



## NJDOE News

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### **Department of Education Releases [School Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse Statistics for 1999-2000 School Year](#)**

#### *First Year of New Electronic Filing Reporting System*

The Department of Education today submitted its annual report on Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Schools covering the 1999-2000 school year to the education committees of the Senate and General Assembly. Statute requires that this report be compiled annually and submitted to the Legislature.

The report is the first that is based upon incident data entered by districts onto an Internet-based system. As this new system was designed, some reporting instructions in districts changed, particularly in the violence category. Because of these changes and because reporting each incident electronically represents a radical departure from the paper summary method of prior years, the report does not contain year-to-year comparisons; it treats 1999-2000 as a baseline year for reporting. The new system, which was first deployed in March 2000, is one of the few state systems nationwide where districts report information on individual incidents, and associated offenders and victims.

The total number of incidents reported statewide for 1999-2000 was 21,367 (a complete category-by-category chart is included in the report). The report shows that acts of violence and vandalism occur primarily and to an equal degree in middle and high schools, with incidents of substance abuse occurring more frequently in high schools. Two thirds of all schools reported five or fewer incidents of any kind for the entire year (district totals for the major reporting categories are included as an appendix).

"The annual report of school violence and vandalism provides us with the important information we need in order to make our schools as safe as possible," said Commissioner of Education Dr. Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. "I am also pleased that our new electronic reporting system will provide us with the most accurate data possible."

The report also summarizes recent activity under the Safe Schools Initiative and other programs to confront the problems of violence and vandalism in our schools. The department has recently developed innovative programs such as the Intervention and Referral Services Initiative, the Safe Schools and Communities Violence Prevention and Response Pilot Plan, and the Character Education Initiative.

It has also engaged in collaborative ventures with institutions and agencies such as the Violence Institute of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the New Jersey Association of Mental Health Agencies, the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists and the Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey. Collaborative projects include the V-Free Initiative, the Peer-to-Peer Transitions Pilot Project and the Sudden Violent Loss and Mediation Services Project.

The report also highlights prominent efforts by local school districts to address the problem of violence in schools. It describes programs in Bordentown City, Pennsauken, North Brunswick, Jersey City, New Providence, and the West Morris Regional High School District.