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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *L. Lowery*

DATE: August 25, 2015

RE: Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools Update

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a general update on *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools: A report to the Maryland General Assembly on Incidents Reported under the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 (Attachment I)*. This briefing will provide a look at the past and present reports to demonstrate state efforts to reducing Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation.

BACKGROUND

During the 2005 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Safe Schools Reporting Act, §7-424 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. In 2008, the General Assembly passed additional legislation, removing the sunset provision in the original law and required the Maryland State Department Education (MSDE) to develop a model anti-bullying policy. A technical assistance bulletin was developed to assist with the implementation of the policy (**Attachment II**).

The Safe Schools Reporting Act defines “bullying, harassment, or intimidation” as intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written, or electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment and is motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic such as race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, physical attributes, or familial status. Such behavior also meets the definition if it is threatening, seriously intimidating, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

The Safe Schools Reporting Act requires that each local school system report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Local incidents can be reported by a student, parent, guardian, close adult relative, or a school staff member. To facilitate this process, MSDE, in conjunction with a broad group of stakeholders, has created and distributed a standardized form to each school system to be used by every school in Maryland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2015 *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools: A report to the Maryland General Assembly on Incidents Reported under the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005*, local school systems reported data for the 2013-2014 school year. The report contains comparison data for the past three school years. This report also examines incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in terms of other key variables such as location and description of incidents, ages of the victim and offender, number of days missed from school by victims and offenders, and the number of false allegations reported.

During the 2013-2014 school year, a total of 4,587 incidents were reported statewide, which represents a decrease of 668 reported incidents from the previous school year (5,255) and a decrease of 626 incidents reported in the 2011-2012 school year (5,213). Although larger school systems reported more incidents, some of the smaller systems reported a higher rate of incidents per 1,000 enrolled students.

All school systems have implemented system-wide and school-wide programs around bullying awareness and prevention. In fact, the 2013-2014 school year marked the fifth year that bullying prevention programming was required to be presented by local school systems to students, staff, and volunteers. Bullying prevention models and frameworks such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Olweus, Character Counts, Restorative Practices, and Text-2-Stop It are currently being implemented in school systems and are believed to be partly responsible for the decrease in reported incidents of bullying over the past few years.

ACTION

For information only. No action required.

LML/WJS

Attachments

**BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION
IN MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**A REPORT TO THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON INCIDENTS REPORTED UNDER THE
SAFE SCHOOLS REPORTING ACT OF 2005**

**Presented by the
Maryland State Department of Education**

March 31, 2015

**LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR**

**Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS**



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Appendix - Forms

- Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form
- Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident School Investigation Form
- Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument
- Implementation Instructions for Local School Systems

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION IN MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 became effective on July 1, 2005. The law (Education Article §7-424, Annotated Code) required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to require all county boards of education and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to report incidents of harassment or intimidation against students in public schools under the county board's and commission's jurisdiction to the Maryland General Assembly. Additionally, MSDE was required to create and distribute a "Standard Victim of Harassment or Intimidation Report Form", and to submit a report to the Maryland General Assembly consisting of a summary of the information included in the victim of harassment and intimidation forms filed with the local boards the previous school year.

To ensure that the law was implemented according to reporting requirements, the first reporting period of the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 encompassed the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year. The first reporting period for schools and local education agencies (LEAs) began on the first day of school in each LEA and continued through the end of the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year. The information contained in the first report to the General Assembly represented this time period. It was submitted prior to the March 31, 2006 deadline.

The 2008 General Assembly passed three bills, which were enacted into law on July 1, 2008 that affected the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005. House Bill (HB) 1209 removed the sunset requirement of the original Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005. The requirements of that law will now remain in effect unless changed by future legislation. HB 1158 added a provision to the original law which permitted school staff members to use the same incident reporting form previously available to only students, parents, or close adult relatives of a student. Lastly, HB 199 required the Maryland State Board of Education to develop a model anti-bullying policy in collaboration with school system representatives by March 31, 2009. The model policy was developed according to the requirements of Education Article §7-424.1, Annotated Code of Maryland and was formally adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education on February 24, 2009. The model policy was forwarded to the twenty-four LEAs in the State and was used as a basis for developing their own anti-bullying policies as required by the law. All LEAs submitted copies of their anti-bullying policies to the State Superintendent of Schools on or before July 1, 2009. The law also kept all requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 while expanding the definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and adding a definition for an electronic communication.

This year's report to the General Assembly describes the process used by MSDE to carry out the mandates of this law. The reporting period for this ninth report encompasses the entire 2013-2014 school year (first and second semesters). The report still provides additional information gathered as a result of the implementation of the law, including LEA practices and procedures employed in order to meet this requirement. The findings from the LEA reports are detailed, including incident rates, locations and descriptions of the incidents, ages of victims and perpetrators, alleged motives of the perpetrators, investigative methods used, corrective actions taken by schools, number of days missed by victims and perpetrators, and the number of false allegations reported.

PROCESS

In compliance with the law, MSDE was tasked with developing forms that included the elements required by the law. In July 2005, MSDE assembled a group of stakeholders that included representatives from Carroll, Montgomery, Baltimore, Cecil, and Frederick Counties. Additionally, representatives from the mental health profession participated. The desire of each of the participants was to develop forms that would include the elements required by law, but would not go beyond the law, and thereby would not include questions *that were not required*. With guidance from the Office of the Attorney General, the group worked to reach consensus on forms and procedures that would fulfill the intent of the legislation. Furthermore, a spreadsheet was developed to ensure the accurate and consistent collection of data from all LEAs.

Once the forms were finalized, they were sent to local superintendents of schools for review and comment. Additionally, draft forms were sent to directors of student services, school counseling supervisors, and supervisors of safe and drug-free schools for comment. Where possible, and in keeping with the decision to include *only* elements mandated by law, comments and suggestions were incorporated into the forms.

The *Harassment or Intimidation (Bullying) Reporting Form* is a standard form to be used by all public schools, and cannot be modified. Its title was changed to correspond to the requirements of HB 199. Its components and function remain the same. It is now entitled the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form* and includes a section for check-off if used by a school staff member.

The *Harassment or Intimidation (Bullying) Incident School Investigation Form* was presented to schools and local systems as a template, but could be changed to align with local school system policies. However, the elements on the form needed to remain in order to complete the spreadsheet, the *Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying) Incident Reporting Instrument*. To correspond to HB 199, the investigation form is now entitled the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident School Investigation Form* and includes a section for check-off if used by a school staff member. The school system reporting instrument is now entitled the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument*.

A major concern not addressed in the law had to do with the retention of the forms once processed. An Advice of Council dated December 20, 2005 stated that the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) defines student records as records that are directly related to a student and that are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. The Maryland Student Records System Manual, authorized by COMAR 13A.08.02, essentially mirrors FERPA and states that "Records are information recorded in any way, including but not limited to handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, or microfiche." Therefore, given the information contained in the harassment and intimidation forms, the Advice of Council was that these forms are student records for both the victim and the perpetrator. School staff had expressed serious concerns regarding this issue. An amendment to Education Article §7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland was submitted during the 2007 General Assembly session. House Bill 383 sought to amend Education Article §7-424 to preclude these forms from becoming part of a student's record. It was felt that the inclusion of these forms in a student's record might become detrimental to a victim or if a harassment/intimidation accusation was determined to be false or to contain incorrect information, then having these forms in a student's record would be unfair to an alleged offender. House Bill 383 was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor. These forms are no longer required to be part of a student's record.

On July 7, 2008, a memorandum was sent by the State Superintendent of Schools to local Superintendents of the 24 local school systems describing the changes to the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 now required by HB 1158 and HB 1209. On August 13 2008, information about the changes to the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 and copies of the updated forms were provided electronically to the school system personnel responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act in the 24 local school systems. This same information and forms were shared with the Directors of Student Services from the 24 LEAs at an administrative meeting on October 15, 2008 and has been shared every October since.

In June of each year, copies of all updated forms and directions pertaining to the Safe Schools Reporting Act are sent electronically to the school system personnel responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act in the 24 local school systems. In July of each year, a memorandum is sent by the State Superintendent of Schools to local superintendents reminding them of the requirements of the Safe Schools Reporting Act.

FINDINGS

Implementation of the Law by Local Educational Agencies

The 24 LEAs reported data for the entire 2013-2014 school year. Data from the SEED School of Maryland are included in this report. The SEED School, which opened in August, 2009, is a college preparatory public boarding school that serves underserved students from around the state. The SEED School is located at 200 Font Hill Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21223.

In this report, the accompanying graphs (Figures 1-11), Tables 1 and 2, and narrative provide a comparison of the reported information for three complete school years. On the graphs, the 2011-2012 school year information is presented in light blue, the 2012-2013 school year information is presented in grey, and the 2013-2014 school year information is presented in dark blue.

Incident Rates

A total of 4,587 incidents were reported for the 2013-2014 school year. This represents a state-wide decrease of 668 reported incidents from the 2012-2013 school year, and a state-wide decrease of 626 reported incidents from the 2011-2012 school year. The number of reported incidents in each LEA is presented in Figure 1; the rate of reported incidents per 1,000 students relative to 2013-2014 enrollment is shown in Table 1. Sixteen (16) LEAs indicated a decrease in the number of reported incidents while eight (8) LEAs indicated an increase. Several LEAs reported relatively significant decreases in the number of incidents, notably Howard (-160), Talbot (-107), and Allegany (-44) Counties.

As expected, the larger systems had the most incidents. Baltimore County reported the most number of incidents with a total of 581 and a rate of 5.4 incidents per 1,000 enrolled students. Following Baltimore County was Baltimore City (472, 5.6), Montgomery County (440, 2.9), Prince George's County (416, 3.3), Anne Arundel County (327, 4.2) and Frederick County (323, 7.9) respectively. Kent (29.8), Dorchester (19.1) and Talbot (17.4) Counties reported the most incidents relative to enrollment. It should be noted that three school systems (Kent, Dorchester and Talbot) with a higher number of reported incidents relative to enrollment (Table 1) are smaller school systems – that is, school systems with a smaller overall student enrollment. These systems have reported more incidents per 1,000 students.

Based on the methods of reporting and the varied means of distributing the reporting form in LEAs, it is speculated that the decrease in reported incidents may be attributed to an increase in awareness of bullying and harassment on the part of students, staff, and parents. Since the change in the law in 2008, staff members were able to use the same reporting form as students and parents, thereby providing additional information.

The 2013-2014 school year marks the fifth year during which bullying prevention programming was required to be presented by the LEAs to students, staff, and volunteers. Bullying prevention models and frameworks such as PBIS, Olweus, Character Counts, Restorative Practices, and Text-2-Stop It are used throughout the LEAs. It is speculated that the programming further heightened awareness of the issue among the school communities, which initially increased reported numbers for several years. Last year we saw a slight increase in overall reporting of only forty-four incidents, this year there is a decrease of over six hundred cases possibly indicating that prevention efforts are working.

Figure 1. Number of Reported Incidents, by Local School System

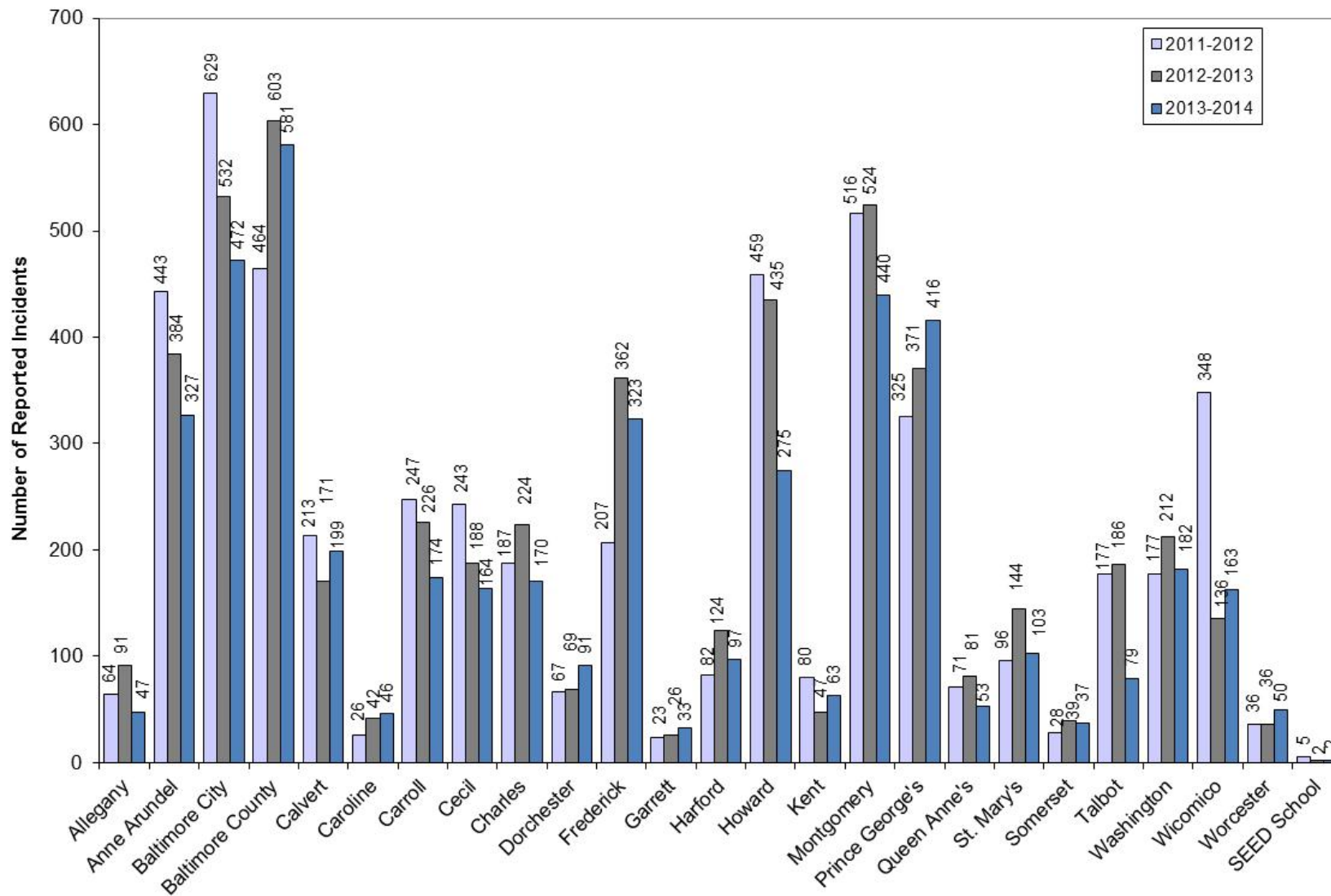


Table 1. Number of Reported Incidents Relative to Enrollment, by Local School System

Number of Reported Incidents Per 1000 Enrolled Students			
School System			
Local School System	School Year		
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Allegany	7.2	10.2	5.3
Anne Arundel	5.8	4.9	4.2
Baltimore City	7.5	6.3	5.6
Baltimore County	4.4	5.6	5.4
Calvert	12.9	10.5	12.3
Caroline	4.7	7.5	8.3
Carroll	9.1	8.5	6.6
Cecil	15.4	12.0	10.4
Charles	7.0	8.4	6.4
Dorchester	14.4	14.6	19.1
Frederick	5.1	8.9	7.9
Garrett	5.6	6.5	8.5
Harford	2.1	3.3	2.6
Howard	8.9	8.4	5.2
Kent	37.0	22.1	29.8
Montgomery	3.5	3.5	2.9
Prince George's	2.6	3.0	3.3
Queen Anne's	9.1	10.4	6.9
St. Mary's	5.5	8.3	5.8
Somerset	9.7	13.3	12.6
Talbot	38.9	40.7	17.4
Washington	8.0	9.5	8.1
Wicomico	24.0	9.4	11.3
Worcester	5.4	5.4	7.5

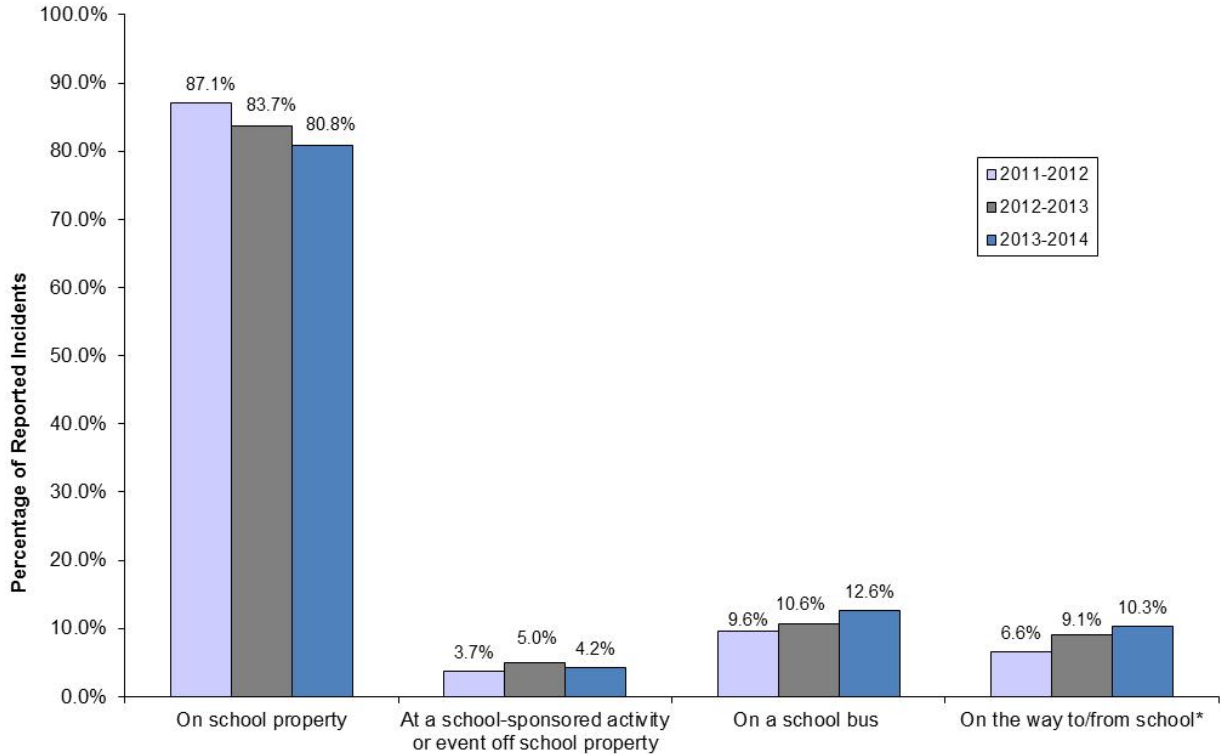
Again, it is important to note that the variation in numbers of reported incidents may largely reflect differences among school systems in levels of awareness on the parts of school staff, parents, and students themselves. School staff with greater understanding of the problems of bullying, and the importance of reporting and investigating incidents, are more likely to be pro-active in disseminating forms and making parents and students aware of the resources available to them. In turn, parents and students who are more aware of the need to report bullying incidents and the assistance that school staff can provide are more likely to report such incidents.

All school systems have now implemented system-wide and school-wide programs about bullying awareness and prevention. By the release of this report, most LEAs (23) will have their Bullying and Harassment form digitized, thus making it even easier to report incidents. It is believed from these results and conversations with parents, staff and students that students, parents, and staff in the school systems feel more comfortable reporting bullying and harassment. However, there is still some concern about expedited and appropriate responses and consequences from school staff/administration.

Locations of the Incidents

The majority of the incidents occurred on school property (80.8%), with the second largest number (12.6%) occurring on a school bus, closely followed (10.3%) by to/from school (Figure 2). These percentages remain consistent with those from the previous two reports. It should be noted that "On School Property" incidents were at a four year low with a slight decrease in the other mentioned categories.

Figure 2. Locations of Reported Incidents, Statewide

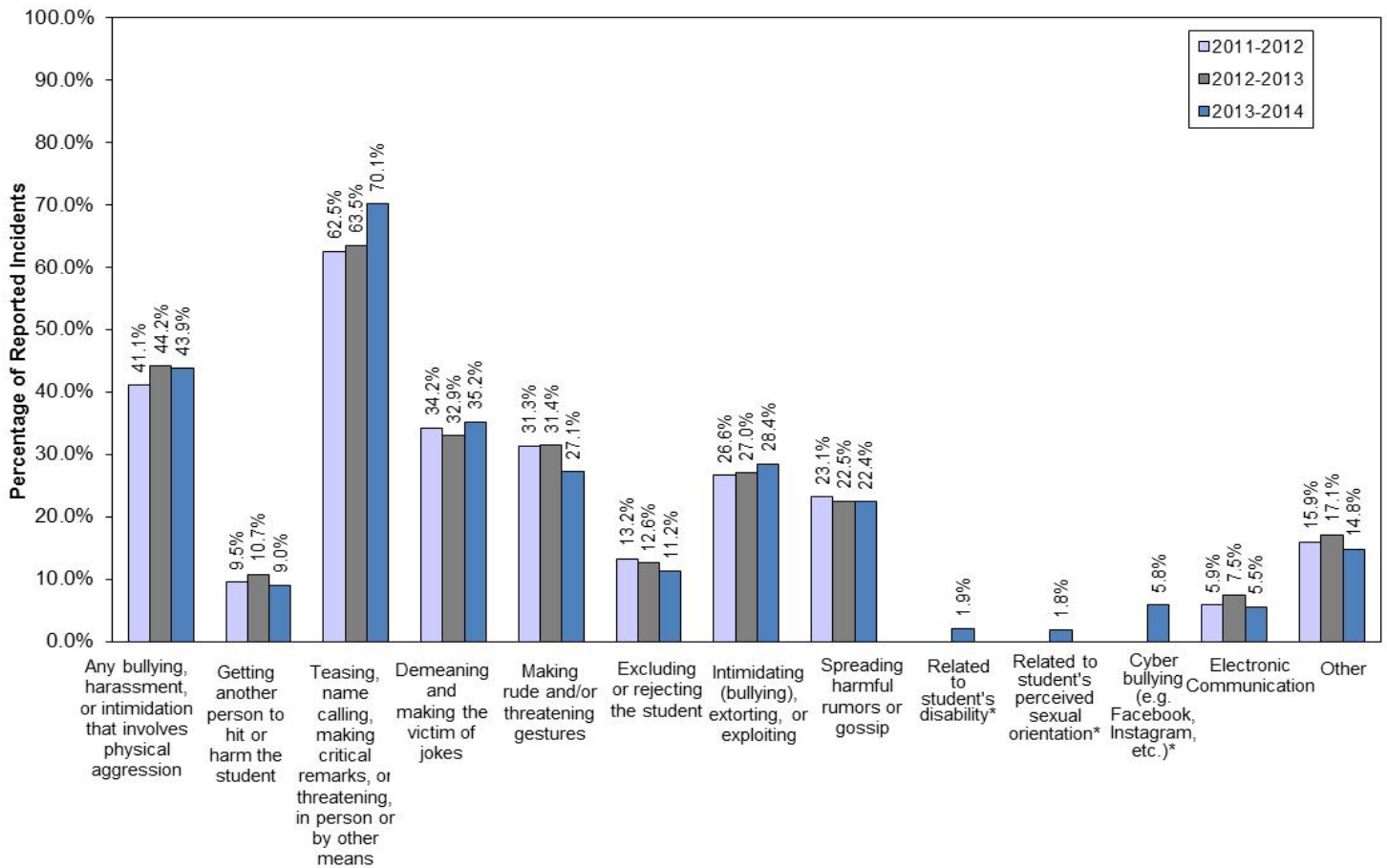


* Collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy. Note: Each incident report could identify more than one location. Therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.

Descriptions of the Incidents

To describe the incident, those who completed the investigation form were asked to choose from a list of descriptions which was created from research of the most prevalent forms of bullying (see *Victim of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form*). The largest number of incidents involved teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks, or threatening (70.1%). In other words, direct verbal bullying/harassment is experienced more than other forms, such as physical bullying, exclusion, gestures, extorting, or spreading rumors. Forty-three point nine percent (43.9%) of the incidents involved some form of physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair-pulling or throwing something (see Figure 3). These percentages remain consistent with those from the previous two reports.

Figure 3. Descriptions of Reported Incidents, Statewide

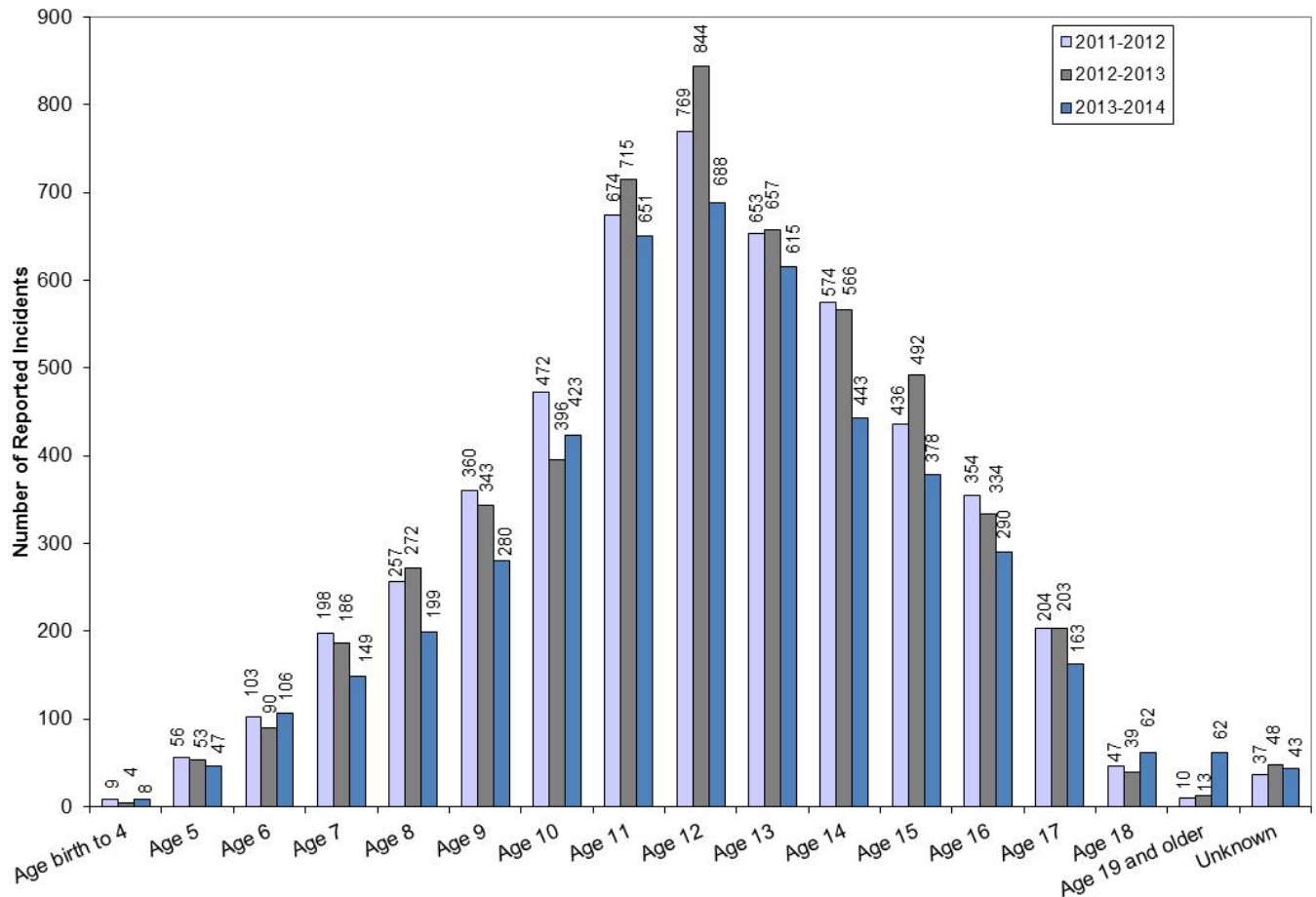


Note: Each incident report could identify more than one description; therefore, the percentages do not total 100%. *New description category added in SY 2013-2014

Ages of Victims

Twelve year olds were the most frequent victims of incidents of bullying and harassment (n=688, 15.07%) according to the submitted reports (see Figure 4). This represents the same age-group as the March 31, 2013 report (n=844, 16.06%). The number of victims of bullying and harassment decreases for each age group from age 12 through age 17 and continues to decline progressively to age 19 and older. This pattern has been largely consistent during the 10 years that these data have been collected. The majority of victims were between the ages of 10 and 14 (n=2,820, 61.8%). This is consistent with research that indicates that more bullying and harassment occurs in middle school than in elementary or high schools. The ages of victims ranges from birth to 4 to age 19 or older. In 2011-2012 there were 37 cases with ages unknown, in 2012-2013 there were 48 cases with ages unknown and in 2013-2014 there are 43 cases with ages unknown.

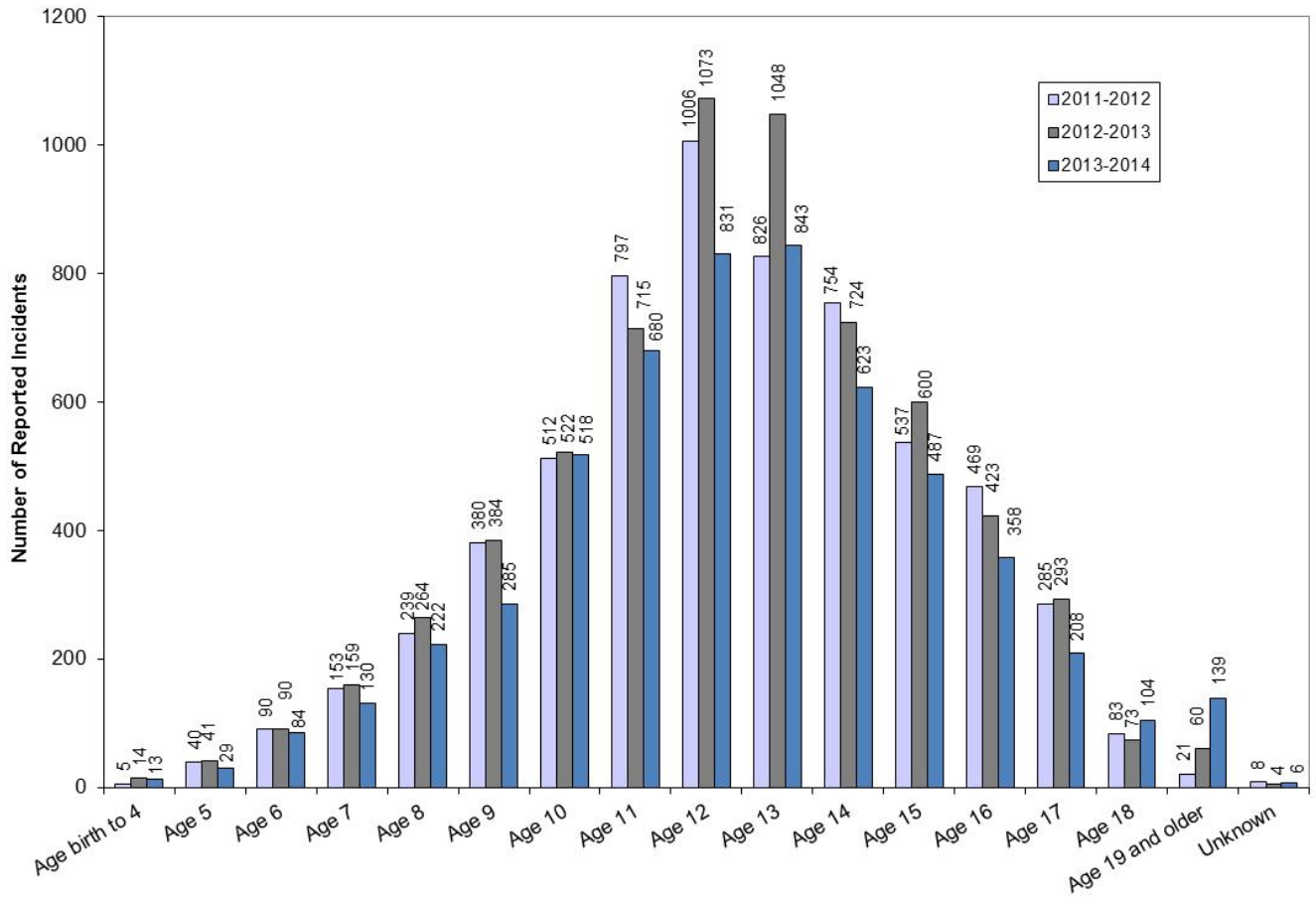
Figure 4. Ages of Victims, Statewide



Ages of Alleged Offenders

The greatest number of incidents were perpetrated by 13 year olds (n=843, 15.04%) according to the submitted reports (see Figure 5). This represents a one year increase in age-group from the March 31, 2014 report (n=1063, 16.75%). Data in the March 31, 2013, and 2014 reports indicated that the greatest number of incidents had also been perpetrated by 12 year olds. Data in the March 31, 2010 report indicated that the greatest number of incidents were perpetrated by 13 year olds (n=319, 18.9%). The number of offenders for each age group decreases from age 12 through age 19 and older. This is a similar pattern indicated in the 8 previous reports. The majority of offenders were between the ages of 10 and 15 (n=3982, 72.15%). This age bracket indicates that the majority of bullying occurs at middle school age. The ages of offenders (overall) ranged from birth to 4 to age 19 and older.

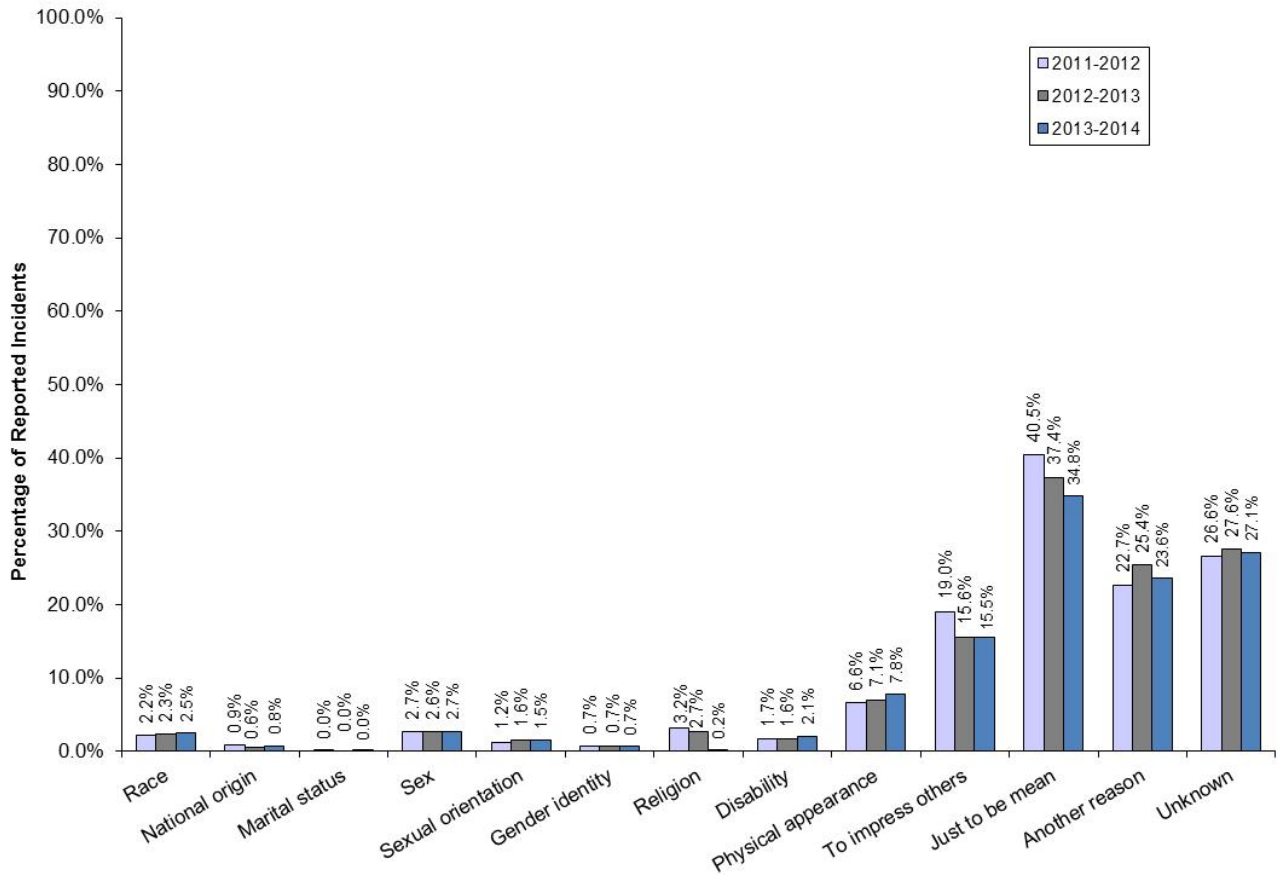
Figure 5. Ages of Alleged Offenders, Statewide



Alleged Offender’s Motives

The *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form* listed motives that were specified in the law and others that were gathered from research as to the reasons why students bully other students. The motives reported are presented in Figure 6. The motive most frequently cited was “Just To Be Mean” (n=1596, 34.8%). Twenty-seven percent (1245, 27.1%) of the incidents were allegedly perpetrated for “Unknown” reasons, Another reason (1081, 23.6%), To Impress others (711, 15.5%) Physical appearance (n=358, 7.8%); Sex (69, 2.7%), and race (n=115, 2.5%) were next, although with much smaller percentages. The remaining incidents were allegedly perpetrated due to national origin, gender identity, and religion. These factors reportedly made up less than 2% of motives for bullying, respectively. A significant number of reports identified “Another Reason” (n= 1081, 23.6%) and “Unknown” (n=1245, 27.1%) as the alleged motives (see summary section).

Figure 6. Description of Alleged Motives as Reported by Investigator, Statewide

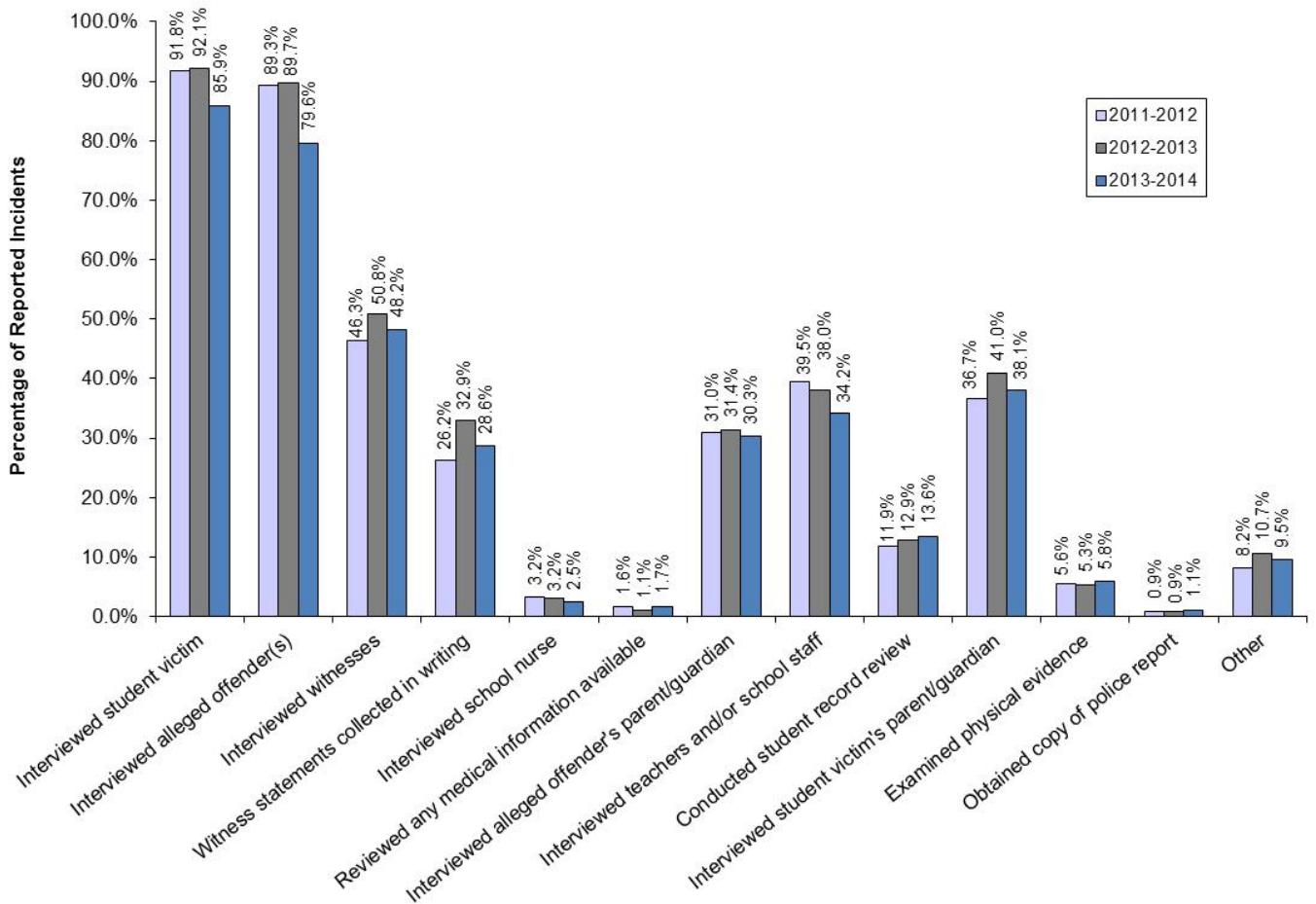


Note: Each school investigation form could identify more than one alleged motive; therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.

Description of the Investigations

Investigative methods were developed from a variety of techniques utilized by school administrators when investigating any behavioral infraction. The most frequent investigative methods cited were interviews of student victims (n=3940, 85.9%), interviews of alleged offenders (n=3649, 79.6%), interviews of witnesses (n=2213, 48.2%), interviews of student victims parent/guardian (n=1747, 38.1%), interviews of the teachers or school staff (n=1571, 34.2%), Interviewed alleged offender's parent/guardian (n=1388, 30.3%), and Witness statements collected in writing (n=1313, 28.6%). Other means were also used when necessary (see Figure 7). Investigative methods varied and most categories showed decreases in the percentages in their use from 2012-2013 school year. There were increases in the percentages of reviewed medical information, conducted student record review, and examine physical evidence categories. School administrators are still devoting time to investigate the details of reported incidents for the 2013-2014 school year with a focus more on interviewing victims, offenders, and witnesses while less time spent on record reviews and examination of physical evidence.

Figure 7. Methods Used to Investigate Incident as Reported by Investigator, Statewide



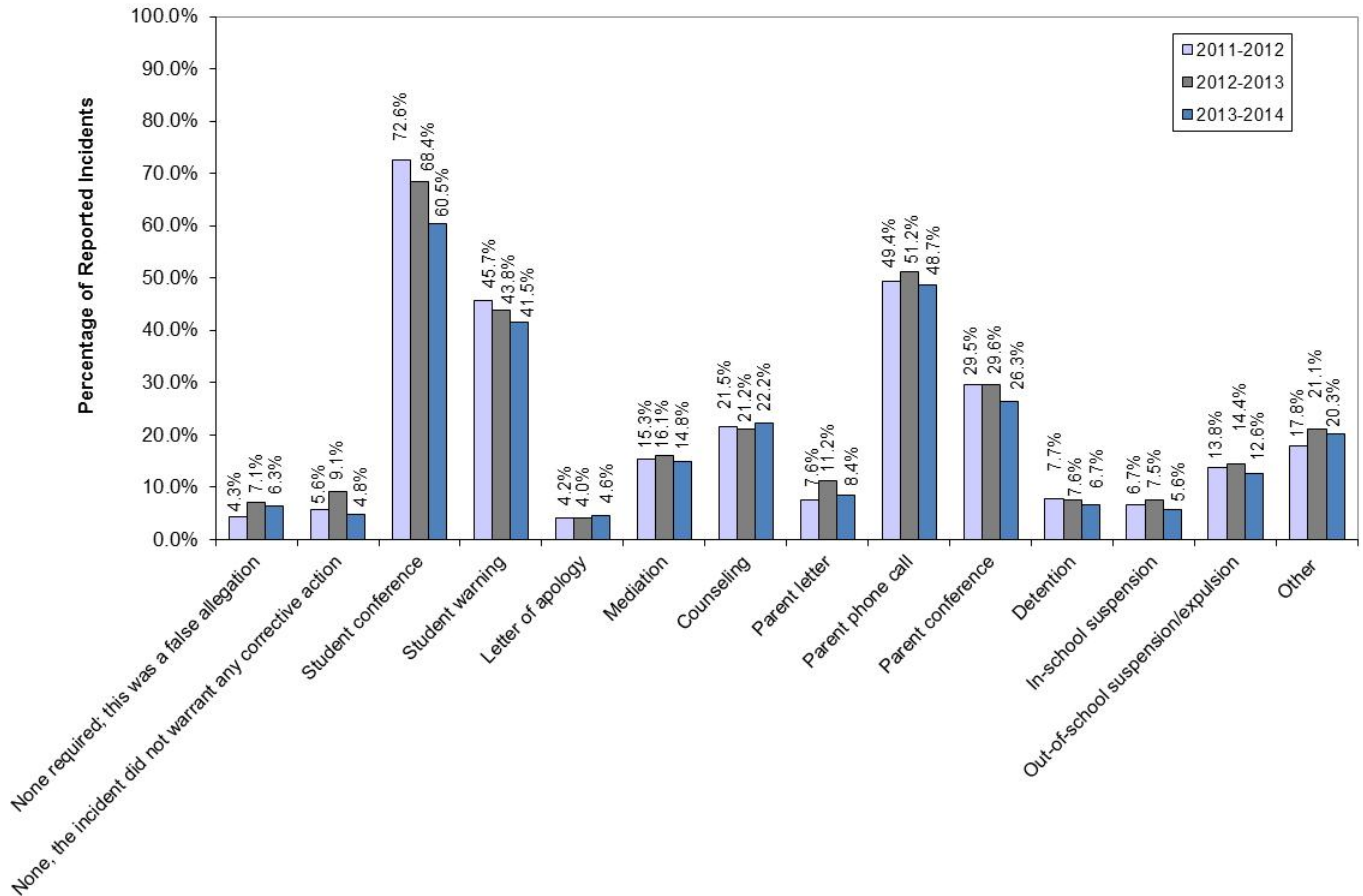
Note: Each school investigation form could identify more than one investigative method. Therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.

Corrective Actions Taken

Corrective action was taken in the vast majority of reported incidents that were not false allegations (n=12,714, 98.0%). Student conferences (n=2,774, 60.5%), parent phone call (n=2,236, 48.7%) student warnings (n=1,903, 41.5%), and parent conferences (n=1,208, 26.3%) were among the most frequently used corrective actions (see Figure 8). Counseling was also offered in more than twenty-two percent of the incidents (n=1,019, 22.2%). As schools work toward reducing suspensions and providing positive behavioral interventions, student and parent interactions are being looked at as more effective ways to change behaviors. Five hundred eighty (580, 12.6) incidents resulted in out-of-school suspensions or expulsion. This is a reduction of (177, 1.8%) from last

year. There was also a reduction in the amount of in-school suspensions,(257, 5.6%) compared to last year's (394, 7.5%) demonstrating a reduction of One hundred thirty-seven suspensions(137, 1.9%).

Figure 8. Corrective Actions Taken as Reported by Investigator, Statewide

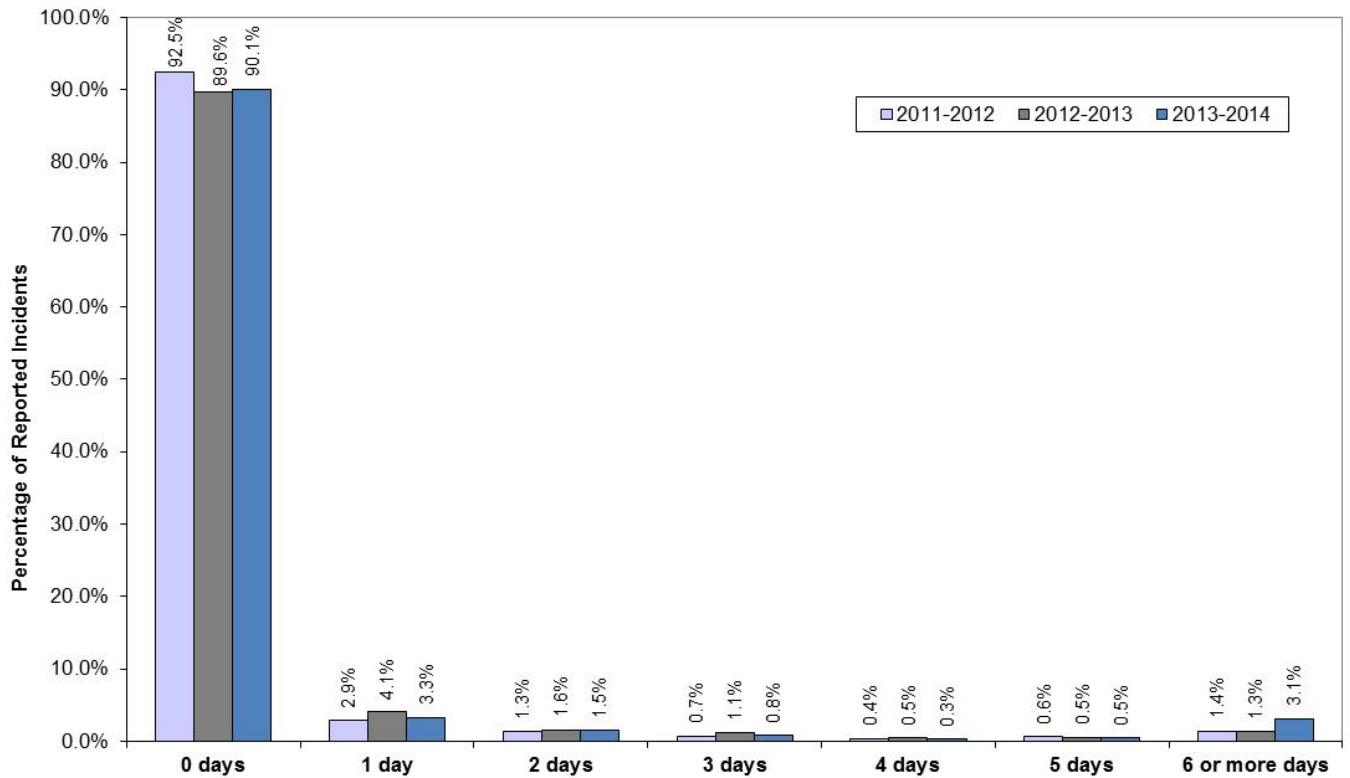


Note: Each school investigation form could identify more than one corrective action. Therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.

Number of Days Victims Missed From School by Incidents

As a group, victims did not miss much school as a result of the incidents in the majority of cases. Victims missed school in 431 cases (9.4%), (see Figure 9). It is unknown from the data whether victims missed school due to injury, fear of attending, or other reasons. In comparison to similar data from the previous report, 90.1% of the incidents did not result in missed any school. This represents a slight increase of 0.5% of victims not missing time from school when compared to the information in the March 31, 2014 report and a decrease of 2.2% of victim's not missing time from school when compared to the information in the March 31, 2013 report. The alarming fact is the 143 incidents of victims missing 6 or more days.

Figure 9. Absences as a Result of Incidents for Victims, Statewide.*

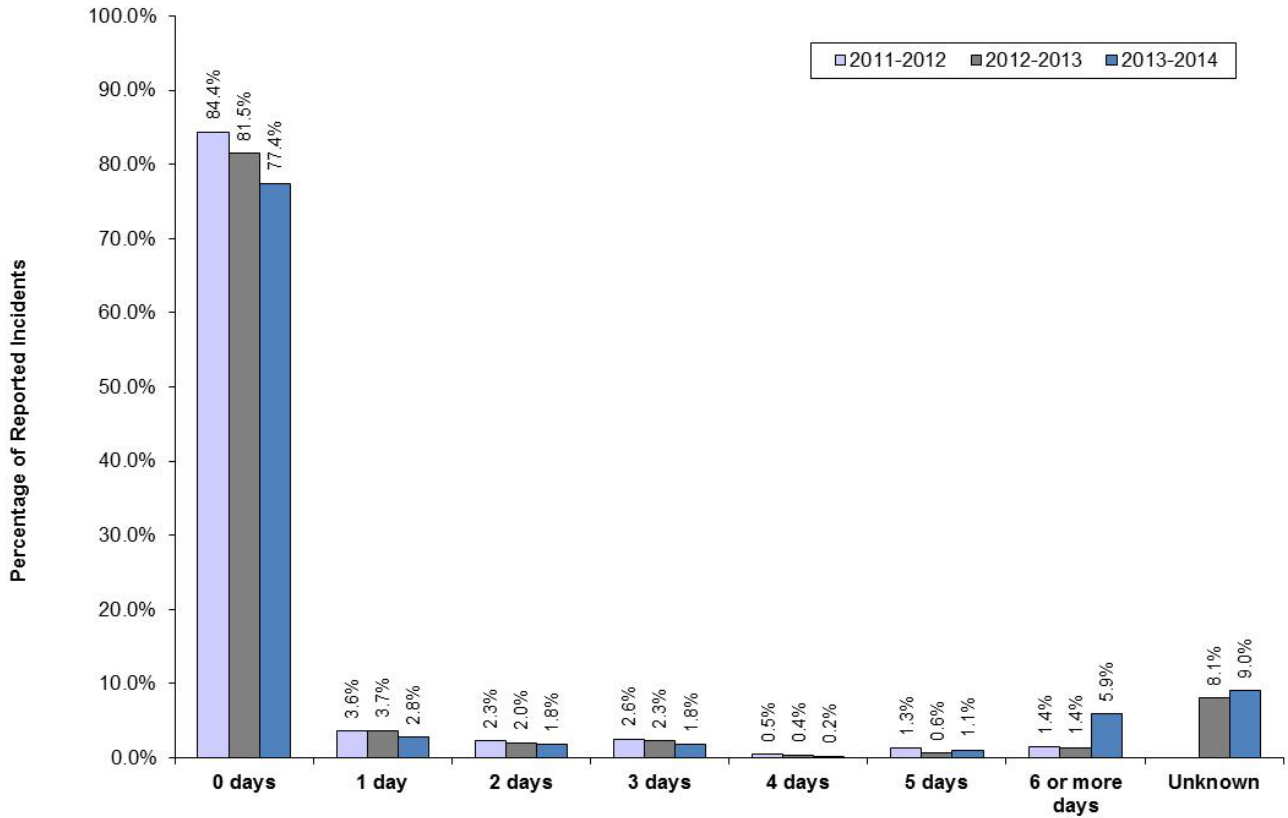


*The number of incidents resulting in an unknown number of days absent from school by the victims decreased to 23 cases in 2013-2014, down from 67 in 2012-2013 and up from 10 in 2011-2012.

Number of Days Missed From School by Alleged Offenders

Alleged offenders missed more school than victims as a result of the incidents in the majority of cases. Offenders were absent in 621 cases (13.5%) (See Figure 10). It is unknown from the data whether the offenders missed school due to suspensions, injury, or other reasons. This is a increase of 3.1% of incidents in which offenders did not missed school when compared to the information in the March 31, 2014 report and an increase of 1.7% incidents in which offenders did not missing school when compared to the information in the March 31, 2012 report. The alarming fact still remains there was 272 incidents of offenders missing 6 or more days.

Figure 10. Absences as a Result of Incident for Alleged Offender, Statewide



* The number of incidents resulting in an unknown number of days for which alleged offenders missed days from school decreased to 414 in 2013-2014, down from 424 in 2012-2013, but up from 200 in 2011-2012.

Number of False Allegations Reported

Investigations into some incident reports found them to be false allegations (see Figure 11 and Table 2). There were a total of 289 false allegations reported in 22 school systems, representing 6.3% of the total number of incidents reported statewide. This is also a decrease of 89 incidents from last school year. The largest number of false allegations per reported incidents was in Howard County (n=92 out of the reported 289, or 31.8%) followed by Cecil (27.4%) and Anne Arundel (10.1%). Caroline County, Worcester County and the SEED School both reported zero number of false allegations.

Figure 11. Number of False Allegations, by Local School System

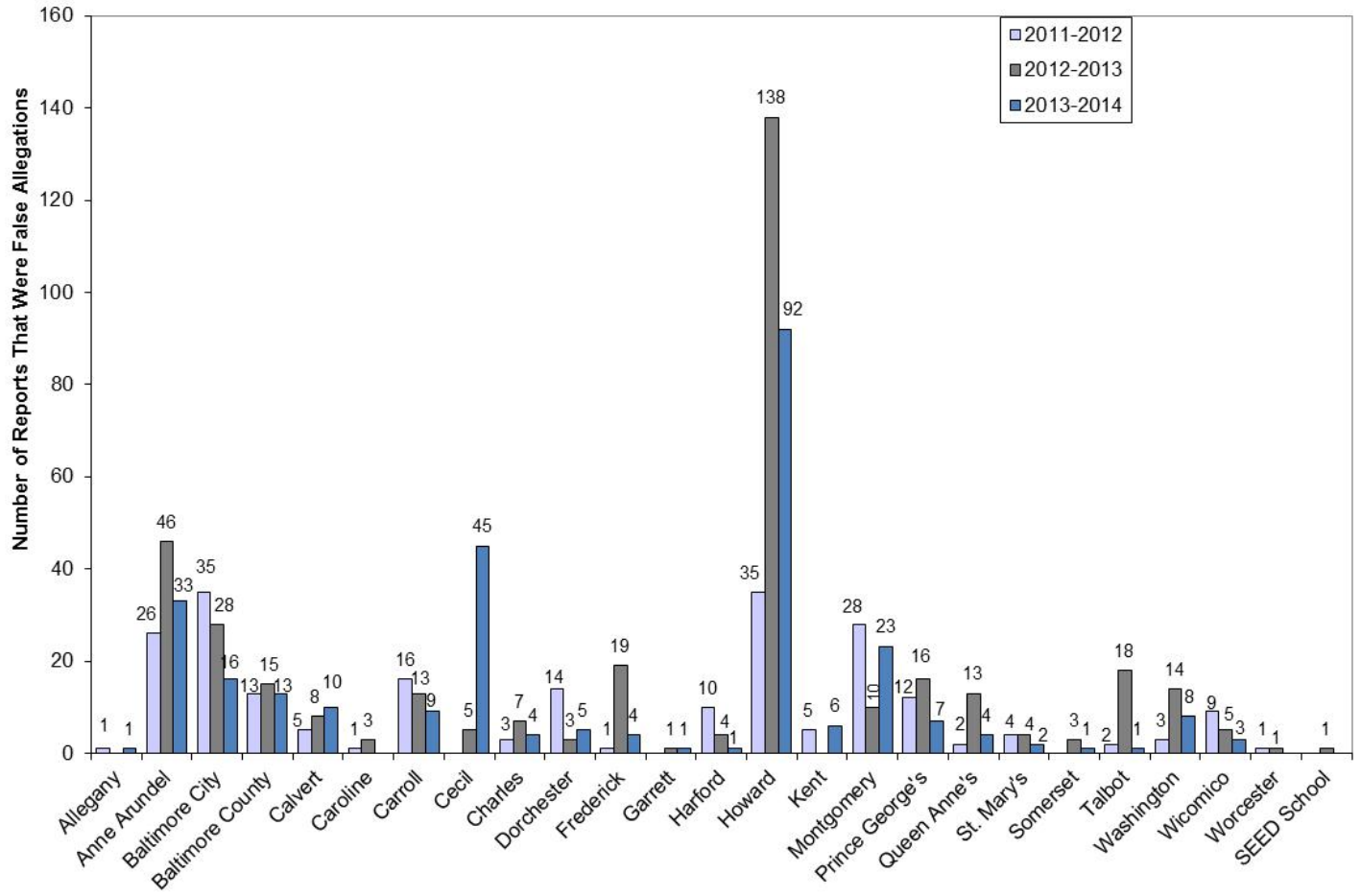


Table 2. Percentage of Incident Reports That Were False Allegations, by Local School System

Percentage of Incident Reports that were False Allegations by Local School System			
Local School System	Year		
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Allegany	1.6%	0.0%	2.1%
Anne Arundel	5.9%	12.0%	10.1%
Baltimore City	5.6%	5.3%	3.4%
Baltimore County	2.8%	2.5%	2.2%
Calvert	2.3%	4.7%	5.0%
Caroline	3.8%	7.1%	0.0%
Carroll	6.5%	5.8%	5.2%
Cecil	0.0%	2.7%	27.4%
Charles	1.6%	3.1%	2.4%
Dorchester	20.9%	4.3%	5.5%
Frederick	0.5%	5.2%	1.2%
Garrett	0.0%	3.8%	3.0%
Harford	12.2%	3.2%	1.0%
Howard	7.6%	31.7%	33.5%
Kent	6.3%	0.0%	9.5%
Montgomery	5.4%	1.9%	5.2%
Prince George's	3.7%	4.3%	1.7%
Queen Anne's	2.8%	16.0%	7.5%
St. Mary's	4.2%	2.8%	1.9%
Somerset	0.0%	7.7%	2.7%
Talbot	1.1%	9.7%	1.3%
Washington	1.7%	6.6%	4.4%
Wicomico	2.6%	3.7%	1.8%
Worcester	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%
SEED School	0.0%	50.0%*	0.0%

SUMMARY

COMAR 13A.01.04, School Safety, states, “All students in Maryland's public schools, without exception and regardless of race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, or disability, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment.” The *2007 Maryland Adolescent Survey* of students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 indicated that over 80% of the students reported never or rarely feeling unsafe in school. Only 7.2% of those students reported missing some time from school due to feeling unsafe.¹

The *2013 Maryland Youth Tobacco Risk Behavior Survey* (YTRBS) surveyed 80,752 students in grades 6 through 12 in randomly selected Maryland public high & middle schools. The survey revealed that 19.6% of Maryland's school students had been harassed or bullied on school property during the past 12 months of the survey's administration. This indicated a downward trend of 1.6% from the 2011 survey's results. The survey also revealed a downward trend (-0.2%) of those bullied electronically, (14.2%) in 2011 and (14.0%) in 2013. However, there was an upward trend (+1.4%) from 7.4% in 2011 to 8.8% in 2013 of those students that did not go to school because they felt unsafe in the last 30 days.

During the 2013-2014 school year, 4,587 incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation were reported in Maryland's public schools using the reporting system mandated by the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005. All school systems reported incidents. Consistent with previous reports, most incidents occurred at the middle-school age. The majority of victims reported being teased, called names, or threatened (70.1%), while 43.9% or over a third of the reported incidents involved a physical attack. The most frequently reported motives behind these incidents included, just to be mean, to impress other, and physical appearance- 34.8%, 15.5%, and 7.8%, respectively. It was also noted that there was a large amount of alleged motives captured under the categories of “unknown” (27.1%) and “another reason” (23.6%). MSDE is consistently improving methods to improve the description of data falling into these categories.

These bullying acts were most likely to have occurred on school property (80.8%), and investigation of incidents primarily involved interviewing the victim, offender, witnesses, victim's parent/guardian, or teachers and/or other school staff. Slightly more than twelve percent of incidents (12.6%) resulted in an out-of-school suspension or expulsion, while (5.6%) of incidents resulted in in-school suspensions. Four hundred thirty-one (431) students or a little more than nine percent (9.5%) of victims reportedly missed school as a result of the bullying incident compared to six hundred twenty-one (621) or (13.6%) of alleged offenders.

¹*2007 Maryland Adolescent Survey*, Maryland State Department of Education, October, 2008. Available online at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/student_services_alt/surveys/

The number of incidents reported in Maryland represents about 5.3 reports filed per 1,000 enrolled students; this is an decrease of 2.6 compared to last year. The extent of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in Maryland public schools may likely be underreported by these figures but as bullying prevention programs continue to be implemented in the LEAs and awareness is raised, the number of reported incidents may continue to decrease in coming school years.

Findings from the national publication, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2013 Report*, showed that during the 2010-2011 school year, a higher percentage of public school students than private school students reported being bullied and being subjects of selected bullying problems. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of public school students reported being bullied at school compared to twenty-one percent (21%) of private school students. Higher percentages of public school students than private school students also reported that they were made fun of, called names, or insulted (18% vs. 14%), were the subject of rumors (19% vs. 13%), were threatened with harm (5% vs. 2%), and were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on (8% vs. 5%). Additionally, there were differences by urbanicity: a lower percentage of students in urban areas (25%) reported being bullied at school than students in suburban and rural areas in 2011 (29% and 30 %, respectively).

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the responding public school students reported being bullied at school during the school year. Of those who reported being bullied at school, eighteen percent (18%) reported that they were made fun of, called names, or insulted. Eighteen percent (18%) of students reported being the subject of rumors, five percent (5%) reported being threatened with harm, three percent (3%) reported others tried to make them do things they did not want to do. Six percent (6%) reported being excluded from activities on purpose, three percent (3%) reported their property was destroyed by others on purpose, and eight percent (8%) said they were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on. A higher percentage of females (24%) than males (13%) reported being the subject of rumors in 2011, while a lower percentage of females (7%) than males (9%) reported being shoved, tripped, or spit on. Also, a higher percentage of females (6%) than males (5%) reported being excluded from activities on purpose.

Of the students in 2011 who reported being bullied during the school year, forty-six percent (46%) of students reported that the bullying occurred in the hallway or stairwell at school. In addition, Thirty-three percent (33%) reported being bullied inside the classroom, and twenty-two percent (22%) reported being bullied outside on school grounds. Eleven percent (11%) reported being bullied in the bathroom, nine percent (9%) reported in the cafeteria, seven percent (7%) reported being bullied on the school bus, and two percent (2%) reported being bullied somewhere else in the school.

In 2011, about nine percent (9%) of students reported having been cyber-bullied (bullied using electronic devices or media) on or off school property during the school year. Four percent (4%) of students said that another student posted hurtful information on the internet and four percent (4%) reported being subjected to harassing text messages. Three percent (3%) of students reported being subjected to harassing instant messages, two percent (2%) reported being subjected to harassing emails, and one

percent (1%) reported having their private information purposefully shared on the internet, being harassed while gaming, and being excluded online. With the exception of gaming and being excluded online, female students reported being victims of all other types of cyber-bullying at a higher percentage than males (6% vs. 2%).

The percentage of students being cyber-bullied was higher for White students (11%) than for Hispanic (8%) or Black (7%) students. There was also a higher percentage of 10th graders (12%) being cyber-bullied than students in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 12th grade. Suburban areas were slightly lower than urban areas (7% vs. 10%).

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of students who reported cyber-bullying problems anywhere indicated that these problems occurred at least once or twice a month during the school year. Twenty-six percent (26%) of males and sixteen percent (16%) of females were cyber-bullied once or twice a month, and nine percent (9%) of males and three percent (3%) of females were cyber-bullied once or twice a week. On the other hand, a greater number (79%) of females and (60%) of males reported being cyber-bullied once or twice in the school year.

In 2011, a higher percentage of students reported notifying an adult after being cyber-bullied at school than after being cyber-bullied anywhere else (40% vs. 26%). A higher percentage of females (32%) reported more than males (16%). Higher percentages of students in grades 6 through 9 reported notifying an adult after being bullied at school than students in grades 10 through 12.

The Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2013 Report is annually produced by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), in the U.S. Department of Education, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in the U.S. Department of Justice. It presents the most recent data available on school crime and safety which are based on information drawn from a variety of sources, including national surveys of students, teachers, and principals.²

The data presented in this report confirm that bullying and harassment are a problem in Maryland schools. Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year; an offense code specific to bullying was added to the Maryland Student Records System Manual. The code reflects the number of students who are suspended as a result of bullying. The data on “corrective actions” in this report show that 18.2% of the reported incidents resulted in the suspension (Includes in-school) or expulsion of the alleged perpetrators. There was another 20.3% listed as other, therefore the magnitude of bullying in schools will not be depicted by suspension data alone.

MSDE is submitting this report in order to provide the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly with the information requested by Education Articles §7-424 and §7-424.1, Annotated Code of Maryland. Incidents of harassment and intimidation will continue to be collected this year and indefinitely. Incidents for the entire 2014-2015

²*Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2013*, U.S. Department of Education NCES 2014-042, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs NCJ 243299.

school year will be reported in the next report, to be submitted on March 31, 2016. However, to support this initiative, MSDE will continue to assist LEAs as they develop and implement system-wide and school-wide programs of prevention and intervention to address bullying, harassment, or intimidation. It is important that school systems continue to educate staff, students, and parents about bullying, harassment, and intimidation and to provide resources for bullying prevention, encourage victims to report incidents when they do occur, and follow up with thorough investigations, corrective actions, and remediation.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION REPORTING FORM

Directions: Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are serious and will not be tolerated. This is a form to report alleged bullying harassment, or intimidation that occurred during the current school year on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property, on a school bus, or on the way to and/or from school*; or that substantially disrupted the orderly operation of the school. Bullying, harassment and intimidation mean any intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being. The conduct must (1) be motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability, or (2) be threatening or seriously intimidating. Electronic communication means communication transmitted by means of electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer and pager.

If you are a student, the parent/guardian of a student, a close adult relative of a student, or a school staff member and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying harassment, or intimidation, complete this form and return it to the Principal at the student victim's school. You may contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

(PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

Today's date: _____ / _____ / _____ School: _____

Month Day Year

School System: _____

PERSON REPORTING INCIDENT Name: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Place an X in the appropriate box: Student Parent/guardian of a student Close adult relative of a student School Staff

1. Name of student victim: _____ Age: _____ School _____

2. Name of alleged witness(es) (if known):

_____ Age: _____ School _____

_____ Age: _____ School _____

_____ Age: _____ School _____

3. Name(s) of alleged offender(s) (if known): Age School Is he/she a student?

_____ Yes No

_____ Yes No

_____ Yes No

4. On what date(s) did the incident happen?:

_____ / _____ / _____ _____ / _____ / _____ _____ / _____ / _____

Month Day Year Month Day Year Month Day Year

5. Place an X next to the statement(s) that best describes what happened (choose all that apply):

- Any bullying, harassment, or intimidation that involves physical aggression
- Getting another person to hit or harm the student
- Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks, or threatening, in person or by other means
- Demeaning and making the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures

- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating (bullying), extorting, or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip
- Related to the student's disability
- Related to the student's perceived sexual orientation
- Cyber bullying (e.g. social media including Facebook, Instagram, etc.) _____
- Electronic communication (e.g. email, text, etc.) _____
- Other (specify) _____

6. Where did the incident happen (choose all that apply)?

- On school property At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property
- On a school bus On the way to/from school*

*Will be collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy

7. Describe the incident(s), including what the alleged offender(s) said or did. _____

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

8. Why did the bullying, harassment or intimidation occur? _____

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

9. Did a physical injury result from this incident? Place an **X** next to one of the following:

- No Yes, but it did not require medical attention Yes, and it required medical attention

10. If there was a physical injury, do you think there will be permanent effects? Yes No

11. Was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident? Yes No

If yes, how many days was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident? _____

12. Did a psychological injury result from this incident? Place an **X** next to one of the following:

- No Yes, but psychological services have not been sought Yes, and psychological services have been sought

13. Is there any additional information you would like to provide? _____

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION INCIDENT SCHOOL INVESTIGATION FORM

School Personnel Completing Form: _____ Position: _____

Today's date: _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

School: _____

School System: _____

Person Reporting Incident (From reporting form) Name: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Place an X in the appropriate box: Student Parent/guardian Close adult relative School Staff Student Witness/Bystander

1. Name of student victim: _____ Age: _____ Days absent as a result of the incident: _____
(Please print)

2. Name(s) of alleged offender(s) (If known):	Age	School	Is he/she a student?	Days absent due to incident
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____

(Please print)

Total number of alleged offenders: _____

INVESTIGATION

3. What actions were taken to investigate this incident? (choose all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed student victim | <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed student victim's parent/guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed alleged offender(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed alleged offender's parent/guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed witnesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Examined physical evidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Witness statements collected in writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Conducted student record review |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed school nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Obtained copy of police report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed any medical information available | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewed teachers and/or school staff | |

4. Why did the harassment or intimidation (bullying) occur (alleged motives)? (choose all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of race | <input type="checkbox"/> Because of disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of national origin | <input type="checkbox"/> Because of physical appearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of marital status | <input type="checkbox"/> To impress others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of sex | <input type="checkbox"/> Just to be mean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of sexual orientation | <input type="checkbox"/> Because of another reason (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of gender identity | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because of religion | <input type="checkbox"/> The reason is unknown |

5. What corrective actions were taken in this case (choose all that apply)?

- None were required, this was a false allegation
- None, the incident did not warrant any corrective action
- Student conference
- Student warning
- Letter of apology
- Mediation
- Counseling
- Parent letter
- Parent phone call
- Parent conference
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension/expulsion
- Other (specify) _____

6. Additional pertinent information gained during the interview : _____

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

7. Investigator notes: _____

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Enter the total number of responses in each category. Because some items are "mark all that apply," totals may exceed the total number of reports filed. Enter responses in bordered, highlighted cells.

Local School System:

Indicate the number of persons of each age

R.I	Ages:	Number of Student Victims	Number of Alleged Student Offenders in Student Victim's School	Number of Alleged Student Offenders Not in Student Victim's School	Alleged Offenders Who are Not Students
	Age birth to 4				
	Age 5				
	Age 6				
	Age 7				
	Age 8				
	Age 9				
	Age 10				
	Age 11				
	Age 12				
	Age 13				
	Age 14				
	Age 15				
	Age 16				
	Age 17				
	Age 18				
	Age 19 and older				

R **Location of the Incident:** **Number of Incidents**

On school property	
At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property	
On a school bus	
On the way to/from school**	

**Will be collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy

R **Description of the Incident:** **Number of Incidents**

Any bullying, harassment, or intimidation that involves physical aggression	
Getting another person to hit or harm the student	
Teasing, name calling, making critical remarks, or threatening, in person or by other means	
Demeaning and making the victim of jokes	
Making rude and/or threatening gestures.	
Excluding or rejecting the student	
Intimidating (bullying), extorting, or exploiting	
Spreading harmful rumors or gossip	
Related to the student's disability	
Related to the student's perceived sexual orientation	
Cyber bullying (e.g. social media including Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	
Electronic communication	
Other	

I	<u>Alleged Motives:</u>	<u>Number of Incidents</u>
	Race	
	National origin	
	Marital status	
	Sex	
	Sexual orientation	
	Gender identity	
	Religion	
	Disability	
	Physical appearance	
	To impress others	
	Just to be mean	
	Another reason	
	Unknown	

R,I	<u>Days Student Victim Was Absent As a Result of the Incident</u>	<u>Number of Incidents</u>
	0 days	
	1 day	
	2 days	
	3 days	
	4 days	
	5 days	
	6 days	
	7 days	
	8 days	
	9 days	
	10 days	
	More than 10 days	

I	<u>Days Alleged Student Offender Was Absent As a Result of the Incident</u>	<u>Number of Incidents</u>
	0 days	
	1 day	
	2 days	
	3 days	
	4 days	
	5 days	
	6 days	
	7 days	
	8 days	
	9 days	
	10 days	
	More than 10 days	

I Investigative Methods:	Number of Incidents
Interviewed student victim	
Interviewed alleged offender(s)	
Interviewed witnesses	
Witness statements collected in writing	
Interviewed school nurse	
Reviewed any medical information available	
Interviewed alleged offender's parent/guardian	
Interviewed teachers and/or school staff	
Conducted student record review	
Interviewed student victim's parent/guardian	
Reviewed physical evidence	
Obtained copy of police report	
Other	

I Corrective Actions:	Number of Incidents
None required; this was a false allegation	
None, the incident did not warrant any corrective action	
Student conference	
Student warning	
Letter of apology	
Mediation	
Counseling	
Parent letter	
Parent phone call	
Parent conference	
Detention	
In-school suspension	
Out-of-school suspension/expulsion	
Other	
<u>Total Local School System</u>	
<u>Number of Incident Reports</u>	
<u>Filed:</u>	

Thank you for your assistance in submitting this data.

Key:

R = Information is on the Harassment or Intimidation (Bullying) Reporting Form.

I = Information is on the Harassment or Intimidation (Bullying) Incident School Investigation Form.

Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 Implementation Instructions for Local School Systems

The **Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005** mandates the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to require county boards of education to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation against students attending a public school under the jurisdiction of the county board. The law further specifies procedures for reporting these acts, including specific guidelines for a *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form*. Additionally, the law requires MSDE to report to the Maryland General Assembly the following:

- A description of the act constituting the harassment or intimidation (bullying);
- The age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;
- The allegation of the alleged perpetrator's motive;
- A description of the investigation of the complaint and any corrective action taken by the appropriate school authorities;
- The number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a result of the incident; and
- The number of false allegations reported.

Each local school system (LSS) is required to designate a staff person who will be responsible for implementing this law within the system. LSSs will establish procedures for collecting, compiling and reporting information to MSDE. The following procedures are defined by the law:

- MSDE is providing a copy of the standard *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* to LSSs. Each LSS will make this form available to students, parents or guardians of students, close relatives of students, and school staff members.
- Students, parents or guardians of students, and close relatives of students will return the completed *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Form* to the principal of the student victim's school.
- An investigation of the alleged incident will occur in accordance with LSS policies.
- A sample *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Investigation Form* is being provided. LSSs may modify this form, however, the elements on this form are required to complete the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument*.
- **LSSs will need information from the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form* as well as information obtained from the investigation in order to complete the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument* (Excel spreadsheet). The *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument* must be submitted to Dr. Michael Ford at MSDE michael.ford1@maryland.gov as an attachment by email by December 5, 2014.**
- A hard copy of the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Reporting Instrument* must be mailed by December 2, 2014 with the "Certification of Superintendent's Signature" to:

**Dr. Michael Ford
Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Student and School Services
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201**

Who is Responsible	What is Needed	Date	Reporting Period
LSS	Make <i>Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying)</i> forms available to students and parents/guardians and close adult relatives	Starting September, 2005	NA
Local Schools	Report alleged incidents and results of investigation to LSS	TBD by LSS	NA
LSS	Submit <i>Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying) Incident Reporting Instrument</i> to MSDE (Dr. Michael Ford- see first page for directions)	December 5, of each year.	September, through January
MSDE	Submit report to Maryland General Assembly	March 31, of each year.	September, through January

***This law will remain in effect unless changed by legislation. Subsequent reporting periods will be for entire school years. Reports to the General Assembly will be submitted by March 31 of each calendar year.**

The following definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is included on the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form* to guide students, parents, adult relatives, and school staff when completing this form, and to guide LSS staff when investigating incidents.

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation means conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication, that (I) creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being, and is: 1. motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion ancestry, physical attribute, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or 2. threatening or seriously intimidating; and (II) 1. occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or 2. substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school. Electronic communication means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

If you need additional information, please contact Dr. Michael Ford, Safety Specialist, at (410) 767-0031, or email michael.ford1@maryland.gov.



**Division of Student, Family, and School Support
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

**Technical Assistance Bulletin
for
Implementing Maryland's
Model Policy to Address
Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation**

**Division of Student, Family, and School Support
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
November 2013**



Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

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State Superintendent of Schools

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Martin O'Malley
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[Equity Assurance and Compliance Office](#)
Maryland State Department of Education
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For more information, call 410-767-0311 or 410-767-7770

Bullying Prevention/Intervention: Guidance, Clarification, and Practice

Background

Bullying in schools has become an urgent social, health, and education concern according to the U.S. Department of Education's Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies (December 2011). This Bulletin is designed to provide additional guidance and information to school district administrators, teachers, and staff relating to efforts to implement Maryland's bullying laws and the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) *Maryland's Model Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*, 2009 (Policy). In addition, this Bulletin is intended to encourage schools to take a closer look at how they are implementing their anti-bullying policies, and how they are handling reported incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in order to ensure more reliable, accurate, and uniform reporting of information to the MSDE.

In July, 2005, the Safe Schools Reporting Act became effective after being passed by the Maryland General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor. The law required the development of a form to be used by students, parents, and close family members to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation to school administrators. The law also required all local school systems to record specific information from these forms and to submit that information to MSDE for inclusion in its annual report to the General Assembly. See Education Article, Section 7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland, for what is mandated by statute in Maryland.

On July 1, 2008, the Maryland General Assembly directed the Maryland State Board of Education in consultation with local school systems, to develop and adopt a model policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation in schools. The Maryland State Board of Education recognizes that safe learning environments are necessary for students to achieve high academic standards. Schools which are both safe and civil have the ability to powerfully promote such achievement and positive youth development. Moreover, a positive and supportive school climate allows for the school community to function in an atmosphere of social, emotional, and physical safety. See Education Article, Section 7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland, for what is mandated by law to be included in the model policy.

Maryland's Model Policy may be found at:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/0700B064-C2B3-41FC-A6CF-D3DAE4969707/19401/ModelBullyingPolicyDRAFT102108.pdf>

This Bulletin has been arranged around three over-arching topics:

Prevention; Intervention / Remediation; and Consequences, to provide insight into the implementation of bullying prevention and intervention laws.

PREVENTION

1. Does Maryland's *Model Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation* address the issue of prevention?

Yes. Maryland's *Model Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*, hereafter referred to as the Policy, states that "The prevention of bullying requires a concerted effort to support a whole-school bullying program involving awareness, prevention, and early intervention training with students, parents, administration, and school staff. A school-wide prevention/intervention program addresses the prohibition of bullying in schools as well as retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying."

2. Does the Policy describe what a school will do to prevent bullying?

Yes. The Policy provides specific information on what prevention efforts will include. However, the Policy does not provide an exhaustive list of all the actions schools can take to address the prevention of bullying. The Policy states that prevention *includes* designated items, although MSDE encourages schools to take additional actions and measures beyond those listed in the Policy, as needed, in order to prevent bullying.

The Policy requires that prevention efforts include at least annual professional development for administrators and all staff to increase awareness of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies for preventing bullying. Additional professional development may be provided for new employees who are hired after the start of the school year and thus were unable to attend the scheduled professional development activity. Annual professional development activities should be selected based on the needs of the school at that time. In order to determine the needs of the school, administrators should solicit information from students, staff, and parents about their concerns and perceptions with regard to bullying. This information could be collected through questionnaires or by providing a means for anonymous sharing of information.

Suggested prevention-based efforts to be considered include the following:

- Adoption of a school-wide evidence-based anti-bullying program to be implemented as a part of a system of positive behavioral supports and school improvement efforts at all grade levels.
- Implementation of school climate improvement efforts to promote student involvement in the anti-bullying efforts.
- Collaboration with families and the community to inform parents about the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying, including its central role as a public health hazard, and means of preventing bullying.
- Biennial school/building-specific data collection on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying which is to be used to guide local decision-making related to surveillance, prevention, intervention, and professional development.

3. Does the Policy provide information or guidance concerning Cyber Bullying?

No. The Policy states, “In the creation and support of school climates that are safe places to learn, there is an evolving recognition that bullying is a very toxic form of abuse among peers. Students who are bullied and those who bully others are at significant risk of experiencing a range of health, safety, and educational risks. Bullying can be physical (hitting, pushing, shoving), verbal (being teased, threatened, coerced, made fun of, called derogatory names) or relational (spreading rumors, being left out or ostracized). However, students often use electronic devices to bully their peers. The use of technology in peer abuse is called cyber bullying. Cyber bullying includes acts such as posting negative comments on a social media site, sending malicious or defamatory tweets, sexting (sending explicit material, photos or videos), impersonating another person and sending negative messages and other forms of on-line abuse.

“**Cyber bullying**” may be defined as a person tormenting, threatening, harassing, or embarrassing another person using the Internet or other electronic technologies, for example, smart phones. The psychological and emotional outcomes of cyber bullying are similar to those of in person bullying. The difference is that traditional, non-virtual bullying often ends when the school day ends. Cyber bullying can occur twenty-four hours a day.

Types of Online Bullying:

According to the [InternetSafety101curriculum](http://internetsafety101.org/cyberbullying.htm) (<http://internetsafety101.org/cyberbullying.htm>) there are many types of Cyber bullying:

- **Gossip:** Posting or sending cruel gossip to damage a person’s reputation and relationships with friends, family, and acquaintances.
- **Exclusion:** Deliberately excluding someone from an online group.
- **Impersonation:** Breaking into someone’s e-mail or other online account and sending messages that will cause embarrassment or damage to the person’s reputation and negatively affect his or her relationship with others.
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly posting or sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.
- **Cyber Stalking:** Posting or sending unwanted or intimidating messages, which may include threats.
- **Flaming:** Online fights where scornful and offensive messages are posted on websites, forums, or blogs.
- **Outing and Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, this is then shared online.
- **Cyber Threats:** Remarks on the Internet threatening or implying violent behavior, displaying suicidal tendencies.

Moreover, the 2013 Maryland General Assembly passed legislation, House Bill 396 (Grace’s Law), that was signed into law by the Governor which creates penalties for persons who use a computer or other electronic means to harass or psychologically torment a minor. A person

who violates this law may be found guilty of a misdemeanor and if convicted may be subject to imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both.

While not a part of the Policy, the latest research indicates that a positive school climate is the best and most effective way to reduce and prevent bullying incidents from occurring. Creating a school climate that is conducive to learning and student safety requires the investment of the leadership and all of the building staff. By modeling desired behaviors, intervening early, teaching problem solving skills, and addressing peer abuse immediately schools reduce the number of behavioral referrals, as well as out of class and out of school suspensions. It is important that schools are continually assessing their climate to ensure that students feel welcomed and safe in order to ensure optimum environments for learning.

- Students and staff should feel they are in a school that is welcoming, inclusive and safe.
- Students and staff should be part of a school community that promotes positive communication and interactions.
- Students and staff should feel physically and emotionally safe.
- Students and staff should feel they are in a building that encourages student success and values the contributions of the teaching community.

4. Does the Policy provide specific recommendations or strategies for building a positive school climate?

Yes. Strategies for building a positive school climate include, but are not limited to:

a. Building positive relationships with students:

- What do students see and hear when they first walk into their school?
- Do they see reminders of the expectations?
- Do they hear teachers welcoming students into the building?
- Do they see staff treating all students in a respectful manner?
- Do they hear positive words from their peers?
- When students are reprimanded, what does that look like?
- Are the corrections administered in ways that maintain a child's dignity and self-esteem?
- Do students feel valued?

If students see and hear positive messages throughout the school day they will be encouraged to act in a positive manner as well. If students and staff work collectively to build a positive foundation, then the school will have far fewer problems with bullying. The improved climate will allow students and staff to more fully focus on instruction and developing meaningful social relationships.

- b. Staff visibility:** Staff presence and attentiveness is critical. Staff should be present in the hallways and in the lunchroom, with and around students. This should go beyond simply keeping an eye out for misbehavior, and also include taking the time to speak with and listen to students. The impact of regular presence of staff throughout all

environments of a school can be significant.

- c. **Expectations:** Clear and consistent expectations should be identified and posted in each school for all students to see. These expectations should be explicitly taught and practiced, and student adherence to these expectations should be reinforced.
- d. **Teaching respect for diversity:** Students should be taught the expectations of the school and also to respect the differences of one another. Through classroom lessons and school wide curriculum, students can be encouraged to show acceptance to their peers.
- e. **Evaluating the school culture/environment:** While various methods exist to evaluate school climate, consideration should be given to routinely surveying students to determine their perceptions about the school.

INTERVENTION/REMEDATION

5. Does the Policy provide guidance regarding intervention and remediation?

Yes. The Policy holds that intervention and remediation will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Professional development for school staff should include how to respond appropriately to students who are bullied, bully others, or are bystanders who report bullying.
- Education/intervention for students exhibiting bullying behaviors will include teaching replacement behaviors, empathy, tolerance and sensitivity to diversity.
- Education/intervention for students who are bystanders to bullying behavior will include the importance of their role in preventing and intervening in bullying. They should be encouraged to minimally tell an adult if they witness an incident of bullying.
- Remedial measures must correct the bullying behavior, prevent future occurrences, and protect the victim.
- Support/counseling will be made available for the victim with protection from retaliation and further episodes of bullying.
- A continuum of interventions will be developed to prevent bullying by addressing the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who bully.
- Community health and mental health resources will be made available for students who are unable to stop bullying behaviors despite school intervention, as well as for students involved in bullying behaviors as perpetrators, victims, or witnesses, whose mental or physical health, safety, or academic performance has been impacted.

The Policy only states what intervention and remediation will *include*. The Policy does not in any way limit other types of intervention or remediation that schools can incorporate, as appropriate, or that should be undertaken, as needed, in order to prevent bullying.

6. Are there model procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation?

Yes. The Policy provides specific model procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. However, the Policy also expressly states that schools are not limited to the model procedures, and schools are encouraged to develop or refine their own reporting procedures.

The model procedures are restated below, each with some best practice information.

- If a student complains that he/she is currently the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the staff member will respond quickly and appropriately to investigate and intervene, as safety permits.

Best Practice Tip: Staff members should inform students about the availability of the Reporting Form and how it may be obtained. Staff members should immediately inform the principal of the reported incident and complete the form to best ensure proper documentation.

- If a student expresses a desire to discuss an incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.

- **Best Practice Tip:** Staff should ask the student with whom he/she would feel most comfortable discussing the matter.

- Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms may be obtained in the school's main (front) office, counselor's office, and other locations determined by the local school system. The forms may be submitted by a student, parent, close adult relative, or staff member to school administration. A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the form.

Best Practice Tip: Schools should have the Reporting Forms available and freely accessible to students at all times in a designated location of the school, so that students can obtain the forms without any need to make a request to a staff member. If the Reporting Form is not freely available in the school, staff should immediately provide the form to a student upon request, without questioning the student about the need or intended purpose of the request. The Reporting Form should also be available through the school's website; the on-line form must be prominently located and accessible.

- Local school systems will devise ways in which reporting forms may be submitted to school administration.

Best Practice Tip: Any school staff person should accept a Reporting Form from a student or parent. A copy of each Reporting Form received by the school should be immediately given to the principal or the principal's designee.

- Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms may also be obtained electronically from the school system's website or a school's website and may be

submitted by a student, parent or guardian, close relative, or staff member to school administration.

Best Practice Tip: Schools should accept the Reporting Form from any of the above identified sources. Parents can submit a Reporting Form on behalf of a child who is a student. There is no requirement that a student complete a Reporting Form. Schools cannot refuse to accept a Reporting Form from any person representing the best interests of the student.

- Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms should be made available and accessible in a variety of formats to ease the burden of reporting.

Best Practice Tip: School systems and schools should examine their methods of making the Reporting Form available in terms of the number of reports they receive. If the system's student population is inconsistent with what is known from national reports on the prevalence of bullying in schools then the system should examine its distribution methods.

- Information obtained from the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form shall be stored for state data collection, storage, and submission according to the requirements of Education Article § 7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Best Practice Tip: Schools must record and store the information from each submitted Reporting Form regardless of the outcome of any investigation. **Schools cannot unilaterally decide that the reported incident does not constitute bullying, harassment, or intimidation,** for purposes of reporting requirements.

7. **Are there model procedures for the prompt investigation of acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation?**

Yes. The Policy provides specific model procedures for investigating acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. However, the Policy also expressly states that schools are not limited to the model procedures, and are encouraged to develop or refine their own investigating procedures consistent with the policies and procedures of their local boards of education:

- All reports must be written using the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form. They must then be promptly and appropriately investigated by school administrators or the administrative designee, consistent with due process rights, using the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Investigation Form. All reported incidents of bullying should be investigated as timely as possible and **must** be investigated within two (2) school days after receipt of a reporting form.

Best Practice Tip: Investigation should include written or transcribed statements from witnesses, if any, and copies of the investigator's notes or logs related to the incident.

- The school administrator/administrative designee will determine whether bullying, harassment, or intimidation actually occurred by taking steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and whether others played a role in perpetuating this act. Other related complaints, if any, will be reviewed in making this determination.

Best Practice Tip: In making this determination, school administrators or designees are reminded to refer to the definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation used in the Policy. Neither victim nor witnesses should be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or if a hearing may result from the ultimate outcome of the investigation. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the victim and any witnesses. They should be informed that any information discussed and recorded will be confined to a “need to know” basis.

- The school administrator/administrative designee will immediately notify parents of the victim and offender of the incident.

Best Practice Tip: Schools should make reasonable effort to notify parents on the same day that a Reporting Form is received, or on the date of a reported incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Schools may want to consider meeting with parents of the victim to discuss a plan of support for the victim. Schools should inform parents of the offender that retaliation is strictly prohibited and of consequences if the offender continues bullying, harassment or intimidation. School staff should also meet with the parent of the offender to develop an appropriate intervention plan to address the act(s) of bullying.

- The school administrator/administrative designee will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with due process rights using the range of listed consequences as a guide. The offender will be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is strictly prohibited and that progressive consequences will occur if the activity continues.

Best Practice Tip: The school administrator/administrative designee will create a written record of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, and include the statements of the victim, witnesses, and offender. Discussions with all parties should be documented as soon as possible after the event. Any material records or evidence will not be discarded while a criminal investigation or prosecution resulting from the incident is ongoing.

Best Practice Tip: Bullying is an imbalance of power. For this reason, the bully and the victim should not be placed in a position of confronting one another. The school should maintain the written record in a separate location from the student’s cumulative folder.

- Separate conferences with the victim and offender will occur within two (2) weeks

after the investigation to determine whether the bullying, harassment, or intimidation has continued and whether additional consequences need to be implemented. These conferences may occur as part of the counseling intervention. Another follow-up conference or conversation will be held with the victim four (4) weeks after the initial follow-up conference to determine if the bullying, harassment, or intimidation has ceased. Local school systems will determine which school system staff will conduct the conferences.

Best Practice Tip: The victim and the offender should not be forced to confront each other. Local school systems are encouraged to develop processes and procedures by which parents/guardians of alleged victims are made aware of what is occurring regarding the incident of bullying.

- The administrator/administrative designee should be aware that some acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation could also be delinquent acts. Delinquent acts shall be promptly reported to the responsible law enforcement agency according to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.15.

8. Are there steps parents can take if they feel that the school has been unresponsive to their concern or report of bullying?

Yes. In instances wherein parents feel the school has not been responsive to the reported incident, the parent or guardian should contact the local school system's Director of Student Services.

9. If a student with a disability has been bullied, are there other steps the school must take to ensure the child receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)?

Yes. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) schools have the responsibility to ensure that a student with a disability who is a target of bullying continues to receive a FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) issued a letter, August 20, 2013 to provide an overview of a school district's responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to address bullying of students with disabilities. Bullying of a student with disabilities, regardless of whether or not the bullying is related to the student's disability, is considered a denial of FAPE if it results in the student not receiving meaningful educational benefit. The student's school should convene an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine whether, as a result of the effects of the bullying, the student's needs have changed as a result of the bullying, and revise the IEP as needed. Schools may not attempt to resolve a bullying situation by unilaterally changing the frequency, duration, intensity, placement, or location of a student's special education and related services. These decisions must be made by the student's IEP team and consistent the IDEA's provisions for parental participation as a member of the IEP team. Below is a link to the letter: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/index.html?exp=8>

10. Are there any recommended supports that are to be provided to the bully, victim, witness, or any bystanders?

Yes. The Policy provides the following list of support services available to the bully, victim, witnesses, and bystanders. This list is presented as a guide that by no means limits school systems from including other additional support services. Interventions and programs should be implemented, as appropriate, based on context, situation, age, and severity. School systems are encouraged to provide a list of the types of available support services based upon their available resources and those available in the communities in which their schools are located, consistent with the policies and procedures of their local boards of education.

Types of supports available to the student bully, victim, witnesses, and bystanders:

Local school systems are encouraged to develop a matrix of support services available in both the school and the community.

School/System

- Referral to the school's student services team for case management
- Counseling
- Conflict resolution
- Problem solving skills training (proactive, constructive, relationship-building)
- Social skills/competency training
- Anger management training
- Educational programming for all affected; this includes, but is not limited to, students, staff, and parents
- Parental involvement
- Peer support groups
- Schedule modifications
- Targeted use of monitors (e.g. hallways, cafeteria, buses)

Community/Family

- Public or private community-based mental health services
- Faith-based services
- Multi-service centers
- Health Department programs
- Youth development organizations
- Community mediations
- Department of Juvenile Services
- Department of Social Services
- Law enforcement agencies

11. Does the Policy contain any direction as to the availability and use of the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form?

Yes. The Policy includes the following information regarding the availability and use of the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form and is presented as a guide that by no means limits school systems from providing other additional information regarding the availability and use of the reporting form. School systems are encouraged to develop or refine their own methods for providing information regarding the availability and use of the reporting form consistent with the policies and procedures of their local boards of education:

- Schools will inform staff about the availability of the Reporting Form for their use during opening of school meetings and then periodically throughout the school year.
- Schools will inform students about the availability of the Reporting Form and its use during orientation sessions the first week of school.
- Forms will be included in the beginning-of-the-year packet for students and their parents.
- A description about the availability of the Reporting Form and its use should be published in a school's student/parent handbook and in a school's Code of Conduct/Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.
- A description about the availability of the Reporting Form and its use should be published on the local school system's main website which should include the capability for downloading the form. Local school systems should also implement a digitized on-line reporting form.
- Reporting Forms should be available in all schools in the main (front) office, counselor's office, and other locations determined by the local school system.
- A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the Reporting Form at school if the student wishes.

Best Practice Tip: Students with disabilities may wish to ask their Individualized Education Program (IEP) Chair/Case Manager to assist them in completing the Reporting Form. In general, a student should ask a trusted adult to help them complete the Reporting Form.

CONSEQUENCES

12. Does the Policy contain guidance for Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation?

Yes. The Policy holds that:

- Consequences such as suspensions, expulsions, or protective orders should not be viewed as punishments designed to prevent bullying. Instead these are means of protecting the victim by providing community containment while positive behavioral discipline is implemented.
- Consequences should also include recognition for positive behavior exhibited by the

student who has previously exhibited bullying behavior, the bullied student who is implementing strategies to offset past problems, and the bystander who has taken an active role in addressing bullying behaviors.

13. Is there a set of “Standard Consequences and Remedial Actions for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, for persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation and for persons found to have made false accusations?”

Yes. Consequences and remedial actions for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation, and persons found to have made false accusations should be consistently and fairly applied after appropriate investigation has determined that such an offense has occurred. The following list of consequences and remedial actions is presented in no particular order and is provided as a guide that by no means limits school systems from implementing other additional consequences and remedial actions. School systems are encouraged to develop or refine their own consequences and remedial actions consistent with the policies and procedures of their local boards of education:

Standard Consequences

- Time out
- Loss of a privilege
- Verbal reprimand
- Parental notification
- Detention
- Reassignment of seats in class, cafeteria, or bus
- Reassignment of classes
- Reassignment to another mode of transportation
- Reassignment to another school
- Completion of letter of acknowledgement of action, with apology, to victim (after review by staff and not in a case of sexual harassment or intimidation)
- Reparation to victim in the form of payment for or repair of damage to possession
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Extended suspension
- Transfer to an appropriate alternative program
- Referral to law enforcement
- Expulsion

Remedial Actions

- Parent/student conference
- Restorative Practices such as:
 - Counseling with school counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist

- Education about the effects of bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Behavioral contract/Positive behavioral supports – e.g. Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) that results in the development of a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP); remediation of problem behaviors that takes into account the nature of the offense, the developmental level of the student, and the student’s behavioral history
- Referral to an external agency such as the local care team, community counseling centers
- Participation in counseling (delivered by a school or community mental health provider)
- Cooperation with a behavioral management program developed in consultation with a mental health professional
- Satisfactory completion of community service

While local school systems have a continuum of interventions to address bullying, harassment, and intimidation, the use of out-of-school suspension should only be considered as a last resort option when the behavior is chronic, escalating, and/or constitutes a threat of serious harm to the alleged victim.

For more information, call 410-767-0311 or 410-767-7770

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools

August 25, 2015

**Division of Student, Family, and School Support
Maryland State Department of Education**

Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005

Passed by the Maryland General Assembly

- The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must...
 - Require all county boards to report incidents of harassment or intimidation against students in public schools;
 - Create and distribute a “Standard Victim of Harassment or Intimidation Report Form”, and to submit a report to the Maryland General Assembly consisting of a summary of the information; and
 - Develop a model anti-bullying policy in collaboration with school system representatives. Created in March 2009; updated in 2013.



Background

- Working in conjunction with Stakeholders, Maryland developed a standard form for reporting incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.
- Incidents can be reported by:
 - Student
 - Parent or Guardian
 - Close Adult Relative
 - School Staff Member

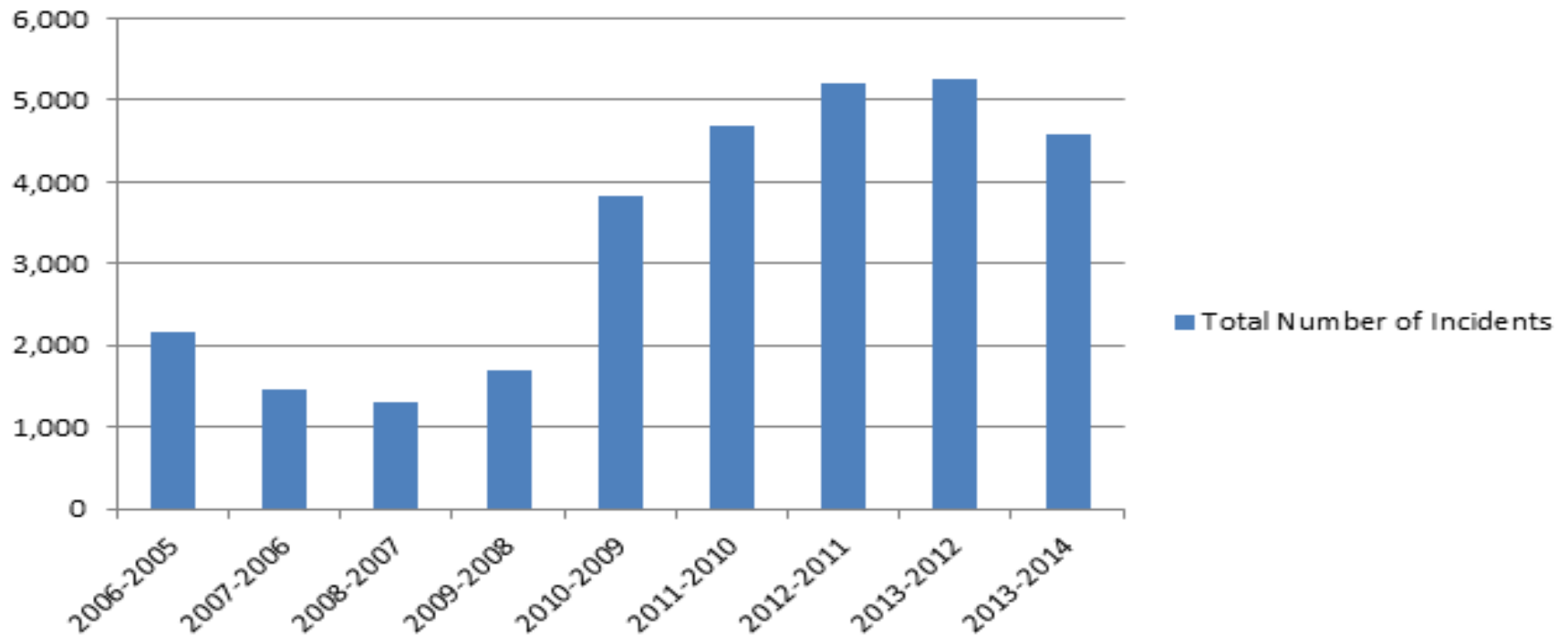
Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Report

- Prepared annually and submitted to the Maryland General Assembly.
- Reports data and analysis from the previous school year.
- Provides data on:
 - Number of Incidents
 - Descriptions of incidents
 - Age (victims & offenders)
 - Days missed from school (victims & offenders)
 - Corrective actions taken
 - Other

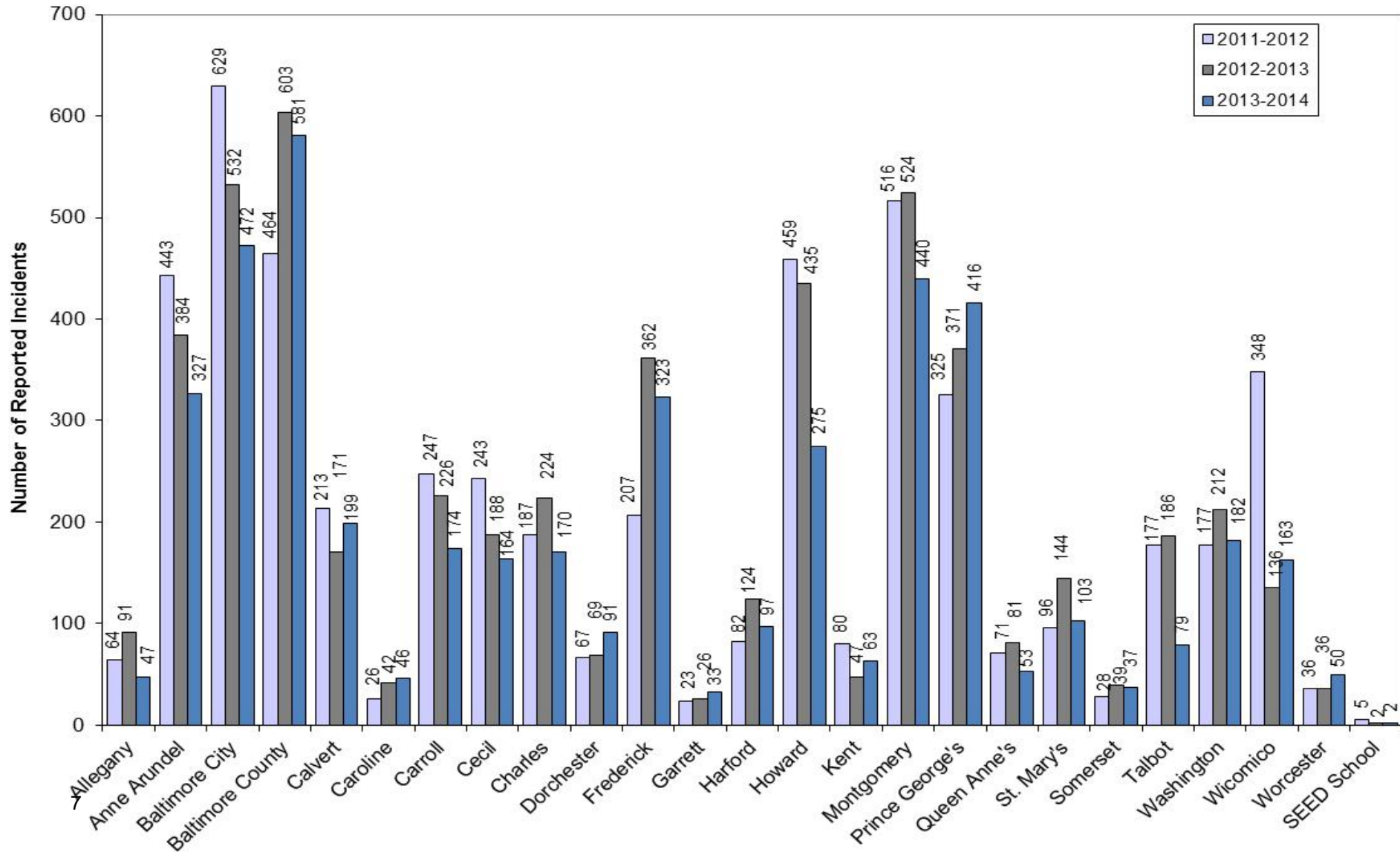
Findings

- Statewide, there were a total of 4,587 reported incidents(2013-2014) –
 - A decrease of 668 reported incidents (5,255) from the 2012-2013 school year and
 - A decrease of 626 reported incidents (5,213) from the 2011-2012 school year.
 - On average 1 out of 189 students are bullied or approximately 5% statewide.

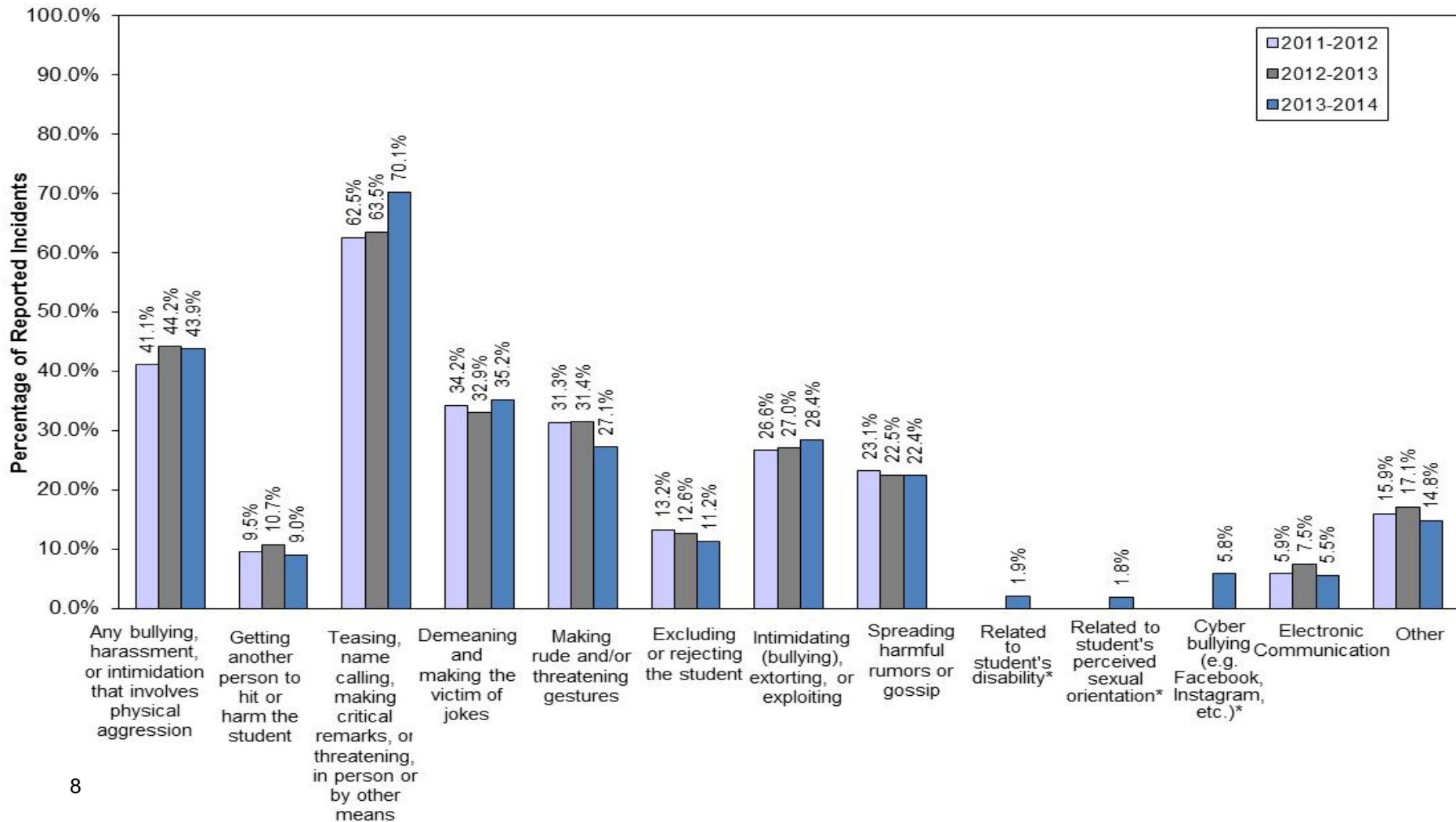
Bullying, Harassment, of Intimidation State Tools 2005-2014



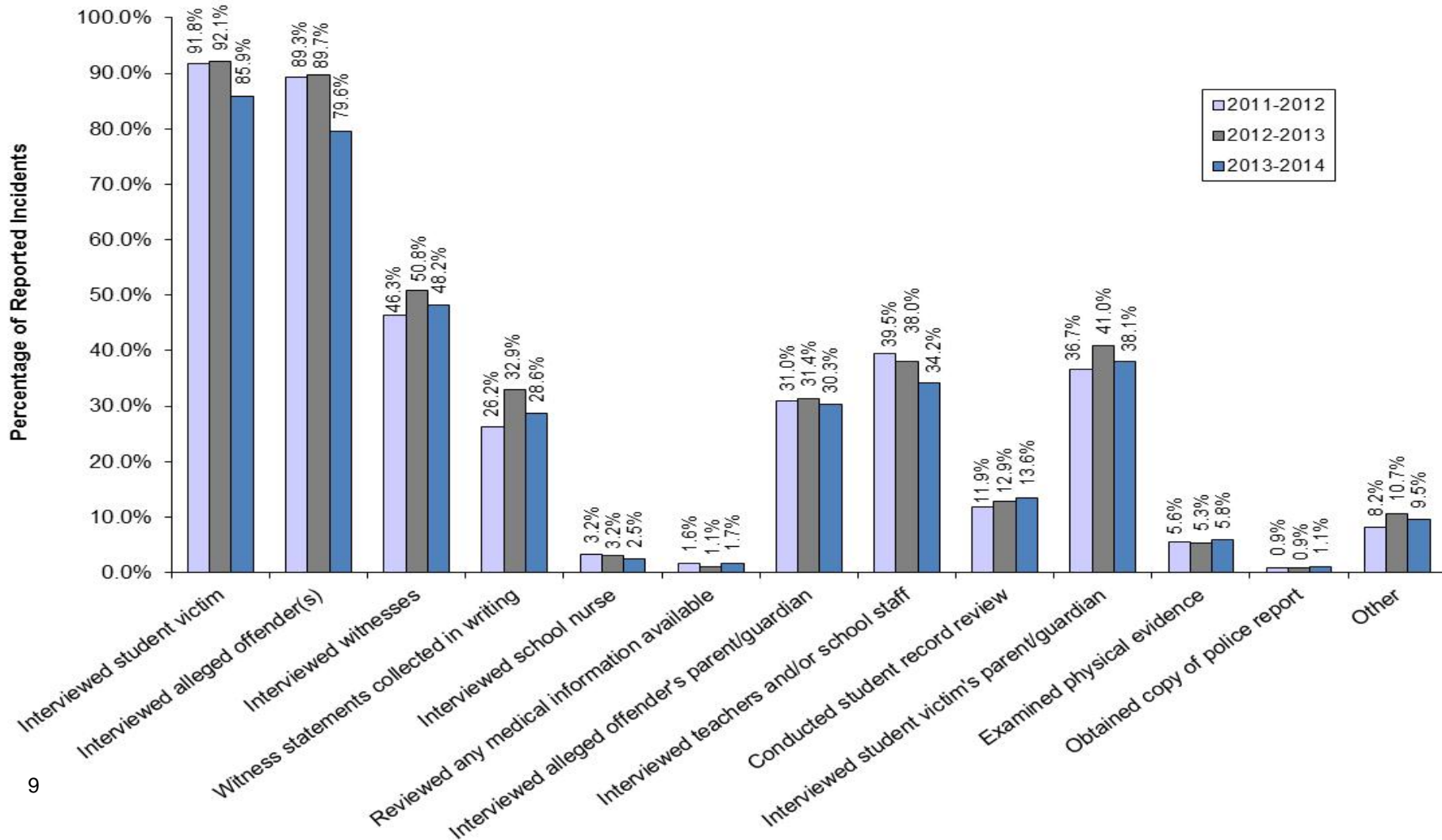
Data Snapshot - Number of Incidents



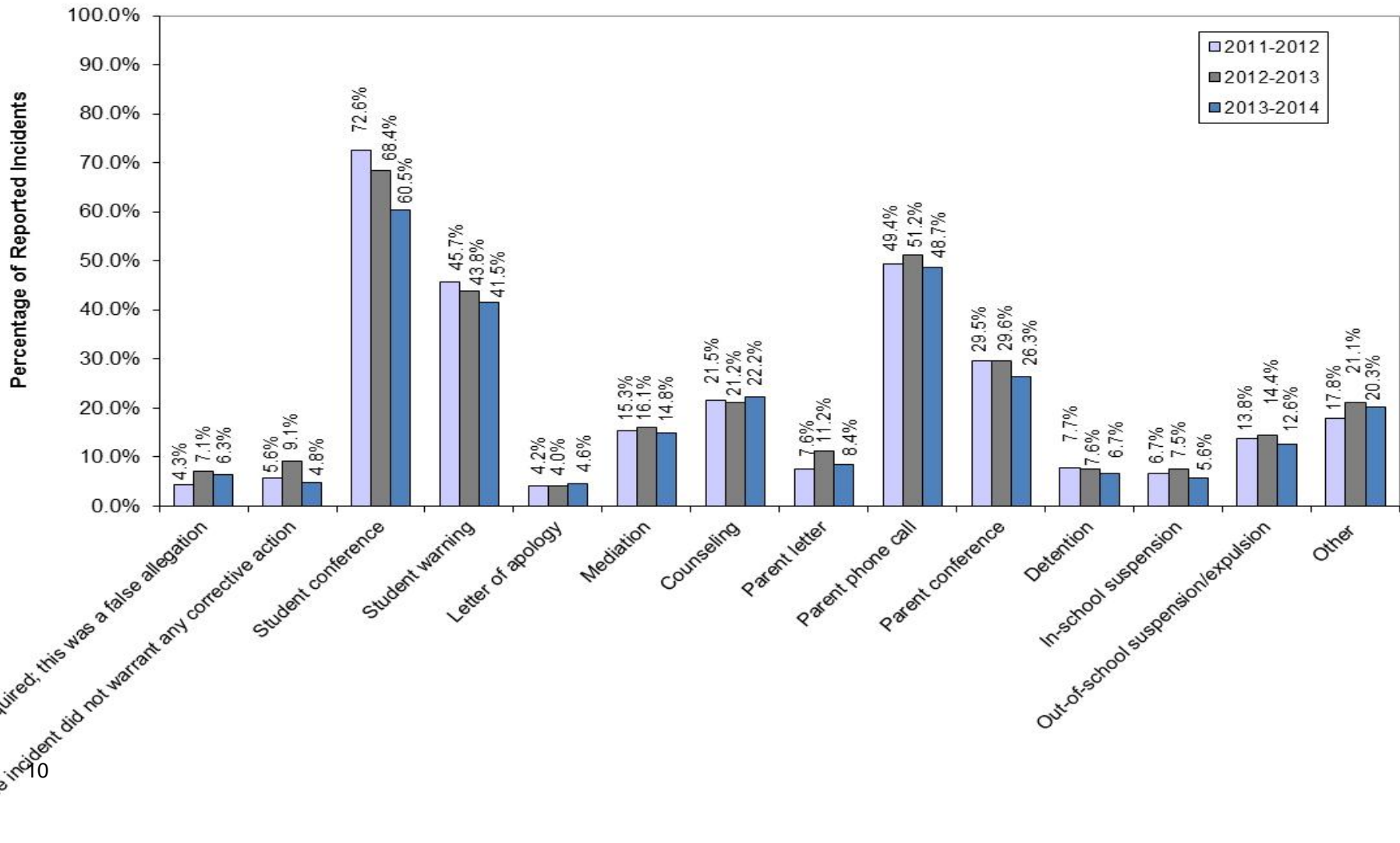
Data Snapshot - Descriptions of Incidents



Data Snapshot - Methods used to Investigate



Data Snapshot - Corrective Actions Taken



Model Bullying Policy Reporting Procedures

Step 1

School officials must notify parents immediately upon. Once form is received, school officials have 48 hours or two school days to begin investigation.

Step 2

School officials must complete an investigation and meet with all parties involved to discuss and resolve incident within two weeks.

Step 3

School officials must follow up conference with all parties after four weeks of the initial conference.

MSDE (Bullying Prevention) Technical Assistance

Provide technical assistance to school systems to ensure they are implementing a coordinated program of student services.

- Annual training with Directors of Student Services
 - to identify and implement additional strategies
- Develop and improve local bullying policies
- Provide technical assistance on strategies for addressing **parents** on Bullying.
- Provide technical assistance on strategies for parents to address **school officials** about bullying.

MSDE (School Safety) Technical Assistance

- Whole Child & Whole School Approach
 - Emergency plan reviews in conjunction with the Maryland Center for School Safety.
 - Gang awareness and prevention Technical Assistance with LEA's.
 - Heroin and Opioid awareness Technical Assistance with LEA's
 - Human Trafficking Awareness Technical Assistance with LEA's.
 - School Resource Officer (SRO) Training on topics including: Bullying, parent engagement, Human trafficking, Adolescent social skills, etc.
 - Parent and Community Outreach.
 - Bullying prevention seminars for Students, Staff, Parents, Community members and Universities (usually grad level).

School Intervention Strategies

- All school systems have implemented bullying awareness and prevention programs, including:
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)- (All 24 Districts at different levels of integration and use)
 - Olweus (Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Prince George's)
 - Character Counts (Baltimore City, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico)
 - Restorative Practices (St. Mary's, Montgomery, Garrett, & Wicomico)
 - Text-2-Stop It (Queen Anne's, Talbot)



Spotlight: 2013-14

415 incidents (143 victims and 272 offenders) of students missing 6 or more days do to bullying related incidents.

12.6% (578) of incidents resulted in out of school suspensions and 5.6% (256) resulted in school suspensions.

Points of Interest

Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2013)

- Nationally, 28% of Public and 21% of private school kids are bullied.

2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, YRBS (80,752 students)

- 19.6% of surveyed students had been bullied in the last 12 months.
 - 1 out of 189 students are bullied or around 5% statewide.
- 8.8% of those students did not go to school because they felt unsafe.

2014 Maryland Safe & Supportive Schools, MDS3 Climate Survey (31,106)

- Only 37.1% felt it was easy for teachers at their school to control students.
- 48.8% felt teachers can not handle disruptive students.



Points of Interest

American Psychological Association suggest:

Children who are bullied:

- ❑ Are more likely to avoid school and more likely to drop out of school.
- ❑ Have lower academic achievement, including lower achievement in math and reading.
- ❑ Have lower self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness.
- ❑ Are more likely to attempt suicide, both during childhood and later in life.

Students in schools with positive climates:

- ❑ Have better school attendance and study habits.
- ❑ Are more motivated and committed to succeed academically.
- ❑ Engage in more cooperative learning.
- ❑ Achieve higher grades, test scores, and subject mastery.



MSDE Technical Assistance

Comprehensive Systems of Support

Supporting the installation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

- MTSS is a three tiered prevention and early intervention framework. (Queen Anne's, Talbot, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel and others).

Provide technical assistance on strategies.

- Work with Directors of Student Services to identify and implement comprehensive tiered strategies, improve school climate and culture, and improve academic outcomes for all.

MSDE (MTSS) Technical Assistance

Routine Onsite Monitoring of Coordinated Student Services: Ensuring that LEAs (and schools) are delivering student services in the four domains and other areas (e.g. school safety and climate) in a consistent coordinated fashion per COMAR).

Regular technical assistance to families, school based staff, and LEA on as as-needed basis.

Project AWARE: Training on Youth Mental Health First Aid.

MTSS/PBIS Maryland: Working with partners and MSDE divisions to ensure that LEAs are implementing MTSS Tier I with fidelity, scaling up and poising ourselves to deliver Tier II & III in the upcoming years - Birth to 21.

Questions & Answers

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