



Bullying Data Collection - *Annual Report for School Year 2023-2024*

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 2023-2024 school year.

July 2025

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez, Commissioner

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu





July 15, 2025

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 year 2023-2024. 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 Rachelle Engler Bennett, Associate Commissioner, Student and Family Support, via RachelleEngler.Bennett@mass.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pedro Martinez".

Pedro Martinez
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 Year 2023-2024* pursuant to Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014.

“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.”

For the purposes of requirements related to the legislation ([Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 37O](#)), the term "Bullying" is defined as the following. NOTE: see the legislation for more details, including the definition of cyber-bullying.

The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

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 includes data collected through the SSDR from SY24, and provides trend data from the past two school years where available as well. 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 provides training and technical assistance on all required data collection elements enumerated in the legislation. More consistent and uniform reporting allows for data analysis to determine reductions or other changes more accurately in bullying related behaviors.

As can be seen in Table 1 below, the total number of substantiated incidents increased 4 percent (from 2,530 to 2,634) from SY22 to SY23, and then in SY24 decreased by 15 percent (to 2,234) which was below SY22 levels. The unduplicated count of students disciplined with a removal for bullying decreased by 33 percent (from 1,071 to 722) between SY22 and SY23, and then increased by less than 3 percent (to 739) in SY24. When looking at the number of districts reporting substantiated bullying incidents, there was an increase of 3 percent from SY22 to SY23 (from 262 to 271), and then a further increase of 1 percent in SY24 (to 274).

Table 1: Massachusetts Public School Bullying Totals, School Years 2021-2022 (SY22) – SY24

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
SY24	2,234	739	274

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

See next page for Table 2, which shows the distribution of Massachusetts public school students with bullying related disciplines, by grade, for SY22-SY24.

Table 2: Distribution of MA Public School Students with Bullying Disciplines by Grade, School Years 2021-2022 (SY22) – SY24

GRADE	SY22 #	SY22 %	SY23 #	SY23 %	SY24 #	SY24 %
Pre-K	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Kindergarten	1	0.1	1	0.1	3	0.4
1	2	0.2	3	0.4	6	0.8
2	10	0.9	10	1.4	12	1.6
3	22	2.1	15	2.1	10	1.4
4	48	4.5	20	2.8	38	5.1
5	83	7.7	50	6.9	62	8.4
6	153	14.3	123	17.0	94	12.7
7	207	19.3	153	21.2	140	18.9
8	228	21.3	141	19.5	127	17.2
9	140	13.1	89	12.3	106	14.3
10	96	9.0	62	8.6	79	10.7
11	55	5.1	35	4.8	39	5.3
12	25	2.3	20	2.8	23	3.1
SP*	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Student Totals	1,071	100	722	100	739	100

*Beyond grade 12 special education student

See next page for Table 3, which shows the distribution of Massachusetts public school students with bullying related disciplines, by student group, for SY22-SY24.

Table 3: Distribution of MA Public School Students with Bullying Disciplines by Student Group, School Years 2021-2022 (SY22) - SY24

STUDENT GROUP	SY22 #	SY22 %	SY23 #	SY23 %	SY24 #	SY24 %
Female	333	31.1	244	33.8	207	28.0
Male	736	68.7	478	66.2	532	72.0
Nonbinary	*	*	*	*	*	*
STUDENT GROUP	SY22 #	SY22 %	SY23 #	SY23 %	SY24 #	SY24 %
American Indian or Alaska Native	3	0.3	1	0.1	0	0.0
Asian	21	2.0	20	2.8	25	3.4
Black or African American	147	13.7	119	16.5	116	15.7
Hispanic or Latino	327	30.5	244	33.8	249	33.7
Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino	55	5.1	37	5.1	24	3.2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0	2	0.3	0	0.0
White	518	48.4	299	41.4	325	44.0
STUDENT GROUP	SY22 #	SY22 %	SY23 #	SY23 %	SY24 #	SY24 %
Low Income	742	69.3	494	68.4	528	71.4
English Learners	127	11.9	98	13.6	95	12.9
High Needs	875	81.7	591	81.9	606	82.0
Students with Disabilities	413	38.6	258	35.7	292	39.5
	SY22 #	SY22 %	SY23 #	SY23 %	SY24 #	SY24 %
STUDENT TOTALS	1,071	100	722	100	739	100

**Nonbinary data is not reported due to small n-sizes.*

Number of Alleged Incidents of Bullying

While some elements of the statute were able to be incorporated into prior data collection systems, developing a uniform definition for alleged incidents of bullying and collecting information on the nature of bullying incidents required the Department to create new processes several years ago in partnership with stakeholders.

The Department engaged with school and district staff to help inform the process of developing a uniform protocol to assist school districts in accurately collecting and reporting alleged incidents of bullying data, and information from SY23 and SY24 is included in Table 4 on the next page. The SY24 bullying allegation data by district can be accessed on the [Data and Accountability](#) webpage.

Table 4: MA Reported Public School Allegations of Bullying Totals, School Years 2022-2023 (SY23) – SY24

School Year	Reported Bullying Allegations
SY23	8,076
SY24	8,421