2003-2008

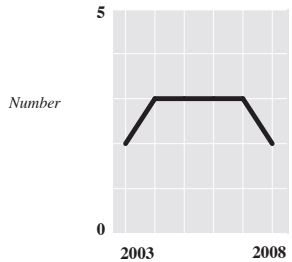
SERIOUS CRIME INDEX



	Number
2003	366
2004	369
2005	337
2006	238
2007	307
2008	307
Total	1,924
% Change 2004-2008	-16.8%

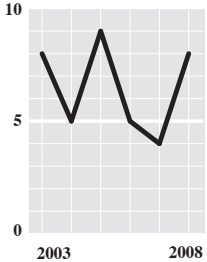
NOTE: Percent change figures are calculated based on the years 2004 thru 2008 due to the fact that gang-related crime statistics for 2003 are for a six-month reporting period.

Homicide



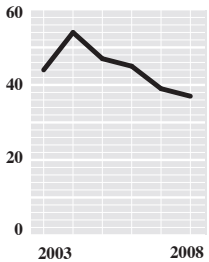
	Number
2003	2
2004	3
2005	3
2006	3
2007	3
2008	2
Total	16
% Change 2004-2008	-33.3%

Forcible Rape



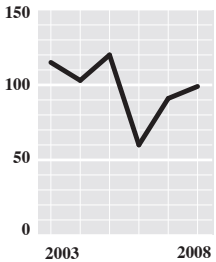
	Number
2003	8
2004	5
2005	9
2006	5
2007	4
2008	8
Total	39
% Change 2004-2008	60.0%

Robbery



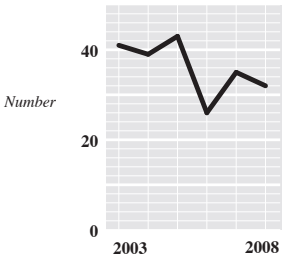
	Number
2003	44
2004	54
2005	47
2006	45
2007	39
2008	37
Total	266
% Change 2004-2008	-31.5%

Aggravated Assault



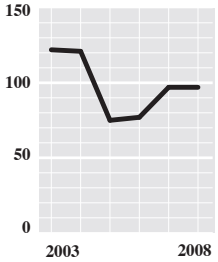
	Number
2003	115
2004	103
2005	120
2006	60
2007	91
2008	99
Total	588
% Change 2004-2008	-3.9%

Burglary



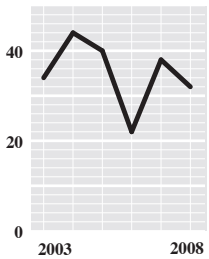
	Number
2003	41
2004	39
2005	43
2006	26
2007	35
2008	32
Total	216
% Change 2004-2008	-17.9%

Larceny



	Number
2003	122
2004	121
2005	75
2006	77
2007	97
2008	97
Total	589
% Change 2004-2008	-19.8%

Motor Vehicle Theft



	Number
2003	34
2004	44
2005	40
2006	22
2007	38
2008	32
Total	210
% Change 2004-2008	-27.3%

Table 4
Trends in Serious PART I Gang-Related Crimes - By Jurisdiction
Northern Virginia 2003-2008

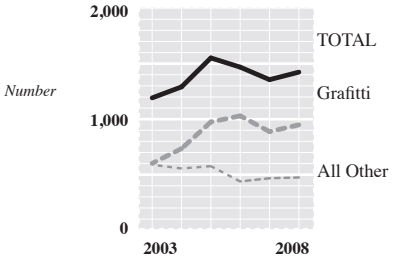
	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	City of Fairfax	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince Wm. County
PART I CRIMES										
2003	366	16	36	0	111	2	9	12	6	174
2004	369	15	28	6	141	2	31	4	3	139
2005	337	19	32	1	135	4	14	6	5	121
2006	238	2	32	2	91	2	21	9	5	74
2007	307	14	22	0	170	1	13	9	1	77
2008	307	8	24	0	171	1	18	5	4	76
Total	1,924	74	174	9	819	12	106	45	24	661
CHANGE In Number (2004-2008)	-62	-7	-4	-6	30	-1	-13	1	1	-63
In Percent	-16.8	-46.7	-14.3	-100.0	21.3	-50.0	-41.9	25.0	33.3	-45.3

NOTE: Change statistics are calculated based on the years 2004 thru 2008 due to the fact that gang-related crime statistics for 2003 are based on a six-month reporting period.

Gang crime statistics for Fairfax County were compiled from data submitted by police departments from Fairfax County and the Towns of Herndon and Vienna; those for Prince William County from data submitted by police departments from Prince William County and the Town of Dumfries; and those for Loudoun County from data submitted by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Leesburg Police Department.

Table 5
Trends in Selected Other Gang-Related Crimes - By Type of Offense
Northern Virginia 2003-2008

TOTAL
Other Reported Crimes

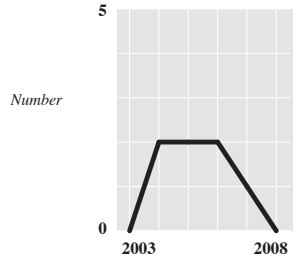


	TOTAL	Grafitti	All Other
2003	1,192	602	590
2004	1,291	735	556
2005	1,552	975	577
2006	1,469	1,030	439
2007	1,356	888	468
2008	1,424	949	475
Total	8,284	5,179	3,105

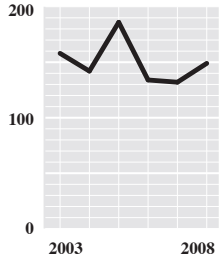
OTHER CRIMES INDEX
Is comprised of eight less serious offenses historically associated with youth gangs and for which the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force reports gang crime statistics. The index consists of arson, simple assault, weapons offenses, sexual assault, drug offenses, disorderly conduct/drunk in public, graffiti/vandalism/destruction of property, and stolen property.

NOTE: Change statistics are calculated based on the years 2004 thru 2008 due to the fact that gang-related crime statistics for 2003 are based on a six-month reporting period.

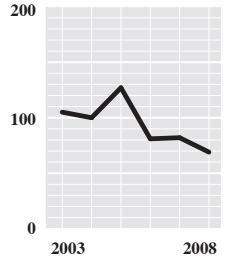
Arson



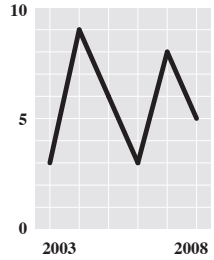
Simple Assault



Weapons

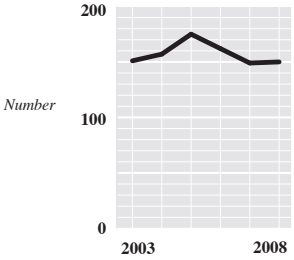


Sexual Assault

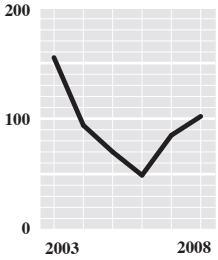


	Number	Number	Number	Number
2003	0	158	105	3
2004	2	142	100	9
2005	2	186	127	6
2006	2	134	81	3
2007	1	132	82	8
2008	0	149	69	5
Total	7	901	564	34
% Change 2004-2008	-100.0	4.%	-31.0%	-44.4%

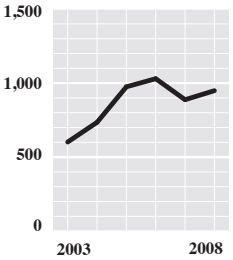
Drug Offenses



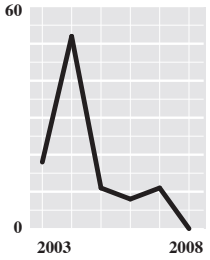
Disorderly Conduct



Graffiti



Stolen Property

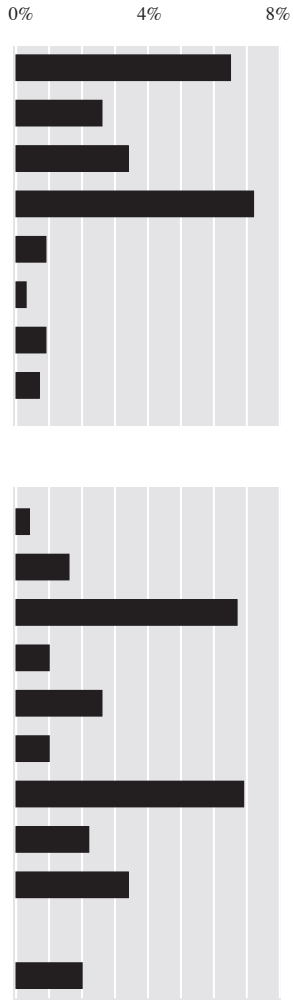


	Number	Number	Number	Number
2003	151	155	602	18
2004	157	94	735	52
2005	175	70	975	11
2006	162	49	1,030	8
2007	149	85	888	11
2008	150	102	949	0
Total	944	555	5,179	100
% Change 2004-2008	-4.5%	8.5%	29.1%	-100.0

Table 6

Reported Gang-Related Crime as a Percentage of Overall Crime: Northern Virginia

Based on Five and a Half Years of Gang Crime Statistics - Mid-2003 through 2008



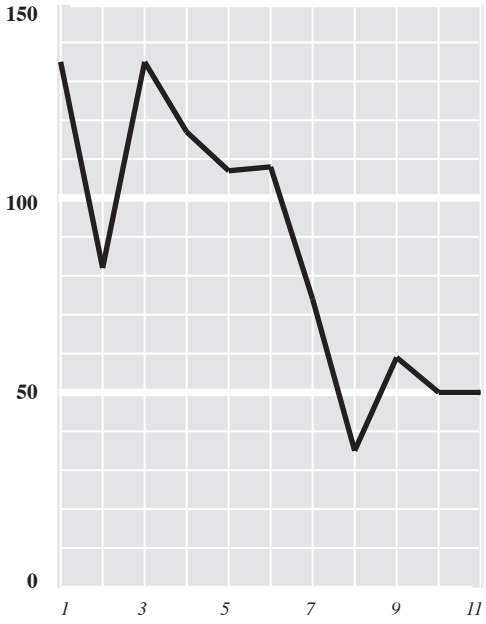
	2003 through 2008		
	Total Crimes	**Reported Gang-Related Crimes**	**Percentage** (Gang-Related)
Homicide	248	16	6.5
Rape	1,511	39	2.6
Robbery	7,868	266	3.4
Aggravated Assault	8,155	588	7.2
Burglary	24,363	216	0.9
Larceny	197,537	589	0.3
Auto Theft	22,513	210	0.9
PART I	262,195	1,924	0.7
Arson	1,662	7	0.4
Simple Assault	57,941	901	1.6
Weapons	8,394	564	6.7
Sexual Assault	3,467	34	1.0
Drug Offense	37,012	944	2.6
Disorderly Conduct	52,970	555	1.0
Graffiti	74,555	5,179	6.9
Stolen Property	4,499	100	2.2
OTHER	240,500	8,284	3.4
ALL CRIME CATEGORIES	502,502	10,208	2.0

Table 7

Gang Arrests in Northern Virginia

Number Arrested and Charged Offenses: 2003- 2008 *(Note; These data include only arrests made by the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force.)*

Number of Gang Members Arrested



2003
1 Aug.-Dec. 135

2004
2 Jan.-Jun.....82
3 Jul.-Dec.....135
217

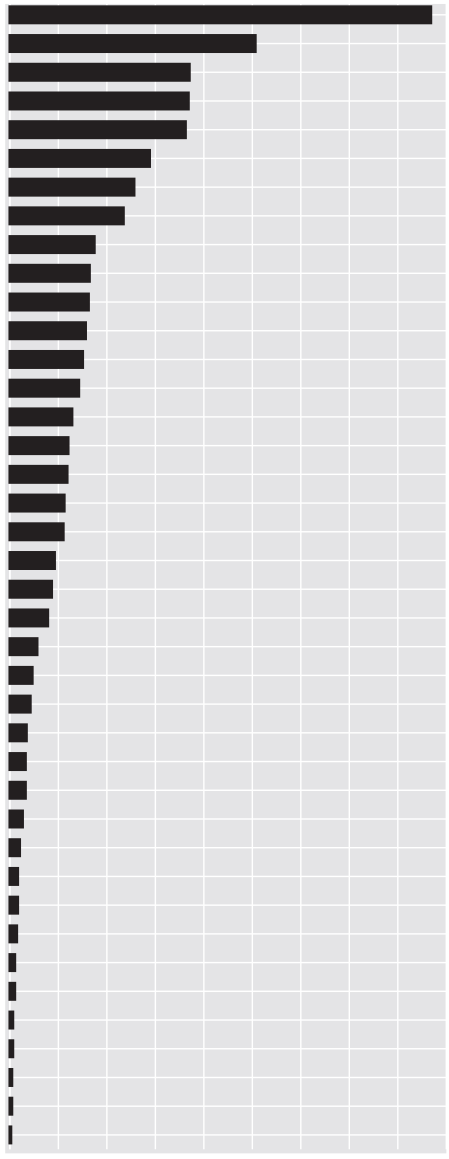
2005
4 Jan.-Jun.....117
5 Jul.-Dec.....107
224

2006
6 Jan.-Jun.....108
7 Jul.-Dec.....74
182

2007
8 Jan.-Jun.....35
9 Jul.-Dec.....59
94

2008
10 Jan.-Jun.....50
11 Jul.-Dec.....50
100

Charged Offenses



	Number	%
ICE Violations	434	16.0
Narcotics Possession	253	9.3
Assault and Battery	185	6.8
Alcohol Violations	184	6.8
Gang Participation	181	6.7
Destruction of Property	144	5.3
Malicious Wounding	128	4.7
Traffic Violations	117	4.3
Obstruction of Justice	87	3.2
Tresspassing	82	3.0
Identity Fraud	81	3.0
Concealed Weapon	78	2.9
Grand Larceny	75	2.8
Firearm Violations	71	2.6
PWID	64	2.4
Robbery	60	2.2
Forgery	59	2.2
FTAlViolate Court Order	56	2.1
Contributing to Delinquency	55	2.0
Possession of Stolen Property	46	1.7
Probation Violation	43	1.6
Auto ThefUUUV	39	1.4
Juvenile/Runaway	28	1.0
Arson/related	23	0.8
Prostitution	21	0.8
Burglary	17	0.6
Homicide	16	0.6
Possess False Documents	16	0.6
DUI	13	0.5
Gang Recruiting	10	0.4
Abduction	8	0.3
Conspiracy to Commit Murder	8	0.3
False Report to Police	7	0.3
A & B on Police Officer	5	0.2
Possession Burglary Tools	5	0.2
Disorderly Conduct	3	0.1
Tattoo a Minor	3	0.1
Intimidate Witness	2	0.1
Rape	2	0.1
Threats to Persons on School Property	1	0.0
	2,710	100.0

Source: Activity reports submitted semi-annually by Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force to the Department of Justice.

Table 8
Trends in Arrest Charges for Gang Members

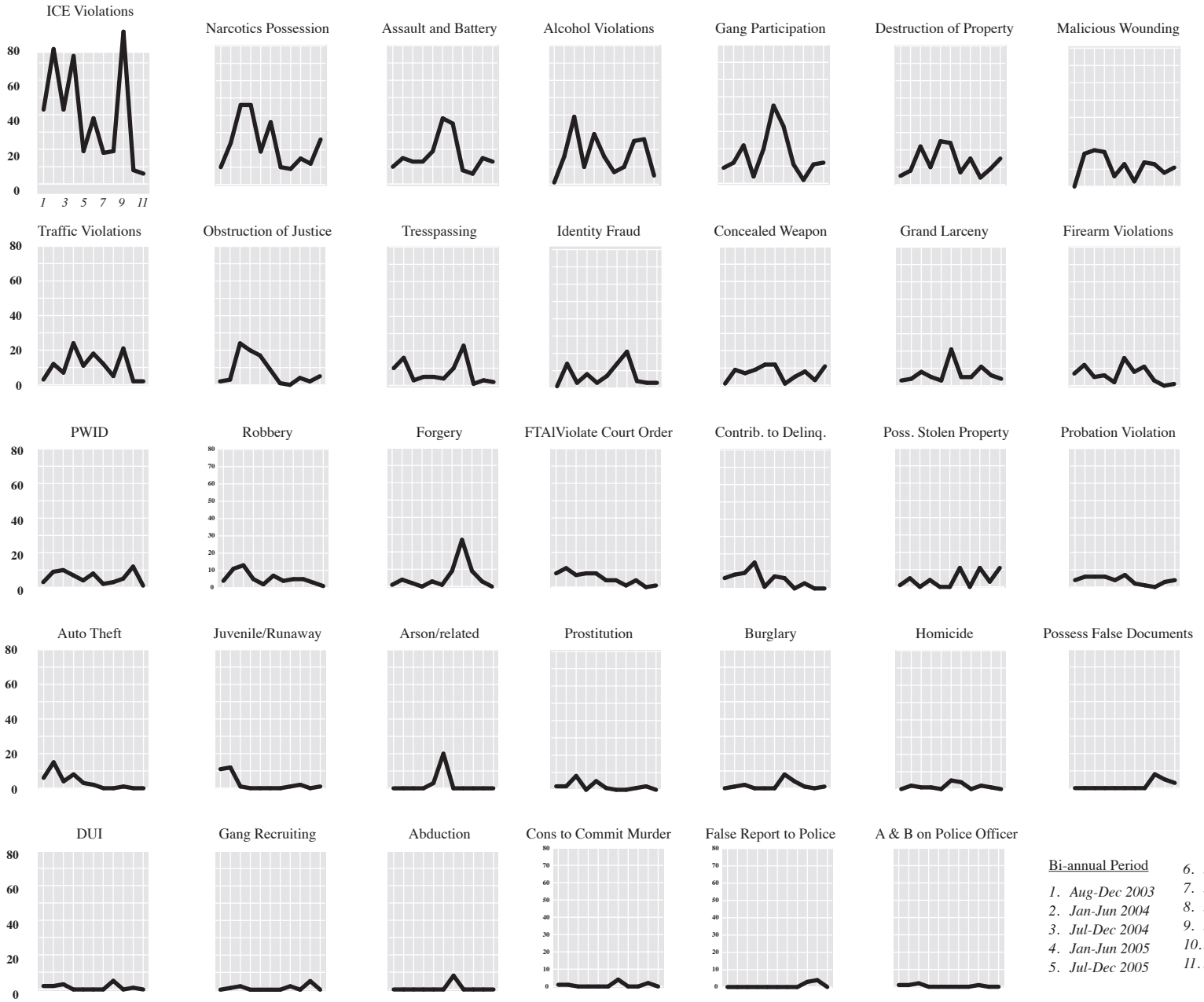


Table 9
Gangs Identified by Local Police Departments as Most Active in their Communities
Current for Summer 2009

City of Alexandria	Arlington County	City of Fairfax	Fairfax County	City of Falls Church
• Latin Homies • Bloods • Crips • Goodfellas • Los Soljahr • MS-13 • Latin Kings • South Side Locos	• MS-13 • 18th Street • South Side Locos • Bloods • Nueva Pershing • Little Locos • Loco Intocables • Vatos Locos • Latin Homies • Tyrol Hill Crew • Tiny Rascal Gangsters • Asian Dragon Family or Flies	• MS-13 • Yorkville Crew	• MS-13 • Crips • South Side Locos • 18th Street • Bloods • Folk Nation/Gangster Disciples • Latin Kings • Latin Homies • Culmore City/SKF/7 • Surenos/SUR	• MS-13 • Bloods • South Side Locos • Asian Thugs • Eden Boys or Hai Au-Boys • Asian Dragon Family • Tiny Rascal Gangsters • Maryland Boys

Loudoun County	City of Manassas	City of Manassas Park	Prince William County
• 18th Street • MS-13 • Bloods	• MS13 • Sur 13 • 18th St • Bloods • SSL • Crips	• SSL 13 • SUR 13 • Bloods • Crips • MS-13 • 18th Street	• MS-13 • South Side Locos • SUR 13 • Bloods • Loco Malditos

Commonly-Used Abbreviations

ADF	Asian Dragon Family
AT	Asian Thugs
CK	Cool Kids
DF	Dragon Family
GD	Gangster Disciples
LH	Latin Homies
LI	Loco Intocables
LL	Lttle Locos
OMG	Outlaw Motorcycle Gang
OPD	Oriental Playboys
SSL	South Side Locos
TRG	Tiny Rascal Gangsters
VL	Vatos Locos or Vice Lords

Table 10
Gangs in Northern Virginia: A Partial List
Identified through Police Crime Incident Reports as Active in the Region: 2003-2008

- Asian Young and Dangerous (AYD)
- Birchdale Crew
- Blood Killer Crips
- Blood Stone Villans
- Bloods
- Brown Pride
- Brown Union
- Crazy Crew
- Criminal Minds
- Crips
- Crossroads
- Culmore City
- Culmore Locos
- Deuce
- Dirty Rotten Scoundrels
- DNZ
- Dopa City Crew
- Down Valley Crips
- Eden Boys
- Forever High
- Folk Nation
- G-12
- Gangster Disciples
- Gangster Disciples 14
- Gangster Disciples 712
- Gangster Disciples 74
- Gangster Killa Bloods
- Geogetown Village
- GKB Gangster Kill Bloods
- Goodfellas
- H Town
- High Soldiers
- Hill Boys
- Hollywood Church Boyz
- Hoover Crips
- Ilicit Mafia
- KC Boyz
- KCF
- Kerrydale Crew
- Killer Hill Bloods
- La Primera
- La Cliqua Original (LCO)
- La Raza
- LAR
- Latin Homies
- Latin Kings
- Latin Locos
- Latin Pride Family
- Latino Intocables
- Little Locos
- Locaz 43
- Locos Malditos
- Lomas 13
- London Town Crips (LTC)
- Lorton 33
- Los Bravos
- LS Lost Soldiers
- Mafia King & Queens
- Mara Pershing
- Mexican Mafia
- MOB (Money over Bitches)
- MS-13
- Nasty Bitches (Tenn)
- Nottingdale 63
- Nueva Pershing
- Oakview Gardens Crew
- Oriental Dragon
- Pimmit Hill Crew
- Pura Sangre Latino (PSL)
- PWA (players or pimps w
- Rolling 60's Crips
- Rollingwood Village
- RWV Crew
- Sa Dubs
- SLM
- Small Soldiers
- South Side Locos SSL
- Street Soldiers
- Street Thug Crew
- Sudley 33
- Sudley 33 MOB
- SUR 13
- Tiny Rascal Gangsters (TRG)
- United Blood Nation
- Vatos Locos
- Wicked Side Loco• Yorkville Crew
- 7C's
- 9 Tec Bloods
- 170 Crips
- 187 Family
- 187 Mafia Crips
- 18th Street
- 202 MOB
- 202 MOB South Boys
- 202 MOB West Side Bloods
- 211 Crips
- 217 Crips
- 313 RSC
- 33 MOB
- 68th Crew
- 55 Mob Dub-T• 36 MOB
- 380 Crips
- 4 Trey Gangster Crips
- 47 Neighborhood Crips
- 55 MOB
- 55 MOB Bloods
- 606 Family
- 7 Woods
- 85 Crips

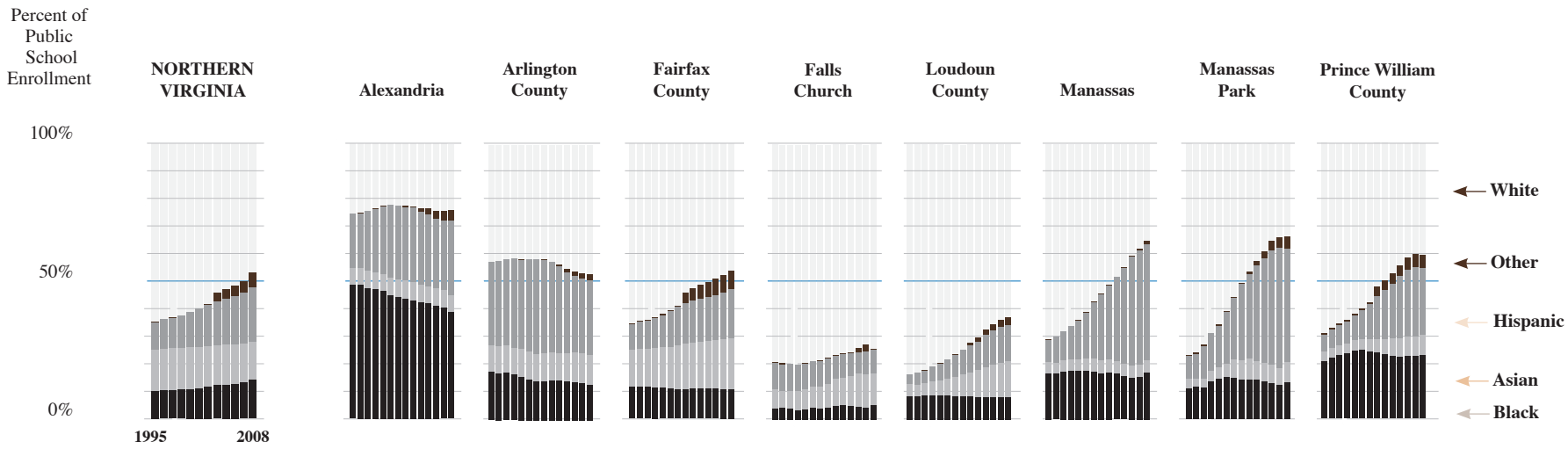
Table 11
Gang-Related Homicides in Northern Virginia: A Description of Selected Cases

Date	Location of Crime	Description
July 2000	Fairfax County	A 22 year-old male was beaten and stabbed in the heart by a gang member who did it to impress fellow gang members.
May 2001	Fairfax County	Two men were shot to death as they stood outside a restaurant exchanging angry words with a gang leader. Note: Le Cuong Gia, who committed the crime, was the sixteenth gang member convicted as a result of a three-year investigation of racketeering and related violent crimes committed by this gang. He and other members admitted to participating in numerous crimes, including another murder (in Falls Church in 1997), attempted murder, burglary, distribution of ecstasy and crack cocaine, credit card fraud and armed robbery (many of them home robberies). They told police that they specifically targeted business owners in Virginia and Maryland, whom they threatened and assaulted.
June 2001	Fairfax County	A 22 year-old male was beaten to death when he pretended to be a gang member but didn't have gang tattoos or know the lingo. He was beaten so badly he couldn't be identified for weeks.
August 2001	Fairfax County	A 24 year old woman, walking home from a nearby club at 2 a.m. in the morning, was accosted by two gang members who dragged her 100 yards to a nearby creek where they raped her and kicked her in the neck, rupturing an artery that killed her.
September 2001	City of Alexandria	A 19 year-old male was lured into the woods and stabbed repeatedly and nearly beheaded by a gang member
December 2002	Fairfax County	Two men, leaving a pool hall at 10 p.m., were approached by gang members who wanted to know if they were part of a rival gang which had jumped and assaulted a few of their members at the Springfield Mall two weeks earlier. After the men entered their car, a gang member fired a shot into the driver's side of the car, hitting one of the men in the head and killing him, and then fired two more shots through the windshield at the other man, missing him.
July 2003	Shenandoah County	A former female gang member, 24 years old, who was a witness in an upcoming murder trial of her one-time boyfriend (a gang member being held in jail pending trial), was murdered for cooperating with police. A resident of Alexandria, she was taken to a wooded area near Front Royal, where a rope was placed around her neck and she was held while two gang members repeatedly stabbed her. This was a celebrated case that focused national attention on the ruthless violence of the gang.
August 2004	Prince William County	Three members of a gang shot and killed a rival gang member to eliminate him as a rival and to impose discipline on their gang.

Date	Location of Crime	Description
May 2004	Fairfax County	Two MS-13 gang member confronted two juveniles to determine if they were rival gang members. When one of them, a young 17-year old male, indicated that he was a member of 18th Street, he was shot and killed and his female companion seriously wounded. The assailant and victims were unknown to one another.
July 2004	Stafford County	The body of a 21 year old female of Illinois was found in Stafford County, shot multiple times. The victim had ties to the Northern Virginia area and unknowingly met members of a gang who thought she had ties to a rival gang
August 2004	Prince William County	Three members of a gang shot and killed a rival gang member to eliminate him as a rival and to impose discipline on their gang.
January 2005	Fairfax County	Three teenagers, standing outside an apartment, were approached by two men, one of whom fired at them, killing a 15 year-old male and wounding the other two in the upper body. None of the victims was known to be associated with a gang. The gang responsible was known to have a presence in the apartment where the shooting occurred.
January 2005	Arlington County	A 24 year-old male was shot and killed as he sat in a parked car in Arlington. Authorities are still investigating whether the shooting stemmed from a dispute between rival gangs.
May 9, 2005	Fairfax County	A teenager was shot, beaten and fatally wounded by a group of gang members. Witnesses told of hearing three shots and seeing a fallen male being beaten with a bat and kicked by multiple assailants, one of whom shouted: "Is he dead".
December 2007	Fairfax County	A teenager, an alleged member of rival gang was shot and killed by two gang members after a parking lot argument. They committed the crime to increase their status within the gang.

II. Community Scan Of The Public Schools

Table 12
School Demographic Trends
Transition to "Majority-Minority" Racial Profile/Explosive Membership Growth in Outer Suburbs



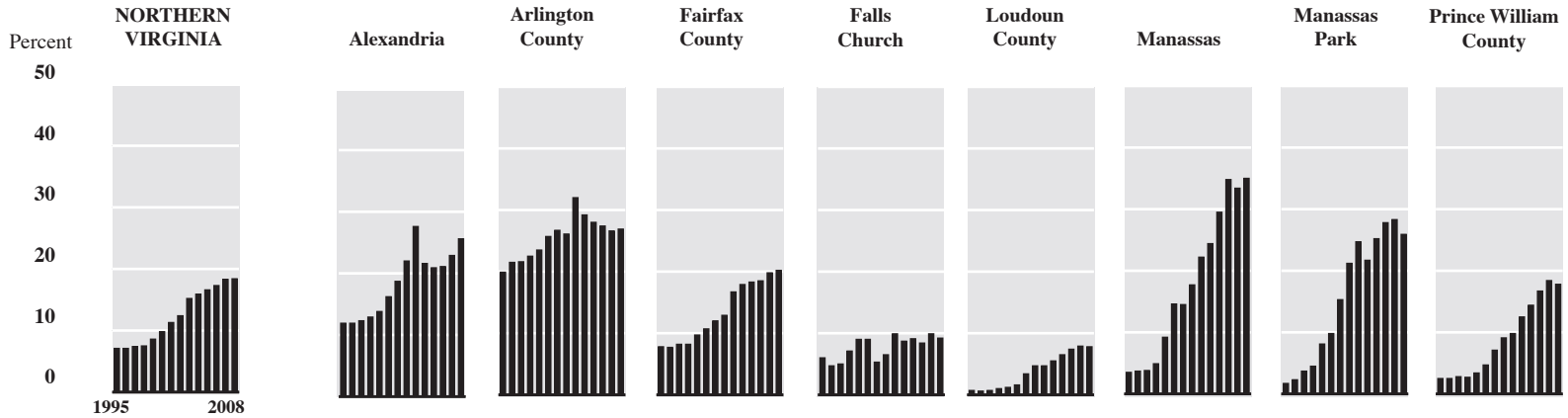
Changing Racial/Ethnic Profile
(Percent of enrollment that is 'non-white')

	NORTHERN VIRGINIA		Alexandria		Arlington County		Fairfax County		Falls Church		Loudoun County		Manassas		Manassas Park		Prince William County	
	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%	Enrollment	%
1995	243,649	35.2	10,044	74.4	17,178	57.6	140,820	34.4	1,462	21.1	19,827	16.4	5,685	29.1	1,561	23.2	47,072	30.9
1996	249,859	36.2	10,156	74.8	17,546	57.9	143,266	35.5	1,480	20.5	21,574	17.2	5,881	30.3	1,623	24.0	48,333	32.6
1997	256,859	36.9	10,488	75.7	17,892	58.5	145,722	35.8	1,451	20.5	23,616	18.1	6,080	32.0	1,705	26.9	49,905	34.2
1998	264,683	37.7	10,803	76.4	18,121	58.9	149,035	36.7	1,541	20.2	26,091	19.4	6,193	34.0	1,788	31.3	51,111	35.6
1999	273,344	38.8	11,017	77.4	18,260	58.4	152,952	37.8	1,675	20.4	28,787	20.7	6,271	36.1	1,831	34.4	52,551	37.8
2000	283,044	40.1	11,167	77.8	18,870	58.7	156,412	39.2	1,721	21.3	31,804	22.1	6,411	38.9	2,013	39.0	54,646	39.8
2001	293,884	41.6	11,104	77.5	19,109	58.5	160,584	41.0	1,764	21.6	34,571	23.7	6,566	42.9	2,169	44.2	58,017	42.0
2002	301,595	45.6	10,971	77.1	19,133	58.4	162,585	45.9	1,833	22.4	37,532	25.5	6,673	45.6	2,327	49.3	60,541	47.9
2003	309,414	46.9	10,902	77.1	19,158	57.7	164,235	47.2	1,874	23.5	40,750	27.8	6,803	48.8	2,288	53.2	63,404	50.0
2004	315,887	48.2	10,996	76.3	18,802	56.6	164,767	48.5	1,898	24.2	43,991	29.9	6,761	51.7	2,374	57.5	66,298	52.7
2005	319,418	49.6	10,643	76.2	18,463	54.9	163,768	49.6	1,865	24.3	47,326	32.7	6,554	55.4	2,337	60.7	68,462	55.6
2006	324,991	50.9	10,334	75.4	18,456	53.9	163,962	50.6	1,883	26.1	50,416	34.7	6,495	59.6	2,497	64.7	70,948	58.2
2007	332,940	52.1	10,570	75.3	18,736	53.3	165,734	52.1	1,936	27.6	53,985	36.3	6,474	62.0	2,516	66.1	72,989	59.4
2008	341,699	53.0	11,223	75.8	19,599	53.0	169,040	53.6	1,967	25.7	56,922	37.3	6,566	64.9	2,464	66.2	73,918	59.5

Racial/Ethnic Composition (%)
In 1995 and thirteen years later

	NORTHERN VIRGINIA		Alexandria		Arlington County		Fairfax County		Falls Church		Loudoun County		Manassas		Manassas Park		Prince William County	
	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008	1995	2008
White	65	47	26	24	42	47	66	46	79	74	84	63	71	35	77	34	69	41
Black	15	14	49	39	17	13	11	11	4	5	9	8	17	17	11	13	21	23
Asian	10	14	6	6	10	11	14	18	7	11	4	13	4	4	3	7	3	8
Hispanic	10	20	20	27	30	27	9	18	10	9	4	13	8	42	8	41	6	24
Other	0	5	0	4	0	2	0	7	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	1	5

Table 13
School Demographic Trends
Large Increases in Students with Limited English Proficiency



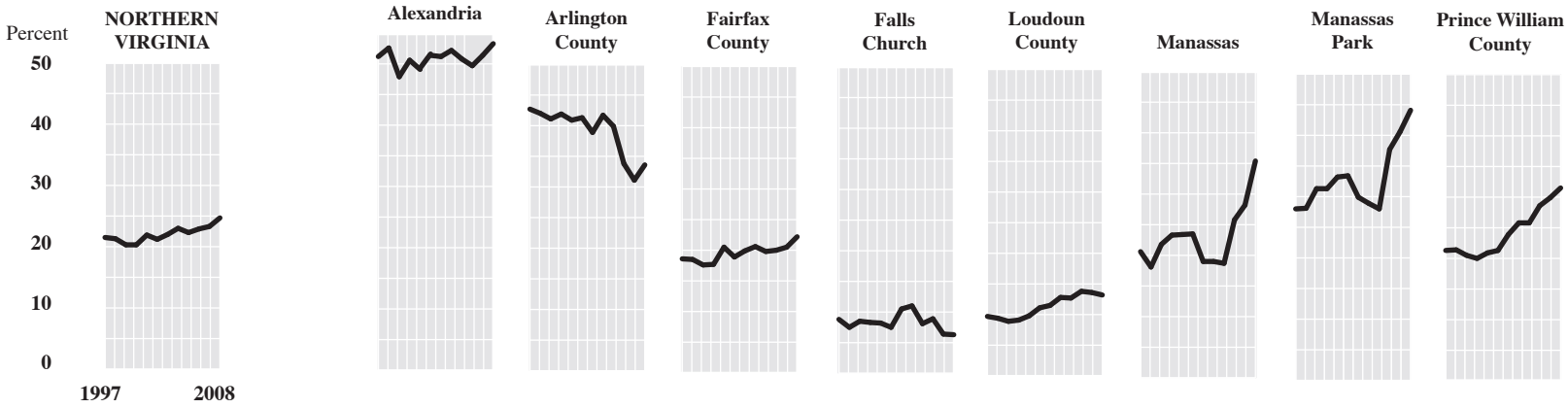
Limited English Proficiency
(Number and percent of enrollment)

	NORTHERN VIRGINIA LEP	%	Alexandria LEP	%	Arlington County LEP	%	Fairfax County LEP	%	Falls Church LEP	%	Loudoun County LEP	%	Manassas LEP	%	Manassas Park LEP	%	Prince William County LEP	%
1995	17,210	7.1	1,199	11.9	3,421	19.9	10,974	7.8	88	6.0	147	0.7	200	3.5	26	1.7	1,155	2.5
1996	17,662	7.1	1,213	11.9	3,776	21.5	10,993	7.7	69	4.7	130	0.6	220	3.7	38	2.3	1,223	2.5
1997	18,981	7.4	1,288	12.3	3,873	21.6	11,890	8.2	73	5.0	160	0.7	230	3.8	63	3.7	1,404	2.8
1998	19,790	7.5	1,395	12.9	4,078	22.5	12,213	8.2	110	7.1	250	1.0	301	4.9	81	4.5	1,362	2.7
1999	23,615	8.6	1,516	13.8	4,292	23.5	14,809	9.7	151	9.0	342	1.2	575	9.2	149	8.1	1,781	3.4
2000	27,790	9.8	1,806	16.2	4,858	25.7	16,746	10.7	155	9.0	506	1.6	939	14.6	197	9.8	2,583	4.7
2001	33,138	11.3	2,078	18.7	5,101	26.7	19,248	12.0	93	5.3	1,192	3.4	954	14.5	332	15.3	4,140	7.1
2002	37,473	12.4	2,412	22.0	4,988	26.1	20,974	12.9	120	6.5	1,778	4.7	1,184	17.7	494	21.2	5,523	9.1
2003	46,909	15.2	3,014	27.6	6,123	32.0	27,348	16.7	185	9.9	1,926	4.7	1,511	22.2	566	24.7	6,236	9.8
2004	50,376	15.9	2,379	21.6	5,485	29.2	29,446	17.9	165	8.7	2,427	5.5	1,648	24.4	514	21.7	8,312	12.5
2005	53,036	16.6	2,223	20.9	5,165	28.0	30,032	18.3	169	9.1	3,095	6.5	1,932	29.5	589	25.2	9,831	14.4
2006	56,215	17.3	2,176	21.1	5,050	27.4	30,327	18.5	158	8.4	3,728	7.4	2,262	34.8	694	27.8	11,820	16.7
2007	60,975	18.3	2,420	22.9	4,981	26.6	32,857	19.8	191	9.9	4,250	7.9	2,160	33.4	712	28.3	13,404	18.4
2008	62,947	18.4	2,868	25.6	5,275	26.9	34,118	20.2	180	9.2	4,416	7.8	2,296	35.0	637	25.9	13,157	17.8
Increase *(From 1995 to 2008)*	45,737		1,669		1,854		23,144		92		4,269		2,096		611		12,002	
Percent	266%		139%		54%		211%		105%		2904%		2,2869%		1,75912%		3,960%	

Table 14

School Demographic Trends

Increase in Percentage of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch, Particularly in Outer Suburbs

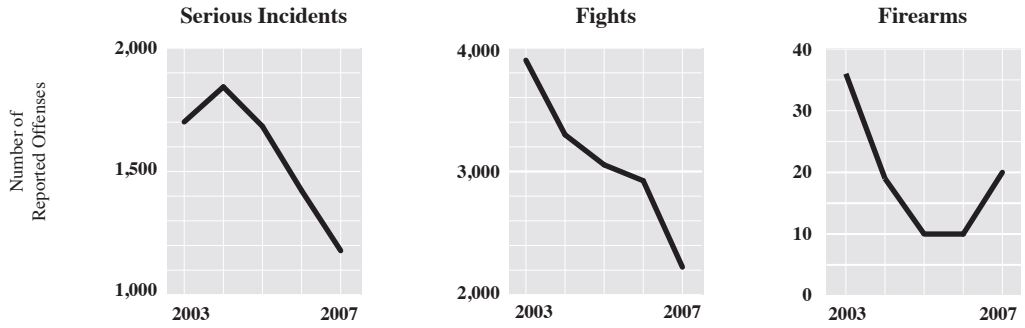


FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH
(percent receiving)

	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
1997	21.5	51.2	42.7	18.6	8.8	9.7	20.6	28.0	21.3
1998	21.3	52.6	42.0	18.5	7.5	9.4	18.1	28.1	21.4
1999	20.3	47.9	41.1	17.6	8.5	8.9	21.8	31.3	20.5
2000	20.3	50.6	41.9	17.7	8.3	9.1	23.3	31.3	20.0
2001	21.9	49.1	40.9	20.5	8.2	9.8	23.4	33.2	20.9
2002	21.2	51.4	41.3	18.9	7.5	11.1	23.5	33.4	21.3
2003	22.0	51.2	38.9	19.9	10.5	11.5	19.0	29.9	23.9
2004	23.0	52.2	41.7	20.6	11.0	12.8	19.0	28.9	25.8
2005	22.3	50.8	39.9	19.8	8.1	12.7	18.7	28.0	25.8
2006	22.9	49.7	33.8	20.0	8.9	13.8	25.8	37.7	28.6
2007	23.3	51.4	31.1	20.5	6.4	13.6	28.2	40.6	29.9
2008	24.7	53.3	33.6	22.2	6.3	13.2	35.4	44.1	31.5
CHANGE: **in** Percentage *(1997-2008)*	3.2	2.1	-9.1	3.6	-2.5	3.5	14.8	16.1	10.2

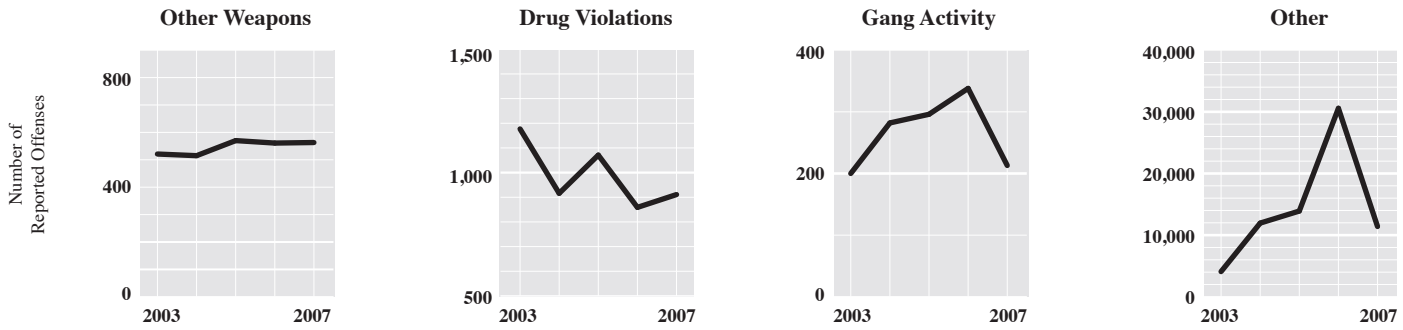
Table 15

All Reported Discipline, Crime and Violence Offenses in Northern Virginia Public Schools: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years



VDOE Code	NCLB Code		2003-'04	2004-'05	2005-'06	2006-'07	2007-'08	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
		SERIOUS INCIDENTS	**1,701**	**1,843**	**1,683**	**1,423**	**1,179**	**-522**	**-30.7**
HO1-4	I	Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
		Assault and Battery							
BA1	II	- Assault/battery/firearm or other weapon/staff	1	0	0	0	1	0	0.0
BA2		- Assault/battery/no weapon/staff	327	403	317	226	236	-91	-27.8
BA3	II	- Assault/battery/firearm or other weapon/student	14	7	9	12	5	-9	-64.3
BA4		- Assault/battery/no weapon/student	1,354	1,428	1,350	1,180	930	-424	-31.3
BA5	II	Maliciously wounding without weapon	4	3	6	4	7	3	75.0
		Sexual Offenses							
SX3	I	- Sexual assault staff/rape	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
SX4	I	- Sexual assault student/rape	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
SX5	I	- Attempted sexual assault/staff/rape	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
SX6	I	- Attempted sexual assault/student/rape	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
SX8	II	- Aggravated sexual battery/ student less than age 15	1	2	1	1	0	-1	-100.0
WP7	I	Use of bomb or explosive device	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
		FIGHTS	**3,902**	**3,298**	**3,054**	**2,925**	**2,225**	**-1,677**	**-43.0**
FA1		Fighting/serious injury/mutual participation	292	166	194	227	0	-292	-100.0
FA2		Fighting/no or minor injury/mutual participation	3,610	3,132	2,860	2,698	2,225	-1,385	-38.4
		FIREARMS/DANGEROUS WEAPONS	**36**	**19**	**10**	**10**	**20**	**-16**	**-44.4**
WP1	III	Weapon handgun/pistol	1	2	2	4	5	4	-100.0
WP2	III	Weapon shotgun/rifle	1	1	1	0	0	-1	-38.4
WP8	III	Zip gun/starter gun/flare gun	21	5	0	2	1	-20	-38.4
WP4	III	Weapon, expels a projectile	11	11	3	3	2	-9	-81.8
WP6	III	Possession of explosive device/live ammunition	2	0	4	1	12	10	500.0

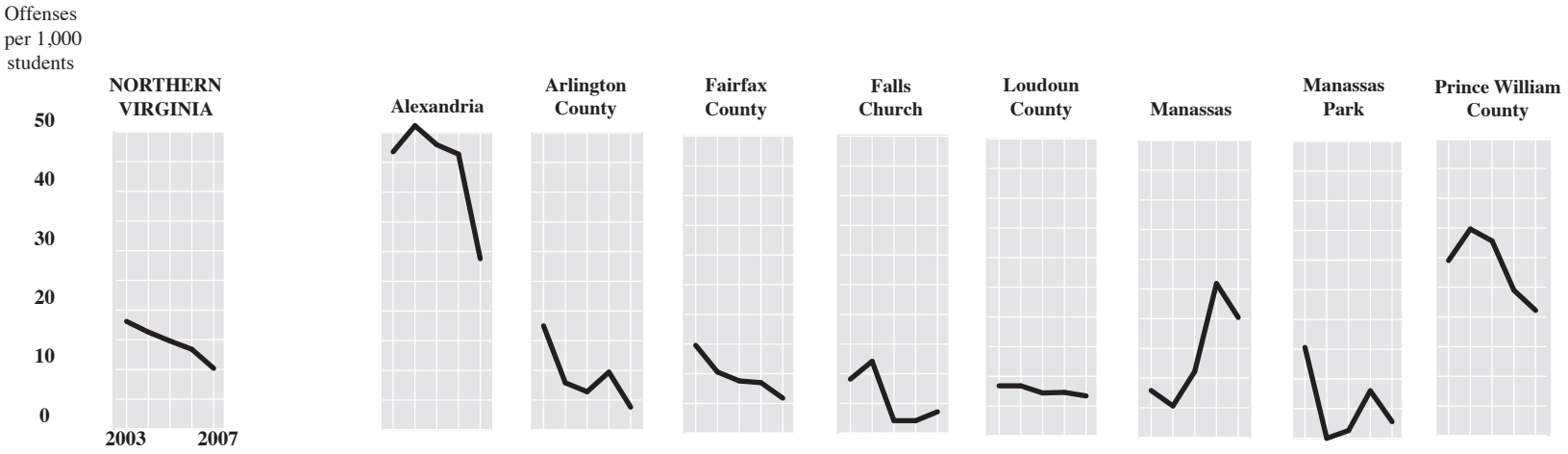
Source: Virginia Department of Education, *Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR),* at https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/. The SSIR data, which presently covers five school years, from 2003-'04 thru 2007-'08, is available for every public school in the State of Virginia. The SSIR site, additionally, contains information on the type of disciplinary action that resulted, ranging from no action taken to expulsion. The VDOE code listed above refers to the three letter coding scheme that the Deptpartment of Education assigns to this particular offense. The NCLB code refers to three levels of severity that are used by the state, under No Child Left Behind requirements, for determining whether an individual school should be designated as an unsafe school.



			2003-'04	2004-'05	2005-'06	2006-'07	2007-'08	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
		OTHER WEAPONS	**521**	**515**	**570**	**561**	**563**	**42**	**8.1**
WP0		Pneumatic weapon-bb, pellet, or paint ball gun	0	37	115	69	31	31	-
WP5		Knife to school/event	198	183	195	183	164	-34	-17.2
WP9		Other weapons	293	266	243	173	214	-79	-27.0
W1P		Possession of ammunition	0	0	0	0	7	7	-
W2P		Possession of chemical weapons	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
W3P		Toy/look-alike gun to school/event	0	0	0	49	67	67	-
WP3		Bringing toy gun to school	30	29	17	0	0	-30	-100.0
W8P		Razor blades, box cutter to school/school event	0	0	0	55	48	48	-
W9P		Fireworks/firecrackers/stink bombs at school/school event	0	0	0	26	30	30	-
WS1		Stun gun	0	0	0	5	0	0	-
WT1		Taser	0	0	0	1	2	2	-
		DRUG VIOLATIONS	**1,177**	**916**	**1,071**	**859**	**911**	**-266**	**-22.6**
AL1		Alcohol (use/poss/sale/dist)	386	302	353	299	303	-83	-21.5
DR1		Marijuana/sch i & ii/anabolic steroid (use/poss)	523	413	461	361	389	-134	-25.6
DR2		Use/possession of inhalants	79	47	55	40	40	-39	-49.4
DR3		Theft or attempted theft of prescription medication	6	3	6	5	7	1	16.7
DR4	III	Marijuana/sch i & ii/anabolic steroid (sale/dist)	73	64	71	41	79	6	8.2
DR5		Other drug (use/poss/dist)	110	87	125	113	93	-17	-15.5
		GANG ACTIVITY							
GA1		Gang activity	200	282	296	338	213		
		OTHER	**22,045**	**25,977**	**26,955**	**35,287**	**25,702**	**3,657**	**16.6**
AR1		Arson (actual/attempted/firecrackers)	64	50	53	26	22	-42	-65.6
A1T		Attendance violations	0	0	0	1,478	2,043	2,043	-
BB1		Bomb/chemical/terrorist threat/fase fire alarm	16	19	24	20	50	34	212.5
BR1		Burglary (actual/attempted)	23	26	30	18	25	2	8.7
		Bullying							
BU1		- Bullying	105	84	1,631	2,000	1,286	1,181	1124.8
HR1		- Harassment	0	0	0	21	1,151	1,151	-
		Disorderly Conduct							

			2003-'04	2004-'05	2005-'06	2006-'07	2007-'08	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
D1C		- Disrespect/walking away	0	0	0	3,168	2,350	2,350	-
D2C		- Defiance/refuses request	0	0	0	4,005	2,791	2,791	-
D3C		- Disruptive demonstrations	0	0	0	0	1,419	1,419	-
D4C		- Possession of obscene/disruptive literature	0	0	0	103	68	68	-
D5C		- Classroom/campus disruption	0	0	0	6,505	2,601	2,601	-
D6C		- Obscene/inappropriate language/gestures	0	0	0	2,242	2,523	2,523	-
D8C		- Minor insubordination	0	0	0	787	1,056	1,056	-
DC1		- Disorderly conduct	5,533	5,575	5,832	5,936	0	-5,533	-100.0
D4G		Over the counter med/use	0	0	0	20	9	9	-
D5G		Over the counter med/possession	0	0	0	35	30	30	-
D6G		Over the counter med sale/distribution	0	0	0	17	6	6	-
		Electronic Devices/Inappropriate Use							
C1M		- Beepers	0	0	0	1	0	0	-
C2M		- Cellular telephones	0	0	0	228	259	259	-
C3M		- Other electronic devices	0	0	0	70	69	69	-
EX1		Extortion (actual/attempted)	0	0	7	7	7	7	-
F1T		Altercation/confrontation/no injury	0	0	0	1,962	2,213	2,213	-
G1B		Gambling	0	0	0	9	1	1	-
H1Z		Hazing	0	0	0	10	3	3	-
RT1		Inciting a riot	0	0	10	18	4	4	-
KI1	III	Kidnapping	0	1	0	0	0	0	-
RO1	III	Robbery (actual/attempted)	6	3	7	6	11	5	83.3
		Sexual Offenses							
S1X		- Sexual touch - staff	0	0	0	8	0	0	-
S2X		- Sexual touch - student	0	0	0	146	0	0	-
SB1		- Sexual battery against staff	0	0	0	0	1	1	-
SB2		- Sexual battery against student	0	0	0	21	11	11	-
SX0		- Sexual harassment	203	235	243	209	271	68	33.5
SX1		- Offensive sexual touching/staff	3	1	7	0	9	6	200.0
SX2		- Offensive sexual touching/student	19	21	7	0	203	184	968.4
SX7		- Sexual offense w/out force/lewd behavior/indecent exposure	69	31	38	42	56	-13	-18.8
ST1		Stalking	0	0	6	1	2	2	-
		Technology Use Violations							
T1C		- Unauthorized use of technology or information	0	0	0	124	120	120	-
T2C		- Damage to computer/ hardware, software/files	0	0	0	4	6	6	-
T3C		- Violation of acceptable use policy	0	0	0	35	55	55	-
T4C		- Violation of internet policy	0	0	0	55	54	54	-
		Theft/No Force							
TH1		Theft/poss. Stolen property	1,249	1,196	1,406	1,378	1,037	-212	-17.0
TH2		Attempted theft or theft of motor vehicle	0	0	4	3	1	1	-
		Threats/Verbal/Physical							
TI1		- Threat/intimidation vs. Staff/physical/verbal	382	435	346	359	285	-97	-25.4
TI2		- Threat/intimidation vs. Student/physical/verbal	825	886	797	888	703	-122	-14.8
		Tobacco Offenses							
T4B		- Bringing tobacco paraphernalia to school/ school event	0	0	0	28	29	29	-
TB1		- Tobacco (use/poss/sale/dist)	1,004	849	729	600	574	-430	-42.8
TR1		Trespassing vandalism	156	154	123	97	49	-107	-68.6
VA1		Vandalism/graffiti	662	688	649	739	352	-310	-46.8
		Other Violations							
S1V		Inappropriate personal property	0	0	0	68	97	97	-
S2V		Misrepresentation	0	0	0	809	1,028	1,028	-
S3V		Other school conduct violation not otherwise included	0	0	0	981	762	762	-
OT1		Other	11,726	15,723	15,006	0	0	-11,726	-100.0
		STUDENT ENROLLMENT	309,414	315,889	319,418	324,991	332,940	23,526	7.6

Table 16
Physical Violence in the Schools
Trends in Northern Virginia Public School Divisions: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years



	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
Physical Violence Offenses (Number)									
2003	5,603	510	335	2,435	17	344	54	35	1,873
2004	5,141	563	148	1,693	23	371	36	0	2,307
2005	4,737	511	118	1,439	4	342	73	3	2,247
2006	4,348	479	179	1,390	4	369	168	20	1,739
2007	3,404	304	72	982	7	363	131	7	1,538
Rate: Per 1,000 students									
2003	18.1	46.8	17.5	14.8	9.1	8.4	7.9	15.3	29.5
2004	16.3	51.2	7.9	10.3	12.1	8.4	5.3	0.0	34.8
2005	14.8	48.0	6.4	8.8	2.1	7.2	11.1	1.3	32.8
2006	13.4	46.4	9.7	8.5	2.1	7.3	25.9	8.0	24.5
2007	10.2	28.8	3.8	5.9	3.6	6.7	20.2	2.8	21.1
Change: 2003 to 2007									
In number	-2,199	-206	-263	-1,453	-10	19	77	-28	-335
Percent	-39.2	-40.4	-78.5	-59.7	-	5.5	142.6	-	-17.9
Rate	-43.5	-38.5	-78.0	-60.0	-	-20.3	154.9	-	-28.7

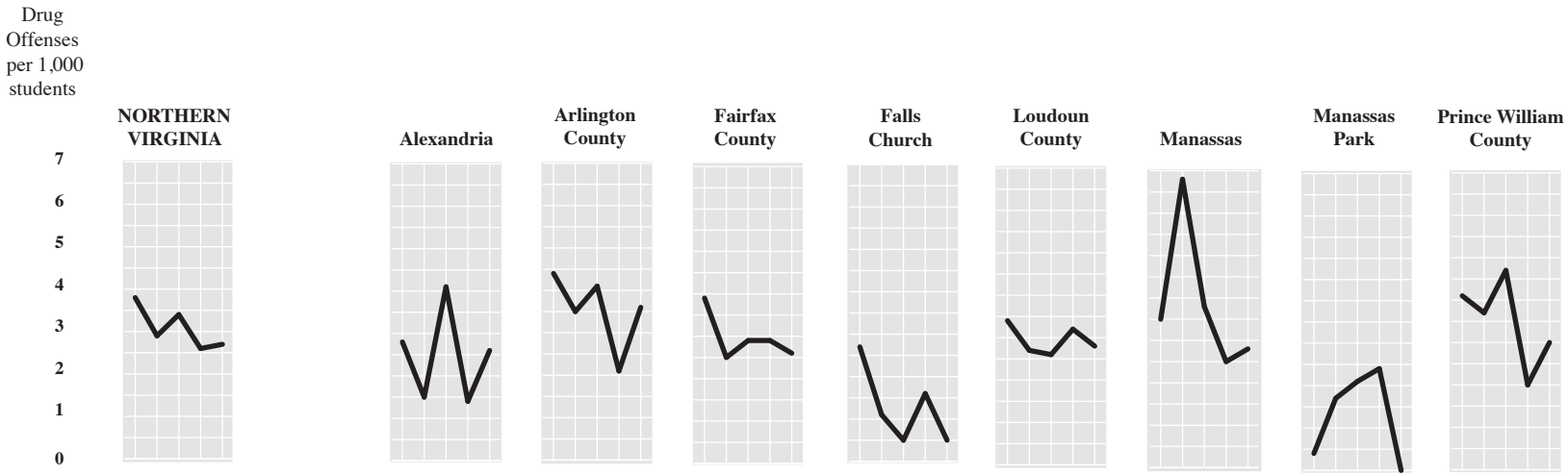
Note: Statistics presented in this table represent a compilation of two categories of physical violence incidents reported on the Virginia School Report Card: "serious incidents" which include homicide, assault and battery, malicious wounding, forcible sexual assault, aggravated sexual battery, and the use of a bomb or explosive device; and "fights" which consist of major and minor occurrances, based on the degree of injury inflicted.

Table 17
Physical Violence Trends — By Specific Type of Offense and Grade Level

A. BY TYPE OF OFFENSE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change ('03 to '07)
	— Offense Rate per 1,000 Students —					
SERIOUS INCIDENTS	5.5	5.8	5.3	4.4	3.5	-35.6
Homicide	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Assault and Battery						
- Assault/battery/firearm or other weapon/staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-7.1
- Assault/battery/no weapon/staff	1.1	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.7	-32.9
- Assault/battery/firearm or other weapon/student	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-66.8
- Assault/battery/no weapon/student	4.4	4.5	4.2	3.6	2.8	-36.2
Maliciously wounding without weapon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	62.6
Sexual Offenses						
- Sexual assault staff/rape	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
- Sexual assault student/rape	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
- Attempted sexual assault/staff/rape	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
- Attempted sexual assault/student/rape	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
- Aggr. sexual battery/ student LT age 15	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100.0
Use of bomb or explosive device	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
FIGHTS	12.6	10.4	9.6	9.0	6.7	-47.0
Fighting/serious injury/mutual participation	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.0	-100.0
Fighting/no or minor injury/mutual participation	11.7	9.9	9.0	8.3	6.7	-42.7
All Physical Violence Offenses	18.1	16.3	14.8	13.4	10.2	-43.5

B. BY GRADE LEVEL	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	5-Yr. Total ('03 to '07)
NUMBER						
High School	2,076	1,861	1,830	1,539	1,297	8,603
Middle	1,984	1,908	1,724	1,675	1,263	8,554
Elementary	1,276	1,097	994	1,042	768	5,177
Alt/Spec. Educ./Other	267	275	189	92	76	899
Total Offenses	5,603	5,141	4,737	4,348	3,404	23,233
PERCENT						
High School	37	36	39	35	38	37
Middle	35	37	36	39	37	37
Elementary	23	21	21	24	23	22
Alt/Spec. Educ./Other	5	5	4	2	2	4
OFFENSE RATE (per 1,000 students)						
High School	21.7	18.8	18.0	14.8	12.2	17.0
Middle	35.9	34.0	31.1	30.2	22.4	30.7
Elementary	8.2	6.9	6.2	6.4	4.6	6.4
Alt/Spec. Educ./Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 18
Illegal Drugs in the Schools
Trends in Northern Virginia Public School Divisions: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years



	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
Drug Offenses (Number)									
2003	1,177	30	85	634	5	140	24	1	258
2004	916	16	65	418	2	120	46	4	245
2005	1,071	44	75	473	1	124	25	5	324
2006	859	14	38	478	3	162	16	6	142
2007	911	27	68	428	1	150	18	0	219
Rate: Per 1,000 students									
2003	3.8	2.8	4.4	3.9	2.7	3.4	3.5	0.4	4.1
2004	2.9	1.5	3.5	2.5	1.1	2.7	6.8	1.7	3.7
2005	3.4	4.1	4.1	2.9	0.5	2.6	3.8	2.1	4.7
2006	2.6	1.4	2.1	2.9	1.6	3.2	2.5	2.4	2.0
2007	2.7	2.6	3.6	2.6	0.5	2.8	2.8	0.0	3.0
Change: 2003 to 2007									
In number	-266	-3	-17	-206	-4	10	-6	-1	-39
Percent	-22.6	-10.0	-20.0	-32.5	-80.0	7.1	-25.0	-100.0	-15.1
Rate	-28.1	-7.2	-18.2	-33.1	-80.6	-19.1	-21.2	-100.0	-26.3

Statistics presented in this table represent a compilation of six drug possession/use/distribution categories. See table on next page for more detailed listing.

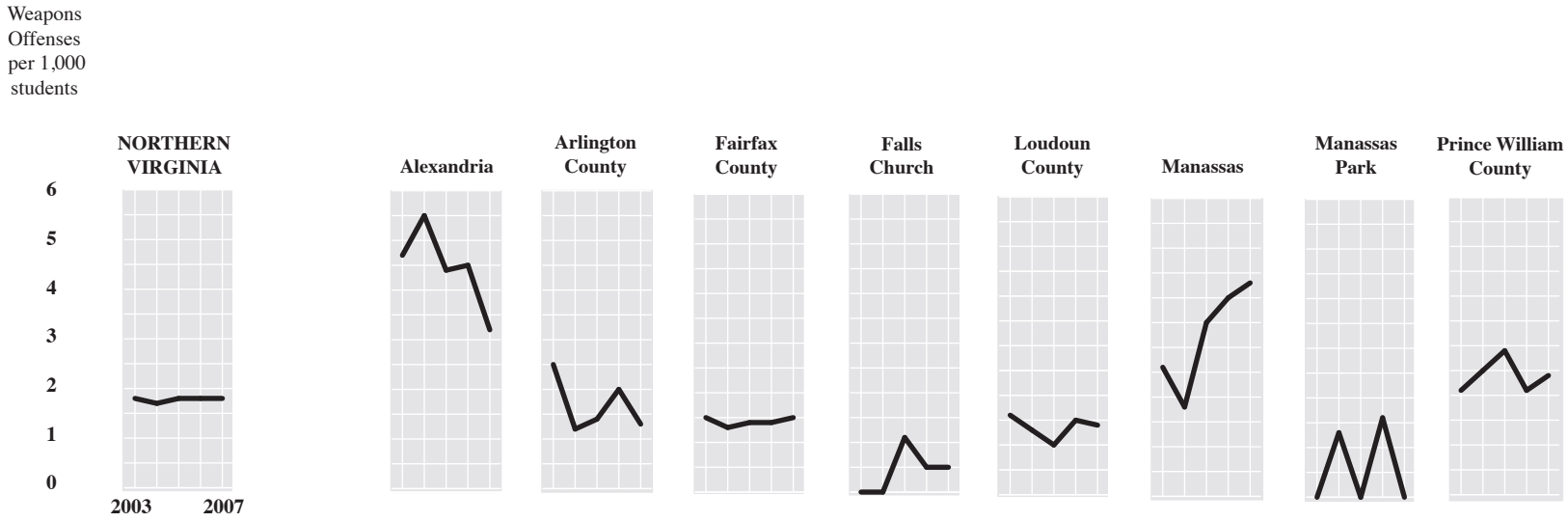
Table 19
Illegal Drug Trends — By Specific Type of Offense and Grade Level

A. BY TYPE OF OFFENSE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change ('03 to '07)
	— Offense Rate per 1,000 Students —					
Alcohol (use/poss/sale/dist)	1.2	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.9	-27.0
Marijuana/Sch I & II/Anabolic steroid (use/poss)	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.2	-30.9
Use/possession of inhalants	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	-52.9
Theft/attempted theft prescription medication	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.4
Marijuana/Sch I & II/anabolic steroid (sale/dist)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6
Other drug (use/poss/dist)	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.0
All Illegal Drug Offenses	3.8	2.9	3.4	2.6	2.7	-28.1

B. BY GRADE LEVEL

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total ('03 to '07)
NUMBER						
High School	930	712	826	704	720	3,892
Middle	183	154	177	97	106	717
Elementary	26	10	11	19	20	86
Alt/Special Educ./Other	38	40	57	39	65	239
Total Offenses	1,177	916	1,071	859	911	4,934
PERCENT						
High School	79	78	77	82	79	79
Middle	16	17	17	11	12	15
Elementary	2	1	1	2	2	2
Alt/Special Educ./Other	3	4	5	5	7	5
OFFENSE RATE (per 1,000 students)						
High School	9.7	7.2	8.1	6.8	6.8	7.7
Middle	3.3	2.7	3.2	1.7	1.9	2.6
Elementary	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Alt/Special Educ./Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 20
Weapons in the Schools
Trends in Northern Virginia Public School Divisions: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years



	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
Weapon Offenses (Number)									
2003	557	51	48	245	0	65	18	0	130
2004	534	60	23	212	0	58	12	3	166
2005	580	47	25	235	2	48	23	0	200
2006	571	46	36	236	1	74	26	4	148
2007	583	34	24	246	1	77	28	0	173
Rate: Per 1,000 students									
2003	1.8	4.7	2.5	1.5	0.0	1.6	2.6	0.0	2.1
2004	1.7	5.5	1.2	1.3	0.0	1.3	1.8	1.3	2.5
2005	1.8	4.4	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.0	3.5	0.0	2.9
2006	1.8	4.5	2.0	1.4	0.5	1.5	4.0	1.6	2.1
2007	1.8	3.2	1.3	1.5	0.5	1.4	4.3	0.0	2.4
Change: 2003 to 2007									
In number	26	-17	-24	1	1	12	10	0	43
Percent	4.7	-33.3	-50.0	0.4	-	18.5	55.6	-	33.1
Rate	-2.7	-31.2	-48.9	-0.5	-	-10.6	63.5	-	15.6

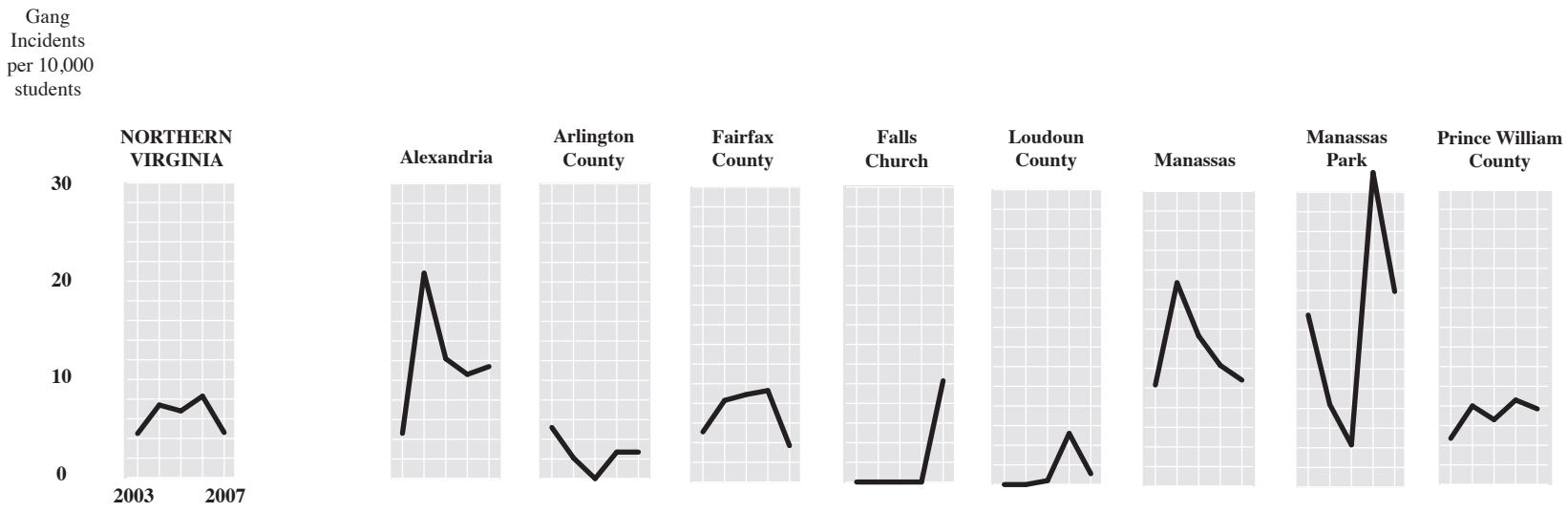
Note: Statistics presented in this table represent a compilation of seven crime categories: posession of firearms, shotguns and rifles, other firearms, weapons that expel a projectile, knives, explosive devices and an "other" weapons designation.

Table 21
Weapons Trends — By Specific Type of Offense and Grade Level

A. BY TYPE OF OFFENSE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change ('03 to '07)
	— Offense Rate per 1,000 Students —					
FIREARMS/DANGEROUS WEAPONS	1.2	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.6	-48.4
Weapon handgun/pistol	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	364.7
Weapon shotgun/rifle	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100.0
Zip gun/starter gun/flare gun	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	-95.6
Weapon, expels a projectile	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	-83.1
Possession of explosive device/live ammunition	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.4	457.6
OTHER WEAPONS	16.8	16.3	17.8	17.3	16.9	0.4
Pneumatic weapon-bb, pellet, or paint ball gun	0.0	1.2	3.6	2.1	0.9	-
Knife to school/event	6.4	5.8	6.1	5.6	4.9	-23.0
Other weapons	9.5	8.4	7.6	5.3	6.4	-32.1
Possession of ammunition	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	-
Possession of chemical weapons	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-
Toy/look-alike gun to school/event	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	2.0	-
Bringing toy gun to school	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	-100.0
Razor blades, box cutter to school/school event	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.4	-
Fireworks/firecrackers/stink bombs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.9	-
Stun gun	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	-
Taser	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	-
All Weapon Offenses	18.0	16.9	18.2	17.6	17.5	-2.7

B. BY GRADE LEVEL	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	5-Yr. Total ('03 to '07)
NUMBER						
High School	273	227	260	258	239	1,257
Middle	160	180	208	164	175	887
Elementary	102	103	101	129	154	589
Alt/Special Educ./Other	22	24	11	20	15	92
Total Offenses	557	534	580	571	583	2,825
PERCENT						
High School	49	43	45	45	41	44
Middle	29	34	36	29	30	31
Elementary	18	19	17	23	26	21
Alt/Special Educ./Other	4	4	2	4	3	3
OFFENSE RATE *(per 1,000 students)*						
High School	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.5
Middle	2.9	3.2	3.7	3.0	3.1	3.2
Elementary	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.7
Alt/Special Educ./Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.1

Table 22
Gang Activity in the Schools
Trends in Northern Virginia Public School Divisions: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years



	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
Gang Incidents (Reported Number)									
2003	140	5	10	84	0	0	7	4	30
2004	233	23	4	137	0	0	14	2	53
2005	216	13	0	145	0	2	10	1	45
2006	271	11	5	152	0	26	8	8	61
2007	154	12	5	61	2	6	7	5	56
Individual Student Offenders (Number)									
2003	164	7	17	77	0	0	7	4	52
2004	237	22	9	122	0	0	13	2	69
2005	258	15	1	146	0	6	10	1	79
2006	290	13	6	131	0	25	14	8	93
2007	203	11	5	74	1	11	13	6	82
Gang Incident RATE: Per 10,000 students									
2003	4.5	4.6	5.2	5.1	0.0	0.0	10.3	17.5	4.7
2004	7.4	20.9	2.1	8.3	0.0	0.0	20.7	8.4	8.0
2005	6.8	12.2	0.0	8.9	0.0	0.4	15.3	4.3	6.6
2006	8.3	10.6	2.7	9.3	0.0	5.2	12.3	32.0	8.6
2007	4.6	11.4	2.7	3.7	10.3	1.1	10.8	19.9	7.7

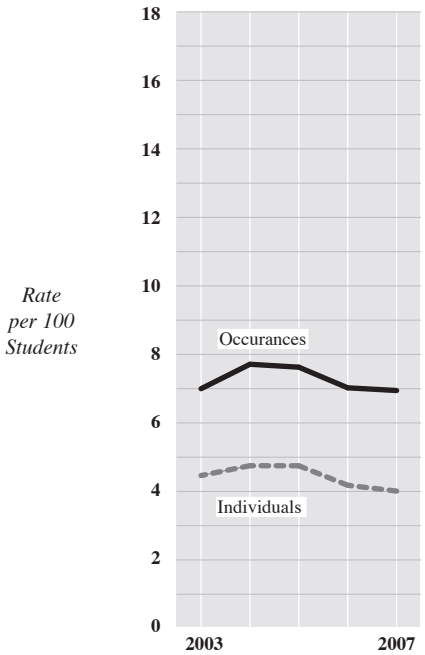
Note: Statistics presented in this table represent a compilation of seven crime categories: posession of firearms, shotguns and rifles, other firearms, weapons that expel a projectile, knives, explosive devices and an "other" weapons designation.

Table 23
Gang Activity Trends — By Grade Level

B. BY GRADE LEVEL	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	5-Yr. Total ('03 to '07)
NUMBER						
High School	128	202	184	189	118	821
Middle	53	54	66	100	74	347
Elementary	-	2	1	3	9	15
Alt/Spec. Educ./Other	19	24	45	46	12	146
Total Offenses	200	282	296	338	213	1,329
PERCENT						
High School	64.0	71.6	62.2	55.9	55.4	61.8
Middle	26.5	19.1	22.3	29.6	34.7	26.1
Elementary	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.9	4.2	1.1
Alt/Spec. Educ./Other	9.5	8.5	15.2	13.6	5.6	11.0
OFFENSE RATE (per 1,000 students)						
High School	1.3	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.1	1.6
Middle	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.8	1.3	1.2
Elementary	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Alt/Spec. Educ./Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ALL Public Schools	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.6	0.8

Table 24
Expulsions and Suspensions
Regional Trends: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years

All Northern Virginia Public Schools



Source: Virginia Department of Education, *Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR)*, at https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/

NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
Expulsions	173	174	115	213	121	-52	-30.1
Modified Expulsions	605	498	587	438	531	-74	-12.2
Long-Term Suspensions	877	1,104	1,323	962	922	45	5.1
Short-Term Suspensions	19,999	22,587	22,338	21,216	21,552	1,553	7.8
TOTAL	21,654	24,363	24,363	22,829	23,126	1,472	6.8

Rate (per 100 students)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
Expulsions	0.056	0.055	0.036	0.066	0.036	-0.020	-35.0
Modified Expulsions	0.20	0.16	0.18	0.13	0.16	-0.036	-18.4
Long-Term Suspensions	0.28	0.35	0.41	0.30	0.28	-0.007	-2.3
Short-Term Suspensions	6.46	7.15	6.99	6.53	6.47	0.010	0.2
TOTAL	7.00	7.71	7.63	7.02	6.95	-0.052	-0.7

NUMBER OF UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS (expelled or suspended)

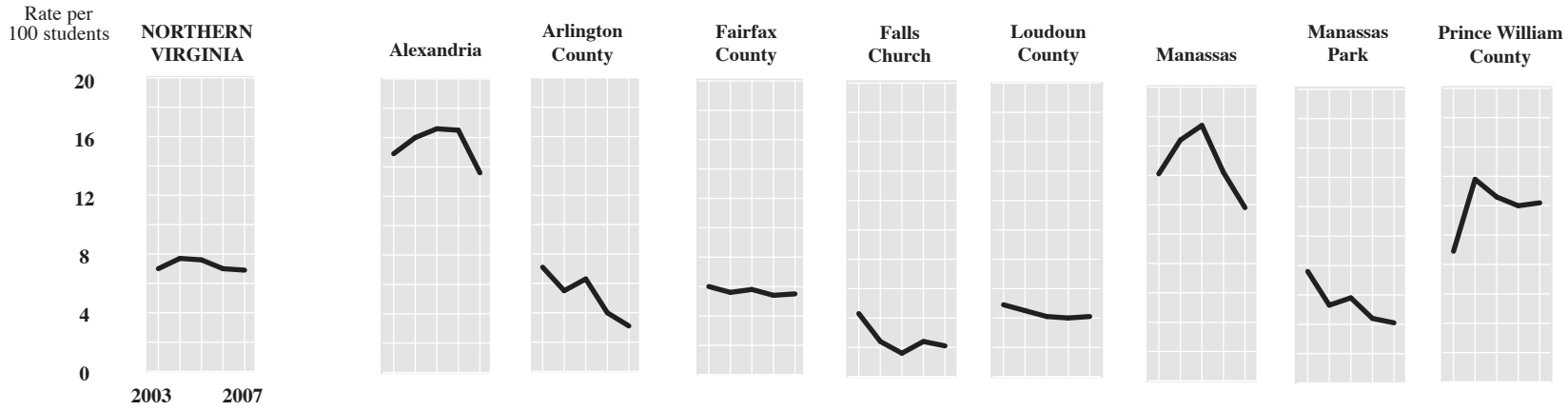
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
Expulsions	136	130	97	145	85	-51	-37.5
Modified Expulsions	530	421	485	378	438	-92	-17.4
Long-Term Suspensions	810	1029	1152	850	730	-80	-9.9
Short-Term Suspensions	12,335	13,431	13,436	12,212	12,100	-235	-1.9
TOTAL	13,811	15,011	15,170	13,585	13,353	-458	-3.3

Rate (per 100 students)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change '03-'07	Percent Change
Expulsions	0.044	0.041	0.030	0.045	0.026	-0.018	-41.9
Modified Expulsions	0.17	0.13	0.15	0.12	0.13	-0.040	-23.2
Long-Term Suspensions	0.26	0.33	0.36	0.26	0.22	-0.043	-16.2
Short-Term Suspensions	3.99	4.25	4.21	3.76	3.63	-0.352	-8.8
TOTAL	4.46	4.75	4.75	4.18	4.01	-0.453	-10.1

Table 25
Expulsions and Suspensions
Trends in Northern Virginia Public Schools Divisions: 2003-'04 through 2007-'08 School Years

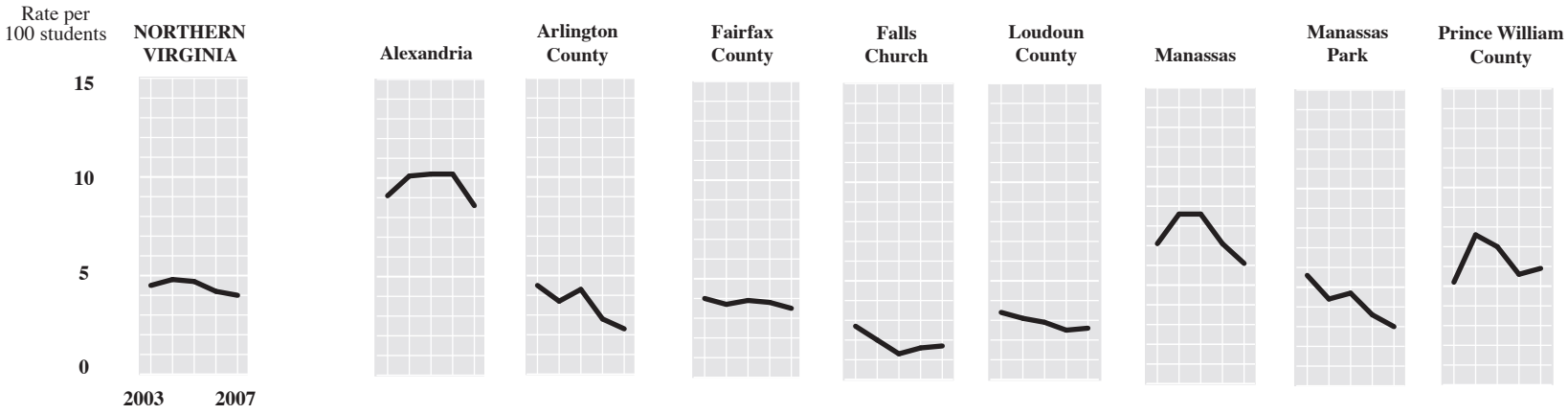
A. BY NUMBER OF OCCURENCES



	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
Occurrences (Number)									
2003-04	21,654	1,619	1,366	9,848	80	1,998	956	175	5,612
2004-05	24,363	1,754	1,040	9,145	46	1,983	1,112	127	9,156
2005-06	24,363	1,765	1,169	9,571	29	1,957	1,140	136	8,596
2006-07	22,829	1,707	731	8,806	46	2,011	925	111	8,492
2007-08	23,126	1,434	580	9,047	40	2,224	763	104	8,934
Rate: Per 100 students									
2003-04	7.0	14.9	7.1	6.0	4.3	4.9	14.1	7.6	8.9
2004-05	7.7	16.0	5.5	5.6	2.4	4.5	16.4	5.3	13.8
2005-06	7.6	16.6	6.3	5.8	1.6	4.1	17.4	5.8	12.6
2006-07	7.0	16.5	4.0	5.4	2.4	4.0	14.2	4.4	12.0
2007-08	6.9	13.6	3.1	5.5	2.1	4.1	11.8	4.1	12.2
Change: 2003 to 2005									
In Number	1,472	-185	-786	-801	-40	226	-193	-71	3,322
Percent	6.8	-11.4	-57.5	-8.1	-50.0	11.3	-20.2	-40.6	59.2
In Rate	-0.1	-1.3	-4.0	-0.5	-2.2	-0.8	-2.3	-3.5	3.4

Note: Figures include all expulsion and suspensions, including multiple suspensions by the same student in a given year.

B. BY NUMBER OF UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS DISCIPLINED



	NORTHERN VIRGINIA	Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church	Loudoun County	Manassas	Manassas Park	Prince William County
Individuals (Number)									
2003-04	13,811	991	853	6,595	50	1,387	485	128	3,322
2004-05	15,011	1,108	696	6,075	38	1,342	581	105	5,066
2005-06	15,170	1,088	788	6,446	25	1,365	563	109	4,786
2006-07	13,585	1,054	517	6,185	30	1,283	463	90	3,963
2007-08	13,353	912	431	5,830	33	1,391	398	75	4,283
Rate: Per 100 students									
2003-04	4.5	9.1	4.5	4.0	2.7	3.4	7.1	5.6	5.2
2004-05	4.8	10.1	3.7	3.7	2.0	3.1	8.6	4.4	7.6
2005-06	4.7	10.2	4.3	3.9	1.3	2.9	8.6	4.7	7.0
2006-07	4.2	10.2	2.8	3.8	1.6	2.5	7.1	3.6	5.6
2007-08	4.0	8.6	2.3	3.5	1.7	2.6	6.1	3.0	5.9
Change: 2003 to 2005									
In Number	-458	-79	-422	-765	-17	4	-87	-53	961
Percent	-3.3	-8.0	-49.5	-11.6	-34.0	0.3	-17.9	-41.4	28.9
In Rate	-0.5	-0.5	-2.2	-0.5	-1.0	-0.8	-1.0	-2.6	0.6

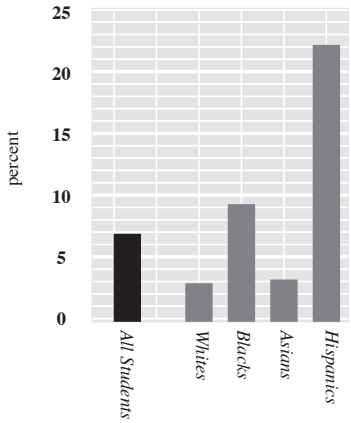
Table 26
Expulsions — By Type of School

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total ('03 to '07)
A. **OCCURENCES**							
NUMBER							
High School		622	546	577	539	530	2,814
Middle		128	117	119	87	100	551
Elementary		16	4	5	18	15	58
Alt/Special Educ./Other		12	5	1	7	7	32
	Total	778	672	702	651	652	3,455
PERCENT							
High School		79.9	81.3	82.2	82.8	81.3	81.4
Middle		16.5	17.4	17.0	13.4	15.3	15.9
Elementary		2.1	0.6	0.7	2.8	2.3	1.7
Alt/Special Educ./Other		1.5	0.7	0.1	1.1	1.1	0.9
OFFENSE RATE (*per 1,000 students)*							
High School		0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6
Middle		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Elementary		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Alt/Special Educ./Other		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ALL No. Va. Public Schools		0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
B. **UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS DISCIPLINED**							
NUMBER							
High School		528	438	475	426	424	2,291
Middle		113	104	101	75	78	471
Elementary		14	4	5	16	14	53
Alt/Special Educ./Other		11	5	1	6	7	30
	Total	666	551	582	523	523	2,845
PERCENT							
High School		79.3	79.5	81.6	81.5	81.1	80.5
Middle		17.0	18.9	17.4	14.3	14.9	16.6
Elementary		2.1	0.7	0.9	3.1	2.7	1.9
Alt/Special Educ./Other		1.7	0.9	0.2	1.1	1.3	1.1
OFFENSE RATE (*per 1,000 students)*							
High School		0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5
Middle		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Elementary		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Alt/Special Educ./Other		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ALL No. Va. Public Schools		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

Table 27
Expulsions and Suspensions
By Type of School

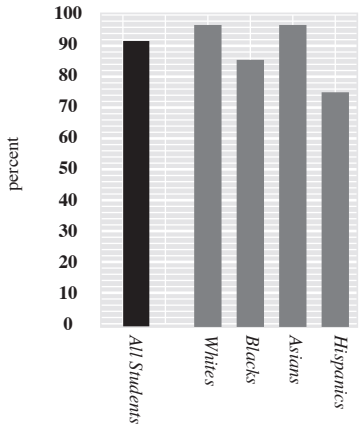
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total ('03 to '07)
A. **OCCURENCES**						
NUMBER						
High School	11,859	13,449	13,617	11,869	12,556	63,350
Middle	6,769	8,047	7,712	7,405	7,258	37,191
Elementary	2,879	2,817	2,901	3,443	3,241	15,281
Alt/Special Educ./Other	175	107	139	117	96	634
Total	21,682	24,420	24,369	22,834	23,151	116,456
PERCENT						
High School	54.7	55.1	55.9	52.0	54.2	54.4
Middle	31.2	33.0	31.6	32.4	31.4	31.9
Elementary	13.3	11.5	11.9	15.1	14.0	13.1
Alt/Special Educ./Other	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5
OFFENSE RATE_ (*per 1,000 students)*						
(*per 1,000 students)*						
High School	12.4	13.6	13.4	11.4	11.9	125.0
Middle	12.3	14.3	13.9	13.4	12.8	133.4
Elementary	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.9	18.9
Alt/Special Educ./Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ALL No. Va. Public Schools	7.0	7.7	7.6	7.0	7.0	72.7
B. **UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS**						
NUMBER						
High School	7,711	8,207	8,448	7,270	7,206	38,842
Middle	4,110	4,837	4,629	4,051	4,016	21,643
Elementary	1,876	1,917	1,994	2,175	2,080	10,042
Alt/Special Educ./Other	142	91	104	93	81	511
Total	13,839	15,052	15,175	13,589	13,383	71,038
PERCENT						
High School	55.7	54.5	55.7	53.5	53.8	54.7
Middle	29.7	32.1	30.5	29.8	30.0	30.5
Elementary	13.6	12.7	13.1	16.0	15.5	14.1
Alt/Special Educ./Other	1.0	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7
OFFENSE RATE_ (*per 1,000 students)*						
Offense Rate per 1,000 students						
High School	8.0	8.3	8.3	7.0	6.8	76.7
Middle	7.4	8.6	8.3	7.3	7.1	77.6
Elementary	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	12.4
Alt/Special Educ./Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 28
High School Dropout and Completion Rates
Class of 2008



DROPOUT RATES

	Percent				
	All Students	**Whites**	**Blacks**	**Asians**	**Hispanics**
Alexandria City	11.1	5.3	9.0	5.4	24.8
Arlington County	9.4	1.9	6.5	10.8	24.3
Fairfax County	5.6	2.0	9.2	2.8	22.1
Falls Church City	-	-	<	-	-
Loudoun County	3.3	1.8	4.7	1.8	12.5
Manassas City	11.8	3.0	14.8	9.1	33.3
Manassas Park City	6.4	4.5	-	<	13.6
Prince William County	10.1	5.7	10.0	3.6	24.2
Northern Virginia	6.6	2.6	9.0	2.9	21.9
State of Virginia	8.7	6.3	12.6	3.6	19.9



COMPLETION RATES

	All Students	**Whites**	**Blacks**	**Asians**	**Hispanics**
Alexandria City	81.6	90.9	80.3	92.9	68.0
Arlington County	84.1	95.4	79.5	87.5	65.0
Fairfax County	92.7	96.9	85.4	96.4	75.7
Falls Church City	97.6	97.4	<	96.4	100.0
Loudoun County	95.3	97.0	91.3	97.0	86.8
Manassas City	84.0	95.0	75.3	90.9	60.5
Manassas Park City	87.9	89.4	96.0	<	79.5
Prince William County	85.8	91.6	83.9	93.6	70.1
Northern Virginia	90.7	95.7	84.4	95.7	73.9
State of Virginia	86.4	90.5	78.1	94.5	75.2