



**MASSACHUSETTS**  
Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

## **Bullying Data Collection- Annual Report**

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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 for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years

February 2024

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Russell D Johnston  
Acting Commissioner

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# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Russell D Johnston  
Acting Commissioner

March 18, 2024

Dear Members of the General Court and Attorney General Campbell:

I am pleased to submit this Report to the Legislature: *Bullying Data – Annual Report* for school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. 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.

If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact the Office of Student and Family Support via [achievement@mass.gov](mailto:achievement@mass.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Russell Johnston".

Russell D. Johnston  
Acting 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 – Annual Report for School Years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023* 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 third Bullying Data Collection Report submitted to the legislature and attorney general. The first report was submitted in [June 2019](#) with information from school years 2014-2015 (SY15) to SY18. The second report was submitted in [June 2022](#) including information from SY18 through SY21.

## 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 SY13. This report encompasses data collected through the SSDR from SY22 and SY23. The SSDR currently collects data on the number of substantiated incidents of bullying, and the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying and reported allegations of 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 Years 2021-2022 (SY22) - SY23**

School Year	Number of Substantiated Bullying Incidents Reported	Unduplicated Count of Students with a Removal Discipline for Bullying*	Number of Districts Reporting Incidents
SY22	2,530	1,071	262
SY23	2,634	722	271

\*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 2021-2022 (SY22) - SY23**

GRADE	SY22		SY23	
	#	%	#	%
Pre-K	0	0.0	0	0.0
Kindergarten	1	0.1	1	0.1
1	2	0.2	3	0.4
2	10	0.9	10	1.4
3	22	2.1	15	2.1
4	48	4.5	20	2.8
5	83	7.7	50	6.9
6	153	14.3	123	17
7	207	19.3	153	21.2
8	228	21.3	141	19.5
9	140	13.1	89	12.3
10	96	9	62	8.6
11	55	5.1	35	4.8
12	25	2.3	20	2.8
SP*	1	0.1	0	0
<b>Student Totals</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Beyond grade 12 special education student

**Table 3: Distribution of MA Public School Students with Bullying Disciplines by Student Group, School Years 2021-2022 (SY22) - SY23**

STUDENT GROUP	SY22		SY23	
	#	%	#	%
Female	333	31.1	244	33.8
Male	736	68.7	478	66.2
	<b>SY22 #</b>	<b>SY22 %</b>	<b>SY23 #</b>	<b>SY23 %</b>
African American/Black	147	13.7	119	16.5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	0.3	1	0.1
Asian	21	2	20	2.8
Hispanic or Latino	327	30.5	244	33.8
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic or Latino	55	5.1	37	5.1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	2	0.3
White	518	48.4	299	41.4
	<b>SY22 #</b>	<b>SY22 %</b>	<b>SY23 #</b>	<b>SY23 %</b>
Economically Disadvantaged	742	69.3	494	68.4
English Learner	127	11.9	98	13.6
High Needs	875	81.7	591	81.9
Students with Disabilities	413	38.6	258	35.7
	<b>SY22 #</b>	<b>SY22 %</b>	<b>SY23 #</b>	<b>SY23 %</b>
<b>STUDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>100</b>

## Number of Alleged Incidents of Bullying

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 presented a more complex challenge.

The Department 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 data. Data collection for the number of reported allegations of bullying began in SY22. Due to concerns over data quality and completeness in the initial year (SY22), the first year of available data is for SY23 and can be accessed on the [Data and Accountability](#) webpage. The Department anticipates including in the next Bullying Data Collection Annual Report more details about the number of reported allegations of bullying, once we have multiple years of data available.