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Fall 2021 School Safety Trends

January 2022

Overview

Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, district administrators and safety leaders have been concerned about how students would cope with returning to the classroom. Quarantine time at home, less structure, limited social interaction, and economic and family stresses were expected to impact student behavior and lead to significant challenges in the school learning environment.

We have certainly seen a rise in school safety incidents. The daily news headlines remind us that our society is experiencing increased violent behavior, and that trend is playing out in our school communities.

> *Back to school has brought guns, fighting and acting out[1]*
> *"School violence has risen to levels that we haven't seen quite frankly. I don't think it took a genius to see this coming." Mo Canady, Executive Director of the National Association of School Resource Officers.*

While the news focuses on the extreme safety incidents in schools – such as active shooters, neighborhood threats, and others – our experience providing incident response for schools tells us that everyday safety incidents – such as medical and behavior situations - are rising dramatically.

In this Fall 2021 School Safety Trends Report, we provide a comparison of several trends over three periods: Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and Fall 2021. The highlights include:

1. Student behavior incidents increased 250%
2. Medical incidents increased 130%
3. Safety incidents per school increased 150%
4. Number of staff requesting help increased 100%
5. Staff called for help 22% more often

We hope this data can help quantify the impact these incidents are having on the learning environment. We know that teacher retention is critical for districts of all sizes.

What does this mean for educators and school districts?

For some time, educators have appropriately focused on increasing safety and security in their schools. "*In my 12 years as an educator, my first priority was always to keep students and staff safe. If we didn't get them home safely at the end of the day – nothing else mattered.*" Dr. Roderick "Rocky" Sams, Chief Development Officer, CENTEGIX and a former teacher and principal.

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Now more than ever, we see that material investments need to continue in the prevention, preparation, and response layers of safety and security programs.

Our CrisisAlert data confirms that students struggle with returning to the classroom and the broader implications of the COVID pandemic. We see this in the dramatic increase in everyday safety events – especially behavioral and medical emergencies.

The trend in the data suggests that these elevated levels of everyday incidents will continue, and teacher retention rates may suffer as a correlation. The stress of classroom management that comes with an uptick in behavior incidents and violent acts are two reasons teachers are leaving the classroom. Teachers want to feel empowered to keep the learning environment safe with an effective method to get help quickly, easily, and discreetly for any emergency or safety incident – anywhere on campus.[2]

Our innovative, award-winning CrisisAlert solution equips teachers and staff with the fastest and easiest way to call for help in emergencies from the everyday to the extreme. CrisisAlert is unique for its ability to deliver precise alert location, immediate audio and visual incident notifications (including lighted strobes, screen messages, and intercom integration) for campus-wide incidents, and 100% full campus coverage. With the simple push of a button on a wearable badge, an alert instantly reaches administrators and responders.

In user surveys,[3] staff indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the wearable CrisisAlert badge. Staff members who used their badge rated their experience as follows:

> ➢ How easy was it to use the badge?   4.93 out of 5
> ➢ Do you feel safer and supported as a staff member?   4.54 out of 5

Comments from users in these surveys indicate that the badge is the easiest solution to use to call for help in a crisis and that having the badge contributes to peace of mind so they can focus on teaching.

> *"It really made me feel safe in an emergency. I felt empowered to get the assistance I needed to ensure the safety of the students."*
>
> *"It's a sense of security to know I can push the button and get administration to the scene quickly. It's also a peace of mind to know if there was a serious situation (like an active assailant) we could get help immediately."*
>
> *"Our crisis team reacts within seconds. This alert system has provided me with the security of having reinforcements rapidly and effectively."*

CrisisAlert Usage at an All Time High

Our data on school safety originates from the CrisisAlert usage patterns of our education customers.

In the Fall 2021 semester, CrisisAlert delivered 25,000 alerts for our education customers. Of these, 10,000 were for Staff and Campus-Wide emergencies. Over 4,500 staff members initiated these alerts, on average 2.2 times each. In addition, 15,000 alerts were for drill or testing purposes.

Fall 2021 Alerts summary:
- 25,000 alerts delivered
- 10,000 Staff and Campus-Wide Alerts
- 98% of alerts for everyday emergencies

Staff alerts, used for every day emergencies such as medical and behavior incidents, continue to represent 98% of all alerts. Campus-wide emergencies such as weather incidents and lockdowns continue to represent a very small percent of CrisisAlert usage.
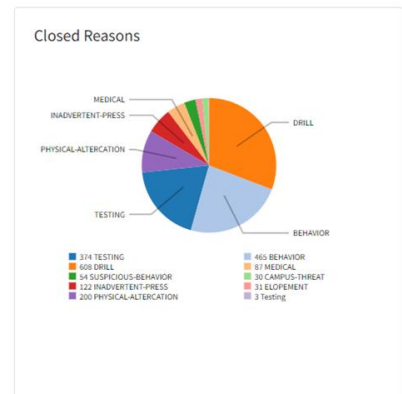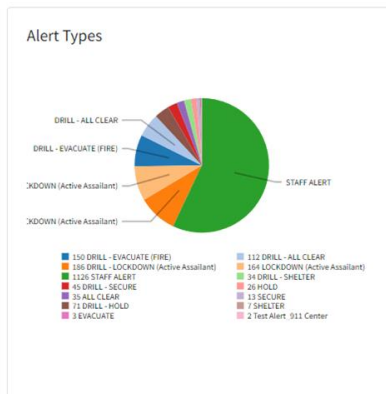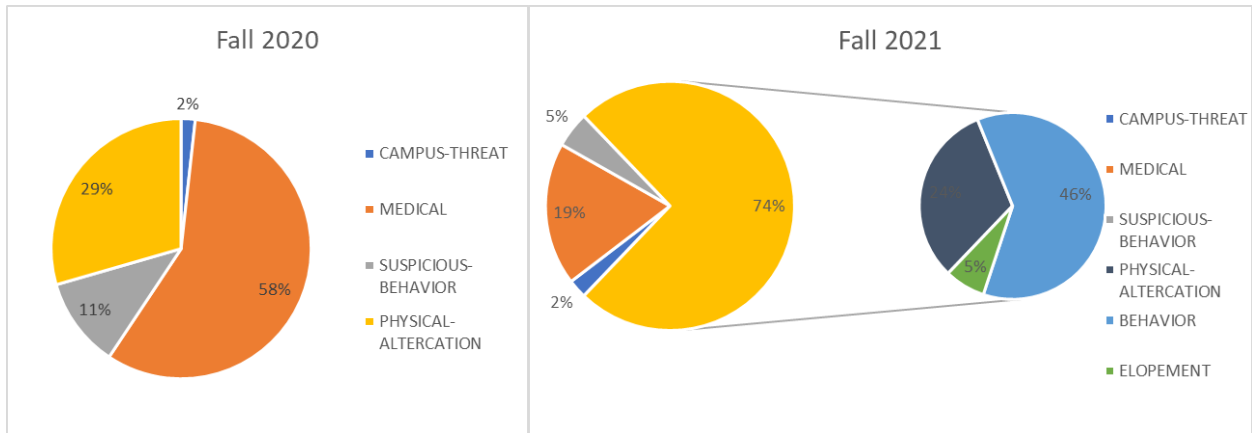
CrisisAlert customers have immediate and easy access to their district's data via the CrisisAlert Dashboard. This data is available on a school and district-wide basis and enables administration to make resource allocation decisions related to school safety. The CrisisAlert dashboard equips district administration with actionable data to understand how to best support their schools.

SAMPLE DATA on a CrisisAlert Dashboard:

Alerts Report for All District Sites

Alerts by Month

Month	Alerts
Aug-2021	390
Sep-2021	318
Oct-2021	447
Nov-2021	421
Dec-2021	398

Alert Types

- 150 DRILL - EVACUATE (FIRE)
- 186 DRILL - LOCKDOWN (Active Assailant)
- 1126 STAFF ALERT
- 45 DRILL - SECURE
- 35 ALL CLEAR
- 71 DRILL - HOLD
- 3 EVACUATE
- 112 DRILL - ALL CLEAR
- 164 LOCKDOWN (Active Assailant)
- 34 DRILL - SHELTER
- 26 HOLD
- 13 SECURE
- 7 SHELTER
- 2 Test Alert :911 Center

Closed Reasons

- 374 TESTING
- 608 DRILL
- 54 SUSPICIOUS-BEHAVIOR
- 122 INADVERTENT-PRESS
- 200 PHYSICAL-ALTERCATION
- 465 BEHAVIOR
- 87 MEDICAL
- 30 CAMPUS-THREAT
- 31 ELOPEMENT
- 3 Testing

1. Student behavior incidents increased by 250%.

In the CrisisAlert platform, school administration indicates a Close Reason for each alert that provides data about the types of incidents happening in their schools.
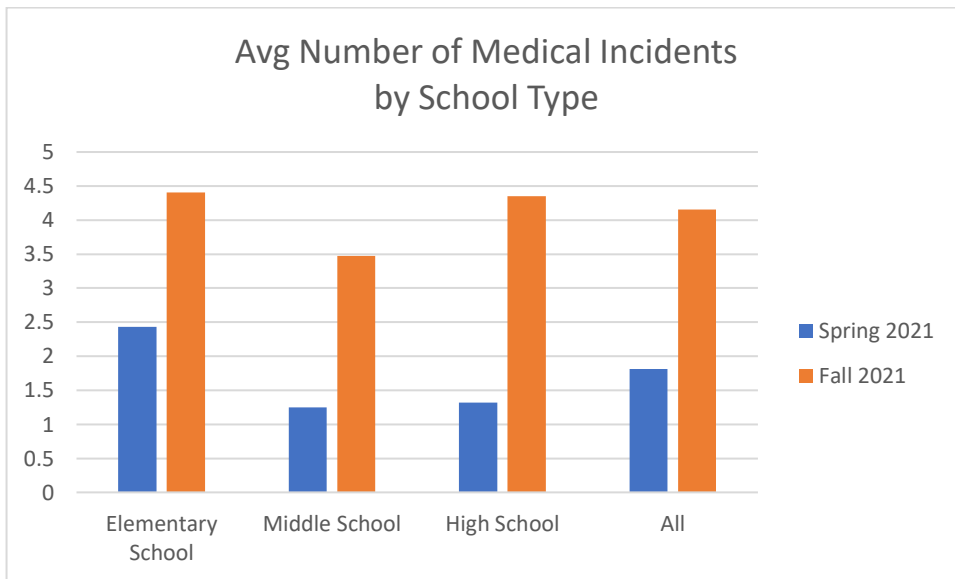
Early in the Fall of 2021, districts requested a new reason code to track elopement, also commonly referred to as "runner." This is a behavior that schools are experiencing with increasing frequency. Elopement now accounts for 5% of all incidents.

In addition, districts requested a new reason code to track general behavior issues. This new "behavior" code is in addition to the existing "physical altercation" option. While student behavior incidents previously represented less than 30% of all alerts, the combined behavior categories (behavior, elopement, physical altercation) now represent 75% of all alerts, *an increase of over 250%*.

Campus-wide alerts (weather events, lock-in/lock-down) were steady at a very low percentage of all alerts (2%).

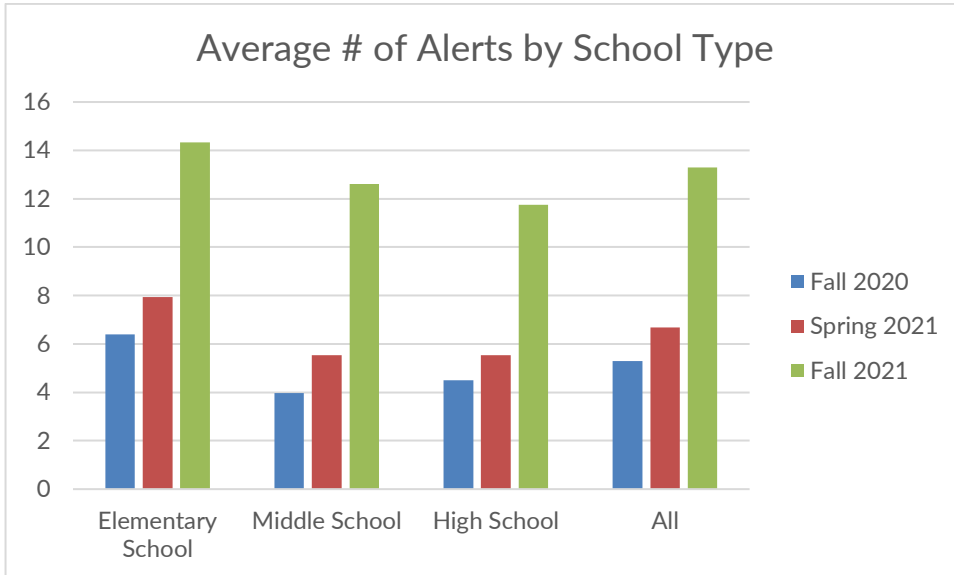## 2. Medical incidents increased by 130%.

While medical events declined as a percentage of overall alerts – attributable to the significant increase in behavior-related events - the rate of medical incidents increased 130% from the Spring to Fall sessions. Medical events – for both student and staff - have always happened in schools, and in any such situation, every second matters to get help quickly where it is needed.

Avg Number of Medical Incidents by School Type

School Type	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Elementary School	2.43	4.41
Middle School	1.25	3.48
High School	1.33	4.35
All	1.81	4.15

In medical incidents, it is critically important to get help quickly and to the right location. Often, the speed of response is the difference between life and death.

To learn about one of these situations, watch this video.

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3. Safety incidents per school increased 150%.

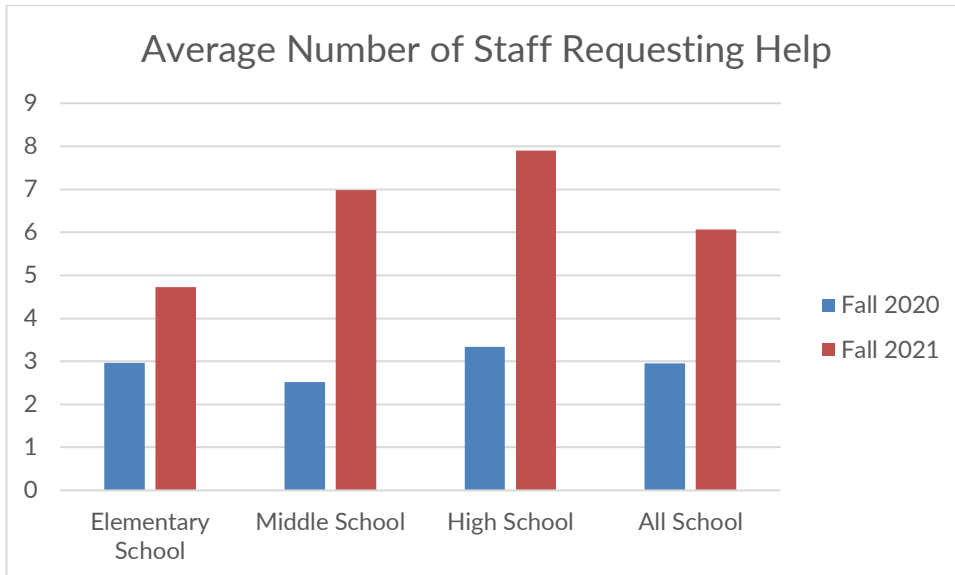### Average # of Alerts by School Type

In Fall 2020, schools averaged 5.3 alerts in the semester. Elementary schools were higher than average at 6.4 alerts per school, while middle schools had 4 alerts on average and high schools 5.3.

Over the course of a year's time, the average number of alerts per school increased 150% to 13.3.

While elementary schools continue to experience the highest rate of alerts on average, middle schools saw the largest gain - a 217% increase from 4 to 12.6.

4. The number of staff requesting help increased 100%.

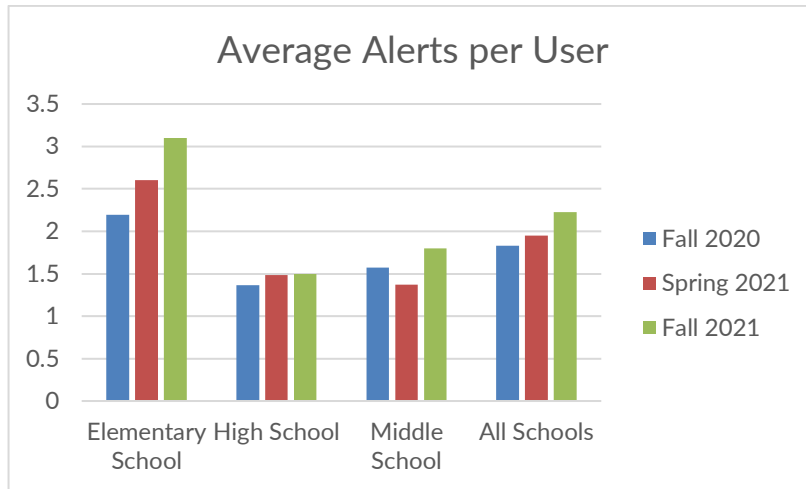Average Number of Staff Requesting Help

In Fall 2020, 3 staff on average per school used CrisisAlert to request help for an incident.

In the Fall of 2021, that number had doubled to 6 staff per school requesting help.

Again, middle schools saw the largest increase at over 170% from 2.5 to 7 staff members on average requesting help.

5. Staff called for help 22% more often.

On average, staff in all schools experienced a 22% increase in safety incidents from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021.

While all types of schools experienced an increase, the change for elementary schools was the largest at over 40%.

Summary

We have certainly seen a rise in school safety incidents over the last six months. District administrators expected the rise and the data validates their instincts. Unfortunately, we know the COVID pandemic is continuing to evolve with new variants, and that school districts will continue to lead their community's learning environments, whether in-person or virtual.

The return to virtual learning will create less structure, limited social interaction, and economic and family stresses that we experienced in the fall. We will continue to provide data that districts can leverage to help quantify the problem and hopefully support investment in areas and resources that support teachers and students.

CENTEGIX is grateful for the opportunity to support schools and help them protect the lives of students and staff in districts across the country. We are dedicated to our mission to innovate technology to save and enrich lives.

Reference:
1 – https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/10/26/schools-violence-teachers-guns-fights/
2 - To Keep Teachers From Quitting, Address These 5 Key Issues (edweek.org)
https://www.edweek.org/leadership/to-keep-teachers-from-quitting-address-these-5-key-issues/2021/12
3 – User surveys conducted weekly September to November via online form