

Bullying Data Collection- Annual Report

This report is submitted pursuant to Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 which amended G.L. c.71, §37O, the anti-bullying statute, and was signed into law on April 24, 2014. It includes information from school year 2017-2018 through school year 2020-2021.

June 2022

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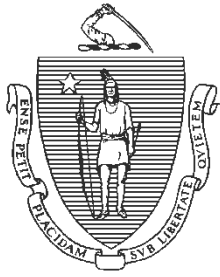
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June 21, 2022

Dear Members of the General Court and Attorney General Healey:

I am pleased to submit this Report to the Legislature: *Bullying Data – 2022 Annual Report* for school years 2017-2018 (SY18), SY19, SY20, and SY21. The bullying data provided in this report was compiled from information submitted by school districts to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) through the [School Safety Discipline Report](#) (SSDR). Data for each school district can be found on the Department's [Student Discipline Data Report](#) available on the [School and District Profiles](#) web pages. This report provides information about data collected through the SSDR during SY18, SY19, SY20, and SY21.

If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact Anne Gilligan, Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator, in the Office of Student and Family Support via AnneL.Gilligan@mass.gov or 781-338-6309.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) respectfully submits this Report to the Legislature: *Bullying Data – 2022 Annual Report* pursuant to Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014. This report was prepared in consultation with the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office.

“Each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall annually report bullying incident data to the department. The data shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; (ii) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying or retaliation; (iii) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation; and (iv) any other information required by the department. Said incident data shall be reported in the form and manner established by the department, in consultation with the attorney general; provided, that the department shall minimize the costs and resources needed to comply with said reporting requirements; and provided further, that the department may use existing data collection and reporting mechanisms to collect the information from school districts. The department shall analyze the bullying incident data and shall publish an annual report containing aggregate statewide information on the frequency and nature of bullying in schools. The department shall file the annual report with the attorney general and with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives who shall forward the same to the chairs of the joint committee on education, the joint committee on the judiciary and the house and senate committees on ways and means.”

This is the second Bullying Data Collection Report submitted to the Legislature and the Office of the Attorney General. The first report was submitted in June 2019 with information from school years 2014-2015 (SY15) to SY18. Due to the wide-ranging school schedules associated with the pandemic in SY20 and SY21 (e.g., in-person, remote, hybrid), the data included in this second report is highly variable year to year. This report includes data from SY18-SY21. The Department plans to submit its next annual report by fall 2023.

Number of Substantiated Incidents of Bullying

The bullying data compiled from the Department’s School Safety Discipline Report (SSDR) data collection is provided in the tables below. Bullying data for each school district can be found on the Department’s website on the [Student Discipline Data Report](#) under the topic “Bullying” in the drop down menu.

Data has been available on the Department’s website since school year 2012-2013 (SY13). This report encompasses data collected through the SSDR since the inception of the requirement for SY18, SY19, SY20, and SY21. The SSDR currently collects data on the number of substantiated incidents of bullying, and the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying. To further ensure that districts are reporting incidents of bullying consistently and accurately, the

Department plans to provide additional training and technical assistance on all required data collection elements enumerated in the legislation. More consistent and uniform reporting will allow for data analysis to determine reductions or other changes more accurately in bullying related behaviors.

Table 1: Massachusetts Public School Bullying Totals, School Year 2017-2018 (SY18) - SY21

School Year	Number of Substantiated Bullying Incidents Reported	Unduplicated Count of Students with a Removal Discipline for Bullying*	Number of Districts Reporting Incidents
2017-2018 (SY18)	1,935	915	267
SY19	2,115	941	277
SY20	1,409	535	239
SY21	500	175	151

*Removals include In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions, Emergency Removals, and Removals to an Alternative Setting.

Table 2: Distribution of MA Public School Students with Bullying Disciplines by Grade, School Years 2017-2018 (SY18) - SY21.

	SY18		SY19		SY20		SY21	
GRADE	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Pre-K	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Kindergarten	2	0.2	2	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0
1	8	0.9	6	0.6	3	0.6	0	0.0
2	13	1.4	4	0.4	6	1.1	1	0.6
3	27	3.0	22	2.3	6	1.1	1	0.6
4	49	5.4	47	5.0	19	3.6	4	2.3
5	96	10.5	73	7.8	41	7.7	13	7.4
6	122	13.3	142	15.1	63	11.8	27	15.4
7	133	14.5	178	18.9	103	19.3	40	22.9
8	178	19.5	168	17.9	95	17.8	31	17.7
9	121	13.2	118	12.5	81	15.1	24	13.7
10	85	9.3	90	9.6	60	11.2	22	12.6
11	52	5.7	54	5.7	27	5.0	9	5.1
12	29	3.2	37	3.9	30	5.6	3	1.7
SP*	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Student Totals	915	100	941	100	535	100	175	100
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*Beyond grade 12 special education student

Table 3: Distribution of MA Public School Students with Bullying Disciplines by Student Group, School Years 2017-2018 (SY18) - SY21.

STUDENT GROUP	SY18		SY19		SY20		SY21	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female	279	30.5	311	33.0	176	32.9	48	27.4
Male	636	69.5	630	67.0	359	67.1	126	72.0
African American/Black	137	15.0	153	16.3	79	14.8	20	11.4
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	0.2	4	0.4	1	0.2	0	0.0
Asian	19	2.1	19	2.0	9	1.7	3	1.7
Hispanic or Latino	291	31.8	306	32.5	156	29.2	27	15.4
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic or Latino	38	4.2	47	5.0	25	4.7	10	5.7
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0.1	2	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
White	427	46.7	410	43.6	265	49.5	115	65.7
Economically Disadvantaged	554	60.5	564	59.9	331	61.9	92	52.6
English Learner	105	11.5	116	12.3	43	8.0	11	6.3
High Needs	698	76.3	696	74.0	415	77.6	124	70.9
Students with Disabilities	347	37.9	345	36.7	220	41.1	66	37.7
Student Totals	915	100	941	100	535	100	175	100

Number of Alleged Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation and Nature of Substantiated Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation

While some elements of the statute can be incorporated into current data collection systems, developing a uniform definition for alleged incidents of bullying and collecting information on the nature of bullying incidents presents a more complex challenge.

The Department has engaged stakeholders to contribute to the process of developing a uniform protocol to assist school districts in accurately collecting and reporting alleged incidents of bullying or retaliation data. Data collection for the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation will begin during SY22.