

51% of school violence incidents flared in just 10 states last year. Is your state one of them?

Fifty-one percent of all incidents of violence and threats against schools took place in just 10 states during the 2017-18 school year, a report released Monday finds.

California, Florida, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, North Carolina and Virginia, which are ranked the top 10 "states of concern," accounted for 1,851 threats and episodes of violence out of 3,654 nationwide, according to the Educator's School Safety Network.

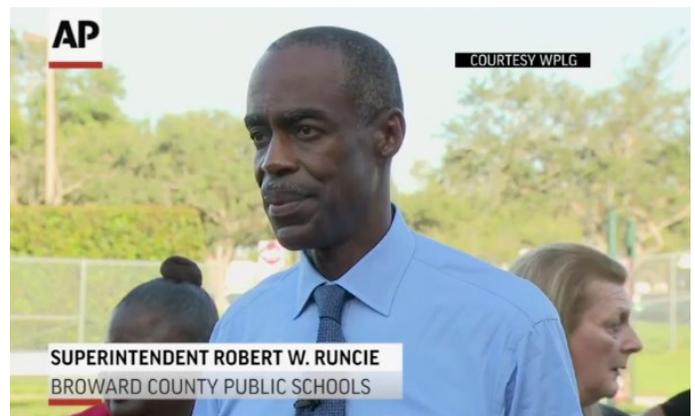
Though this year's states of concern are located around the country and have varying gun-control policies, a few factors link them together, said Amy Klinger, director of programs at the ESSN, an education-based non-profit focusing on violence prevention in schools.

States with hundreds of school districts may have problems coordinating responses to violence, Klinger said, pointing to Ohio's 613 school districts. Ohio schools had 170 threats and 14 incidents of violence the past school year.

"It's very difficult to make sweeping changes when you have 613 different government bodies making decisions," said Klinger, who co-authored the report.

Schools also might have a plan in place for an active shooter, but they rarely fund preventative measures such as direct training for teachers and administrators to address potential threats, Klinger said.

A rampage at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in February, in which 17 died, put a renewed focus on violence in the classroom and security and galvanized a student-run movement on gun control. President Donald Trump also ignited a firestorm



Broward Schools superintendent Robert Runcie called the first day of school "Bittersweet" following the deadly shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018. (Aug 15) AP.

by calling for teachers to be armed, and the debate continues to rage over how to stop the bloodshed.

Adam Winkler, a professor at the UCLA School of Law and a gun-control policy expert, said certain states could see more threats or violence because of outside influences, such as access to guns in a community or the presence of gangs in urban areas.

"There's a whole bunch of different factors that you can expect to lead to hotspots and gun violence on campus," Winkler said.

The study also ranks states by how many threats against schools and violent incidents occurred per million residents, showing whether states have a proportionate number of threats and incidents based on their size. In this category, the top states were Michigan, Ohio, Alabama, Kentucky, Washington, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, Colorado and Idaho during the 2017-18 school year.

Continued from page 1

Nine of these 11 states saw upticks in their ranking from the 2016-17 school year to the 2017-18 school year. Michigan was in 10th place last year, but it is in first place this year. Mississippi and Kentucky were in 44th place and 39th place last year, and they are in sixth place and fourth place this year.

Klinger said these increases are important because, in less populated states, even a few threats of school violence can have educators on edge.

"Some states went from basically last to being in the top 10," Klinger said. "When you have a couple of significant incidents, it really can change the dynamic of safety in your state."

In March, the House passed the STOP School Violence Act to give more than \$1 billion to schools and local governments over the next decade for violence prevention.

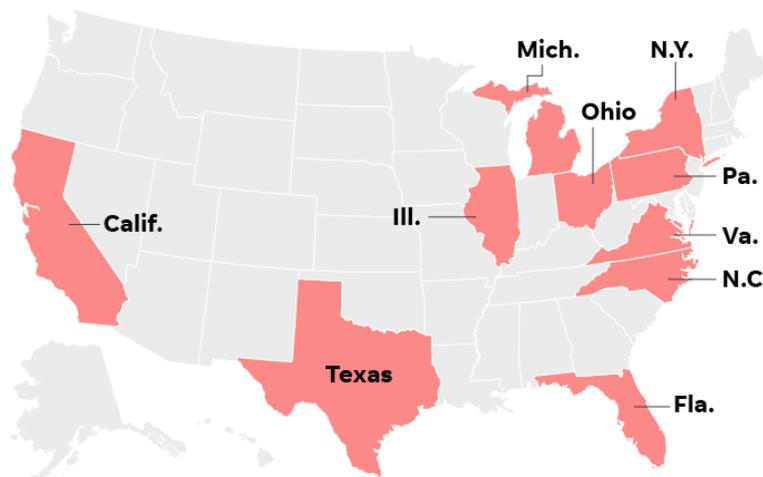
But threats and violence that flared in the 2017-18 school year should be a warning to educators around the country, Klinger said.

"We have seen that there are threats and incidents of violence that occur in literally every state," she said. "So, it's really incumbent upon every school to take a look at what they need to do."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/08/20/10-states-51-percent-school-violence-threats-2018/1031329002/>

10 worst states for school violence

These are the states with the most number of threats and incidents during the 2017-18 school year.



SOURCE Educator's School Safety Network