



NJDOE News

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Acting Commissioner Hendricks Releases Annual Violence and Vandalism Report

The number of incidents of violence, vandalism and weapons in New Jersey's public schools continues to decline, according to an annual report on school violence and vandalism released today by Acting Education Commissioner Rochelle Hendricks.

The annual report to the Legislature reveals a 3-percent decline in the total number of incidents reported by school districts. Individual offense categories that declined include: violence at 5 percent, vandalism at 3 percent and weapons at 15 percent.

In general, the total number of incidents reported decreased by more than 600. In 2008-09, 17,048 incidents were reported compared to 17,666 in 2007-08.

A copy of the report can be found on DOE's Web site at:
<http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/vandv/0809/vandv.pdf>

"School districts appear to be making strides in reducing school-related violence," said Acting Commissioner Hendricks. "This three-year trend report can serve as a tool for districts and parents to track the progress of efforts to curb these unwanted incidents. The safety and well-being of students continues to be one of the Department of Education's top priorities."

The department collects data reported by the districts to produce the annual report. The analysis in the latest report includes data from the 2006-07 through 2008-09 school years.

Three-year trends in the type of violent incidents reported by school districts show a 12-percent decline between 2006-07 and 2008-09 in the number of fights. The number of assaults was 6 percent lower while incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying and threat decreased by 4 percent.

Within the category of vandalism, three-year declines were seen in all but one sub-category of reported incidents. Damage to property decreased 13 percent during the three-year period, while trespassing increased by less than 5 percent to 130 incidents.

The multi-year comparison showed increases in incidents involving substance use, possession and distribution.

A 1982 state law requires the Commissioner of Education to file with the Legislature an annual report detailing the level of violence and vandalism in the state's public schools. Districts are required to report incidents if they occur on school grounds during school hours, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored event.

Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, school districts and charter schools were required to report incidents of violence, vandalism and substance abuse via the Internet using DOE's Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS). Each year, districts are required to publicly report their EVVRS data and are encouraged to use it as a tool to assess the effectiveness of their policies, programs and practices, and to identify other school-level needs.

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