

## *...that students learn more when they feel physically and emotionally safe?*



Students who feel physically or emotionally unsafe have a hard time concentrating on their school work, memorizing information, and learning new things. They also have difficulties making friends and enjoying positive social interactions.

**Fortunately**, despite a few exceptional cases, schools are safer places than they were in the past. An annual survey conducted by the National Center on Education Statistics and the Department of Justice over the past 20 years shows that school crime has declined a lot. In 1992, 181 out of 1000 students reported that they were victimized at school. In 2015, only 33 out of 1000 students reported that they were victimized at school. There are also fewer assaults and robberies and less drug use on school grounds.

**Unfortunately**, bullying, harassment, or inappropriate sexual behavior cause anxiety and stress and make too many students feel emotionally unsafe.

Schools want students to be able to concentrate on their school work rather than worry about their emotional and physical safety. Thus, schools are taking action to reduce bullying, harassment, and inappropriate student behaviors that can threaten someone's emotional safety. They are also taking action to reduce physical aggression and to keep students physically safe

The goal of Project **SOARS** (Student Ownership, Accountability and Responsibility for school Safety) is to give students a tool to make their voice heard if they feel that their own or someone else's physical or emotional safety is threatened. It also encourages them to participate in re-building relationships that were damaged by bullying or harassment so that they can re-focus their energy on academic learning.



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