School Violence and School Safety

Guest Editors: Matthew J. Mayer and Amanda B. Nickerson

School safety is necessary for children and youth in schools to learn and experience a positive developmental trajectory. Problems of school disorder and violence have sequelae that are not always considered by educational and political leaders such that key issues may be conflated, minimized, distorted, or overstated, often hindering systematic progress. Efforts to promote school safety vary tremendously, with widespread efforts to harden schools focusing primarily on security approaches, often at the expense of focusing attention and resources to critical foci investigated in school safety research. Areas in need of further research include fostering a positive school climate, using authoritative approaches that balance structure and support, and creating multidisciplinary collaborative structures, such as threat assessment teams that follow a well-structured approach to analyzing and responding to signals of emerging problems. This special topic focus seeks to further advance the field of school safety research, employing a transdisciplinary approach that is distinct from interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches in that it is a more complex synthesis, going beyond discipline-specific views.

The purpose of this special topic focus is to examine multiple dimensions of school safety research, unpack empirically based answers to key research questions, and enable a broad array of educational stakeholders to identify links to their own areas of school safety concerns. Recognizing transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship in this area, we welcome manuscripts from scholars across diverse disciplines and that address a wide range of science related to school violence and school safety, including (but not limited to) research that:

- expands contemporary understanding of school violence and school safety;
- advances understanding of factors related to diversity and equity that influence school violence and school safety;
- informs contemporary understanding of how school discipline and school organization impact school violence and school safety;
- informs understanding of how gun access relates to school and community violence;
- informs understanding of threat assessment, school climate, positive behavioral supports, restorative justice, and other strategies to promote school safety.

Empirical (quantitative and qualitative) papers, meta-analytic analyses, and systematic-review papers are all welcomed for submission. Each submission will be processed through peer review to determine whether the manuscript is suitable for publication in the journal. The deadline for the receipt of submissions is between June 1–15, 2020.

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