

**Commissioner's Annual Report to the Education
Committees of the Senate and General Assembly
on Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse
in New Jersey Public Schools**

July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Based on the Electronic Violence
and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)

Rochelle R. Hendricks
Acting Commissioner

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October 2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Legislative Charge	1
Purpose of the Report.....	1
FINDINGS.....	1
Overall Total and Totals for Major Reporting Categories.....	1
Three-Year Trends in Types of Incidents Reported (Table 1).....	2
Characteristics of Incidents.....	4
Disciplinary Action Taken and Program Provided.....	4
Data Summary	5
Departmental Review of District Records	5
PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE	6
Comprehensive Approach to Prevention	6
Department Initiatives.....	7
Policy	8
Programs to Support Student Development (<i>N.J.A.C. 6A:16</i>).....	8
School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents	9
Critical Incident Response: Procedures for School Administrators, Faculty and Staff	9
Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) Policy	10
Data Collection and Reporting.....	12
New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS)	12
Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)	12
School Security Incident Reports (SSIRs).....	13
Title IV-A Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Performance Report	14
School Health Profiles Survey Profiles.....	14

Prevention and Intervention Programs and Strategies	15
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Program.....	15
Homeland Security Grant	16
Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS)	17
Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Initiatives.....	18
Developing Safe and Civil Schools: A Coordinated Approach for Social-Emotional and Character Development (DSACS)	21
Character Education Initiatives.....	22
Truancy Reduction Pilot Project.....	23
<i>Time Period:</i> December 1, 2009 through January 31, 2011.....	23
Social Norms Project	23
Title IV-A and Unsafe School Choice Option Policy Training and Technical Assistance Project	24
21 st Century Community Learning Centers Programs	25
New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition	26
New Jersey Afterschool Network	26
Drug Abuse Education Fund Project	27
Collaboration and Technical Support	28
New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign.....	28
Truancy Focus Group	28
State Interagency Truancy Working Group.....	28
Collaboration with Law Enforcement.....	29
Collaboration with Human Services Agencies and Student Support Staff	30
Collaboration with Child Welfare Agencies.....	30
Other Collaborative Partnerships.....	32

Appendix A	33
Public School Safety Law.....	33
Appendix B	34
Appendix C	35
Figures 1-9	35
Appendix D	36
District Totals by County.....	36
Appendix E	37
Substance and Weapons Detail, 2006-07 - 2008-09	37

INTRODUCTION

Legislative Charge

In 1982, in response to the problem of violence and vandalism in the New Jersey schools, the State Legislature passed the *Public School Safety Law* (*N.J.S.A. 18A:17-48*).

The Commissioner of Education shall each year submit a report to the Education Committees of the Senate and General Assembly detailing the extent of violence and vandalism in the public schools and making recommendations to alleviate the problem (see [Appendix A](#)).

Purpose of the Report

The Commissioner's annual report provides the Legislature with information reported by school districts concerning incidents of serious student misconduct grouped into the following four major reporting categories: violence, vandalism, weapons, and substance abuse. An analysis of trends yields indications of progress and of ongoing concern, and provides guidance to districts, other agencies, and the department as they endeavor to focus resources on areas of need. In the Programmatic Response section of this report, the department notifies the Legislature and the public of the actions taken by the State Board of Education and the Department of Education to address the problems evident in the data.

FINDINGS

The Findings section summarizes the data reported by districts over the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS). Districts are required to report incidents, as defined in the EVVRS, if they occur on school grounds during school hours, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event, using the Violence, Vandalism, and Substance Abuse (VV-SA) Incident Report Form (see [Appendix B](#)). The reporting of this year's findings is intended to be read in electronic format; the reader can link to figures that depict many of the findings described in the report. Paper copies of the figures may be found in [Appendix C](#) of the printed version of this document. More detailed findings, i.e., district and school summary data, may be accessed at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/vandy/>.

Overall Total and Totals for Major Reporting Categories

The total number of incidents reported by districts decreased three percent, a decline of 618 incidents from 17,666 in 2007-08 to 17,048 in 2008-09 (see district totals in [Appendix D](#)). The following changes are noted in the number of incidents reported in the four major reporting categories over the same period: violence declined five percent, vandalism declined three percent, weapons declined 15 percent, and substance abuse increased six percent. The decline in reported incidents of vandalism and incidents involving weapons continues a four-year trend (see [Figure 1](#)).

Three-Year Trends in Types of Incidents Reported (Table 1)

From 2006-07 through 2008-09, nearly all types of incidents except those under substances declined:

- In the **violence** category, there were approximately 550 fewer *fights* (a decline of 12 percent) approximately 200 fewer *assaults*¹ and 100 fewer incidents of *harassment/intimidation/bullying/threat* (HIBT)² (a decline of six percent in the former and four percent in the latter). The decline from 81 to 42 in incidents of *gang violence* and from 314 to 144 (54%) in *criminal threats* is also encouraging. Also, [Figure 2](#) shows two-year trends for each type of violence. The number of schools, reporting HIBT incidents declined 4 percent from 827 in 2006-07 to 795 in 2008-09; the number reporting 10 or more incidents over the same period declined from 52 to 44 schools (see [Figure 3](#)). As was reported in 2007-08, in 2008-09 more students in grades 7-8 (32 percent) and 9-10 (26 percent) than students in other grades committed acts of *harassment/intimidation/bullying/threat* (HIBT) (see [Figure 4](#)).
- In the **vandalism** category, consistent three-year declines can be seen in both the reported number of incidents of property damage (195 or 13 percent) and theft (114 or eight percent). The number of bomb threats also declined from 113 reported in 2006-07 to 66 in 2008-09 (see [Figure 5](#) for two-year trends).
- In the **weapons** category, the incidents involving a weapon other than a firearm declined by 280 or 22 percent. Weapons incidents involving air guns declined by 26, imitation handguns by 63 and those involving knives by 225 (see [Appendix E](#)).
- In the **substances** category, the number of incidents of possession of substances increased 14 percent to 817 in 2008-09. Also, [Appendix E](#) reports trends by type of substance. The number of incidents involving marijuana increased nine percent between 2006-07 and 2008-09 to nearly 2,000. The incidents involving alcohol, although increasing only two percent over the three-year period from 496 to 507, jumped 14 percent between from 2007-08 and 2008-09. Incidents involving the unauthorized use of prescription drugs increased from 149 to 238; those involving cocaine declined from 105 to 45 and those involving narcotics declined from 74 to 51 over the three-year period. Data on over-the-counter drugs was first collected in 2007-08; the number of incidents reported in 2008-09 increased from 41 to 53.

¹ Simple and aggravated assaults combined.

² In producing the 2006-07 data for this comparison, reports of threats were combined with reports of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (HIB); an incident that included both a threat and an HIB incident was counted only once as an HIBT incident.

Table 1. Incidents by Type

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	3-Year Change
Incident Type				
Violence				
Simple Assault	3,401	3,302	3,261	-140
Aggravated Assault	250	219	179	-71
Fight	4,477	4,234	3,924	-553
Gang Violence ¹	81	36	42	-39
Robbery/Extortion	70	55	63	-7
Sex Offense	205	170	203	-2
Criminal Threat	314	265	144	-170
Harassment/ Intimidation/Bullying/Threat ²	2,957	2,976	2,846	-111
Vandalism				
Arson	115	76	76	-39
Bomb Threat ³	113	144	66	-47
Burglary	88	80	63	-25
Damage to Property	1,511	1,410	1,316	-195
Fireworks	59	43	43	-16
Theft	1,457	1,261	1,343	-114
Trespassing	124	109	130	6
Weapons				
Firearm ⁴	11	9	4	-7
Other Weapon	1,269	1,155	989	-280
Bomb Offense	7	1	2	-5
Substances				
Use	2,003	2,102	2,146	143
Possession	719	717	817	98
Distribution	86	91	123	37

1. Reported as "Gang Fight" in 2006-07; any violence reported as "Gang-related" in 2007-08, 2008-09

2. Threat added to Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying in 2007-08; threat reported separately in 2006-07.

3. Includes two fake bombs in 1 fake bomb in 2006-07, 2 in 2007-08 and 3 in 2008-09

4. Firearm incidents include handgun and rifle incidents only. Air guns and imitation guns are classified as "Other Weapons."

Characteristics of Incidents

Location

As in previous years, three incidents in ten (30 percent) occurred in the classroom. In fact, the distribution of the data describing incident location has remained stable over the last three reporting years (see [Figure 6](#)). All four categories of incidents are reported as occurring in the classroom (see [Figure 7](#)); their distribution is similar to that of incidents that occur in other locations. For example, 63 percent of incidents occurring in the classroom are in the violence category while 60 percent of incidents occurring in other locations are in the violence category.

Bias

There were 172 incidents where bias was indicated as being related to the commission of the offense in 2008-09, an increase from the 2007-08 total of 143.

Gang-Related Incidents

Prior to 2007-08, the EVVRS collected data on gang fights. In this reporting year and last, districts reported if an incident, regardless of the category, was related to gang membership. Of the 62 gang-related incidents reported (0.4 percent of all incidents), two-thirds (68 percent) were incidents of violence. The total of 62 is an increase from the 51 reported in 2007-08.

Police Notification

Police were notified in over one-third (36 percent) of cases; a complaint was filed with or by the police in more than 3,200 cases, or 19 percent.

Disciplinary Action Taken and Program Provided

Nearly all disciplinary actions were either out-of-school suspensions (17,900 or 87 percent) or in-school suspensions (2,033 or 10 percent). Half of all suspensions (more than 9,000) were from two to four days (an increase of nearly 300, or three percent) while more than 3,500 suspensions were for 10 days or more (see [Figure 8](#)). The number of suspensions lasting five days decreased nine percent to 2,990 in 2008-09 and the number lasting six-nine days decreased 19 percent to 1,263. The program/services most frequently provided to recipients of disciplinary action were assignments and home instruction. The distribution of these and others is shown in [Figure 9](#).

Data Summary

The reporting year 2008-09 saw a continued decline in the number of incidents reported overall and in three of the four major reporting categories. With the exception of trespassing, all other types of incidents in the violence, vandalism and weapons categories decreased from 2006-07 through 2008-09. The types of incidents that declined the most were *fight, assaults, and harassment, intimidation, bullying, threat* (violence), *property damage* and *theft* (vandalism), and weapons, particularly those involving knives. The only major category to show an increase was substance abuse; possession, particularly, increased noticeably (see Table 1). Thirty percent of all incidents occurred in the classroom and the preponderance of those involved violence.

Overall, two general findings stand out: 1) in 2008-09 there were more than 750 fewer assaults and fights reported than there had been in 2006-07; and 2) over the three years there was consistency (i.e., lack of change) in incident attributes such as incident location and police notification.

Departmental Review of District Records

In 2005-06, the department initiated the practice of selecting districts for an in-depth review of their violence and vandalism reporting. The department continues to verify the local standards for reporting by conducting on-site reviews of documents such as suspension forms used for recording incidents of misconduct for which a school imposed a consequence. The selection of districts to monitor is based upon multiple criteria as follows: a significant three-year decline in incidents reported; a gap between the expected and actual number of incidents reported (based on a statistical analysis of three years of EVVRS data); and written complaints filed with the department alleging noncompliance with regulations or statutes. The department conducted records reviews and interviews in six schools in four districts in the spring of 2008-09 and provided an in-service training of administrators on the EVVRS in one of the selected districts. Department staff visited eight schools in five districts plus four charter schools in 2009-10. Additionally, department staff who provide direct assistance to schools and districts have received training in the monitoring process, participated in site visits and provided input into the adaptation of the EVVRS monitoring protocol.

PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE

Comprehensive Approach to Prevention

Violence, as is the case with many community problems, can become manifest in schools. The NJDOE and local school staff persistently strive to make school environments safe, secure, and optimal settings for promoting student learning and growth. The most effective strategies for the prevention of school violence and related at-risk student behavior involve continuous vigilance and proactive, coordinated efforts among all facets of the community for the maintenance of supportive and disciplined school environments.

State and local interagency collaborations have enhanced educators' capacities to cultivate positive learning conditions and to address complex student problems. A growing recognition among representatives from state and local partner agencies regarding the importance of data-driven decision-making and the use of research-based practices has contributed to more focused and functional program efforts and more efficient use of resources.

In the interest of advancing the overarching goals of preventing, reducing, and effectively managing incidences of violence, vandalism, and substance abuse, the NJDOE and its partner state agencies support a diverse array of initiatives designed to help schools achieve the following objectives:

- To protect the health, safety, security, and welfare of school populations;
- To establish and maintain civil educational climates;
- To prevent at-risk student behaviors;
- To intervene with and remediate at-risk student behaviors at all stages of identification;
- To provide supportive services for staff, students, and their families; and
- To prevent, intervene in, respond to, and recover from emergency and crisis situations.

Programs, services, and activities designed to support these aims are at the heart of school safety. There have been important gains in our knowledge from the research literature in the last two decades on the types of school-based strategies that have proven to be effective in creating safe, supportive, disciplined and drug-free schools. At their core, all of the evidence-based school strategies for preventing problem student behaviors and for fostering positive student development are designed to advance the following protective factors:

- Student engagement in learning;
- Student attachment to school; and
- Student acquisition of the social skills, which have been reported in the research literature to result in measurable positive effects on academic performance, student retention and reductions in violence, substance abuse, and related at-risk student behaviors.

Schools are most likely to prevent problem student behaviors and promote student well-being and success through comprehensive, coordinated and systematically planned programs, services and activities designed to develop student's abilities to identify and manage emotions, make

healthy decisions, establish constructive relationships, develop caring and concern for others and effectively manage challenging situations. The NJDOE's initiatives are designed to help schools embrace and cultivate the strategies, increase the factors that protect students from engaging in at-risk behavior (e.g., unexcused absences, conduct problems, poor school performance, substance abuse, gang involvement,) and achieve the purposes described above.

Department Initiatives

School districts, county agencies and state agencies continue to coordinate and collaborate on programmatic responses that foster school safety, ranging from at-risk behavior prevention to threat assessment, intervention, crisis response, and recovery. The NJDOE's ongoing responses to at-risk student behaviors and unsafe educational circumstances include:

- Development and consistent application of clearly defined codes of student conduct and policies and procedures, including strategies for addressing harassment, intimidation, and bullying and student attendance and truancy;
- Assessment of the immediate school surroundings, as well as the social and emotional learning climates of the school communities; and
- Development of comprehensive school safety and security plans that incorporate clearly defined procedures and mechanisms for responding to and recovering from emergencies and crises.

The following district improvement initiatives support general prevention efforts because they focus on establishing school climates that are supportive, respectful and caring; creating meaningful adult-student relationships; providing learning experiences that are relevant and rigorous; and giving students the support needed to help them stay engaged and succeed in school:

- Implementation of the Secondary Education Redesign Initiative, which focuses on redesigning middle schools and high schools through action steps and supportive policies that align content standards, assessments and high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations. It also offers coherent, integrated reform strategies and structures that support students, educators and other members of the education community to assist high schools in graduating students who are college and work ready;
- Administration of a pilot program and adoption of regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3*) on the development of Personalized Student Learning Plans, a component of the NJDOE's Secondary Education Redesign Initiative that are designed to use adult mentors, including parents, teachers and counselors, to help students recognize and achieve their goals. The learning plan formats developed by districts in the NJDOE's pilot program include at least the following three areas of development - personal, academic and career;
- Development of Professional Learning Communities, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15*, in which schools are characterized as learning organizations united by a shared vision of student and staff learning and mutually accepted values of respect and caring, and in which staff and students function interdependently to achieve shared goals for which they are collectively accountable. School-level plans, based on locally identified school goals and student and teacher needs, are currently being written for the 2010-2011 plan;

- Use of data for more effective targeting of resources and tracking of progress and outcomes;
- Implementation of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs; and
- Development of plans for the effective use of available school and community resources.

The following major initiatives are intended to prevent problem student behaviors, foster positive student development, and promote safe, disciplined and drug-free schools. The school safety regulations, initiatives and activities highlighted below are organized under the following categories:

- Policy;
- Data Collection and Reporting;
- Prevention and Intervention Programs and Strategies; and
- Collaboration and Technical Support.

Policy

Programs to Support Student Development (N.J.A.C. 6A:16)

Description: Originally adopted in 2001 and re-adopted in 2006, these regulations, which sunset in September 2011, set minimum standards for district boards of education in establishing policies and procedures and in operating programs in the following areas:

- *School Health Services (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2)* – Includes requirements for health services policies and procedures, health services, personnel, student records, and school health services to nonpublic schools;
- *Comprehensive Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Programs (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-3)* – Includes the purposes for comprehensive substance abuse programs, from prevention, to intervention and referral, to continuity of care, and requirements for in-service training, parent education, tobacco use, and confidentiality;
- *Procedures for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Intervention (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4)* – Includes substance abuse policy requirements and required procedures for students suspected of being under the influence of substances or of using steroids and for voluntary random student alcohol or drug testing programs;
- *School Safety and Security (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5)* – Includes requirements for school safety and security plans, School Violence Awareness Week, violence public hearings, violence incident reporting, access to juvenile justice information and student removals for firearms, assaults with weapons and assaults on district employees;
- *Law Enforcement Operations for Alcohol, Other Drugs, Weapons and Safety (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6)* – Includes requirements for cooperation between school staff and law enforcement authorities, including the establishment and annual review of the *Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials*;
- *Student Conduct (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7)* – Includes requirements for codes of student conduct, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, conduct away from school grounds, attendance and truancy, harassment, intimidation and bullying, and student records and confidentiality;

- *Intervention and Referral Services* (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8) – Includes requirements for the establishment and operation of multidisciplinary teams in each school, in which general education students are served, for addressing learning, behavior, or health difficulties;
- *Alternative Education Programs* (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-9) – Includes requirements for alternative education programs established and operated by either a district board of education or a state agency, public college-operated program or NJDOE-approved school;
- *Home or Out-of-School Instruction* (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-10) – Includes requirements for the provision of instruction due to temporary or chronic health conditions or for general education students for reasons other than a temporary or chronic health condition; and
- *Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children* (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-11) – Includes requirements for the early detection, reporting to and cooperation with law enforcement and child welfare authorities.

Supportive Resources:

- *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16 can be found at
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap16.pdf>.
- A PowerPoint presentation on *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16 can be found at
<http://www.nj.gov/education/edsupport/training>.

School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents

Description: The NJDOE has developed these procedures for school administrators in collaboration with the School Security Task Force. Distributed in October of 2007, the procedures are model guides for active shooter scenarios, lockdown situations, bomb threats, evacuations, and public information scenarios. Each school is required to individualize the procedures for its specific school and community.

Supportive Resources:

- The *School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents* publication is confidential and is not deemed to be a public record under the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.* or the common law concerning access to public records. This document, accessible to school administrators and school safety and security staff, can be found on a secure section of the NJDOE's School Security Website at
<http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/safetycenter/>.
- The school safety and security regulations (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-5) can be found at
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap16.pdf>.
- Additional school safety and security information, including the regulations for school safety and security plans (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-5.1) can be found at
<http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/regs/>.

Critical Incident Response: Procedures for School Administrators, Faculty and Staff

Description: The NJDOE assisted the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) in designing a self-training program, in CD-ROM format, for school

administrators, faculty and education support staff to enhance awareness of recognized standards and guidelines for responding to critical incidents within schools. The guidelines explained in the training tool include the rapid response procedures described in the NJDOE document titled *School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents*. Procedures for the following critical incidents are included the guidelines: bomb threats, non-fire evacuations, school lockdowns, and active shooter situations prior to arrival of emergency first responders. In the summer of 2009 the CD-ROM containing the training tool was disseminated to all public and nonpublic schools in New Jersey.

Supportive Resources:

- The *School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents* publication is confidential and is not deemed to be a public record under the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.* or the common law concerning access to public records. This document, accessible to school administrators and school safety and security staff, can be found on a secure section of the NJDOE's School Security Website at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/safetycenter/>.
- The school safety and security regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5*) can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap16.pdf>.
- Additional school safety and security information, including the regulations for school safety and security plans (*N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1*), can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/regs/>.

Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) Policy

Description: As a condition of receiving funds under the Federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, the NJDOE is required to implement a statewide policy mandating that students who attend persistently dangerous schools, as determined by the NJDOE, or who become victims of violent criminal offenses while in school or on the school grounds of the school that they attend, be allowed to transfer to a safe public school within the local educational agency (Unsafe School Choice Option, Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532 of the *No Child Left Behind Act*). The NJDOE's policy was adopted by the State Board of Education in June 2003. All local educational agencies must comply with the provisions of the policy, as appropriate.

Under the USCO policy for the 2009-2010 school year, no persistently dangerous schools were identified, seven schools were identified as being in early warning status, and one special services school was directed to develop a school safety plan. Training and technical assistance were provided to assigned NJDOE staff for supporting the designated schools. The NJDOE staff provided ongoing technical assistance to identified schools in the fulfillment of their obligations under the USCO Policy, including the development and implementation of corrective action plans.

Supportive Resources: The following USCO policy resources can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/grants/nclb/guidance/usco/>:

- [USCO Policy](#),
- [Unsafe School Choice Option Policy Provisions I & II, Questions and Answers](#),

- USCO Non-Regulatory Guidance,
- USCO Policy PowerPoint Presentation,
- USCO Policy Announcement Memo, and
- List of Persistently Dangerous Schools designated under the USCO Policy.

Data Collection and Reporting

New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS)

Description: The NJSHS is administered bi-annually among a statewide sample of public school students. This survey, which is based on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey sponsored by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asks students to self-report on their actions and attitudes in six areas that are highly related to preventable, high-risk behaviors and premature injury or illness. The survey contains items on lifetime and recent use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana, as well as lifetime use of other drugs. Concerning violence, the survey includes questions related to carrying weapons, fighting, having been hit by a boyfriend or girlfriend, and having been forced to have sex.

As the only source of New Jersey student data on diet and exercise, weight, sexual risk behaviors and safety behaviors, the NJSHS provides data for schools and communities as well as state agencies. The results give trend information and meaningful benchmarks to assist in the planning of effective health programs specifically for New Jersey's youth population, to help to bring federal funds into New Jersey to support prevention and health programs, and to provide high school students, teachers, and parents with factually-based health information.

A total of 34 of the 39 public high schools sampled for the survey participated, with three classes per school being selected on average. A total of 1,757 students completed the survey. The combined school and student response rate (67 percent) enabled the results for this sample to be generalized to all high school students in the state.

Supportive Resources:

- A full report of findings from the 2009 NJSHS survey, plus a summary report and data tables provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/yrbs/index.html>.

Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)

Description: Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3, school district employees are required to report student acts of violence. Districts enter information about individual incidents, including offender and victim information, into the EVVRS. The data, once verified by chief school administrators, form the basis of the Findings section of this report to the State Legislature and of the reports to the United States Department of Education on the implementation of the federal *Gun-Free Schools Act* and the Unsafe School Choice Option policy.

Supportive Resources:

- The *EVVRS User Manual*, which contains general guidance for reporting and includes incident definitions (e.g., explanations of offenses, such as simple assaults, aggravated assaults, or fights), is accessible at <http://homeroom.state.nj.us/index.htm>;
- EVVRS reporting forms, training presentations and notices sent to users of the system can be found at <http://homeroom.state.nj.us/index.htm>; and
- The public may access EVVRS data, summarized by state, district, and school incidents, at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/vandv/index.html>.

School Security Incident Reports (SSIRs)

Description: The NJDOE requires school district officials to submit an SSIR, as soon as possible, during or following a major incident in their districts. District officials forward the completed SSIR via electronic mail (e-mail) to the appropriate county office of education. After county office review, the SSIR is forwarded, via e-mail, to the NJDOE. The following are examples of major incidents that would require the completion of the SSIR:

- Sexual misconduct or assault – either by a student or a staff member,
- Arrest of a student or a staff member,
- Bomb threat,
- Overt gang activity or fight,
- School closing or early dismissal,
- Intruder in school or on school grounds,
- School lockdown, and
- Active shooter situation.

The SSIR submission and review process is time-sensitive, meaning that a district may have numerous report submissions depending on the incidents; whereas, for example, reports entered into the EVVRS are cumulative. Therefore, district officials are asked to complete and forward the SSIR in a timely manner. The NJDOE's Office of the Chief of Staff uses the information provided in the SSIRs for the following purposes:

- To assess whether a school, school district or region of the state needs specific targeted assistance;
- To determine how schools and school districts respond to various incidents; and
- To keep the Commissioner of Education and the Governor's Office abreast of all current school security incidents and trends.

Supportive Resources:

On April 27, 2009, a memo and an updated School Security Incident Report form that included an FAQ sheet was disseminated from the Commissioner of Education to district chief school administrators and charter school lead persons, regarding the reporting of school security incidents.

Title IV-A Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Performance Report

Description: Districts that receive funds under the Federal *SDFSCA* (Title IV-A of the *No Child Left Behind Act*), must complete a report regarding their use of *SDFSCA* funds. In the 2007-2008 report, districts reported on their programmatic approaches to the prevention of substance abuse and violence; their involvement of and consultations with parent and other community members; their utilization of school resource officers and substance awareness coordinators; their use of data in prevention planning and evaluation; the number of referrals of students to school-based and external agencies for problems related to substance use, steroid use and tobacco smoking; and the adoption of policies on voluntary policies for random testing of student alcohol or other drug use and the number and status of tests administered under the policies.

Supportive Resources: A report detailing the results of the 2007 and 2008 surveys will be available in the spring of 2010.

School Health Profiles Survey Profiles

Description: The School Health Profiles Survey, sponsored by United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is conducted biennially by state and local education and health agencies among middle and high school principals and lead health education teachers. The findings from the Profiles provide information on the characteristics of and trends in school-health education; physical education; health services; school health policies related to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention; tobacco-use prevention; violence prevention; physical activity; competitive foods (i.e., foods and beverages sold outside of the United States Department of Agriculture school meal programs); and family and community involvement in school health programs. In the fall of 2008, the Profiles survey was mailed to principals and lead health teachers in 425 secondary schools in New Jersey. The response rate for both groups was very good: 72 percent for principals and 74 percent for lead health teachers.

Supportive Resources:

- The results of the 2008 New Jersey Profiles Survey will be available in the spring of 2010.
- A report on other states' administration of the *School Health Profiles* and information about uses of the survey may be accessed at the survey Web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/profiles/>.

Prevention and Intervention Programs and Strategies

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Program

Description: The capacity for local school response to behavioral, social-emotional and health problems is supplemented by federal funding provided specifically for school violence and substance-abuse prevention activities. The *SDFSCA* is the NJDOE's sole source of funding dedicated to supporting all local educational agencies (i.e., school districts, charter schools, private nonprofit schools) in New Jersey in the development, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive programs and activities, which are coordinated with other school and community-based services and programs. School district applications for these formula funds are submitted as part of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* - Consolidated Formula Subgrant to foster the coordination and effective use of all *NCLB* and other school resources.

Target Population: All public and nonpublic school students in New Jersey in grades K-12 (ages 5-17).

Time Period: FY10.

Funding (Amount and Source): A total of \$5.2 million (\$5,250,046 federal allocation and \$17,894 carryover funds) was made available to school districts in 2009-20010 under the *SDFSCA*. The federal allocation represented a **37 percent (\$2.6 million) reduction** in federal funding provided to school districts under the *SDFSCA* from the amount provided in the 2005-2006 school years and a 43 percent total reduction in the amount available to school districts in the 2002-2003 school year. There has been a reduction of \$4,190,154 in the annual allocation of *SDFSCA* funds to New Jersey since FY2003, from a total of \$11,130,853 in FY03 to a total of \$6,940,699 in FY10.

The appropriation for *Title IV-A* has been eliminated from the Federal budget affecting State fiscal year (SFY) 2011. As a result, there will be no additional *Title IV-A* formula funds available to LEAs in the 2010-2011 school year, and no *Title IV-A* formula funds are anticipated thereafter.

Supportive Resources:

- The following specific *SDFSCA* (*Title IV-A*) resources can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/grants/nclb/programs/>:
 - [Title IV, Part A – Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities](#);
 - [Title IV, Part A, Subpart 3 – Gun Free Requirements \(sec 4141\)](#); and
 - [Title IV, Part C – Environmental Tobacco Smoke](#).
- The *NCLB Reference Manual*, which includes *SDFSCA* (*Title IV-A*) guidance, and additional *NCLB* information can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/grants/entitlement/nclb/>.
- The Electronic Web-Enabled Grant System, which includes the application for *Title IV-A* funds, can be found at <http://206.230.234.37/NJDOEGMSWEBv01/StaticPages/Logon.aspx>. All districts' applications can be viewed from this Web site.

Homeland Security Grant

Description: The NJDOE was awarded a grant from the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness for the 2008-2011 calendar years. Funding from this grant is being used to support two key school safety and security goals. The first goal is to increase the critical infrastructure protection of school facilities and school staff and students by ensuring that schools are identifying and reducing vulnerabilities, and they are practiced and prepared to efficiently and effectively respond to critical incidents. The second goal is to provide training and direct assistance services to school staff in the review of local school safety and security plans, procedures, best practices, and target-hardening initiatives.

Within its Office of the Chief of Staff, the NJDOE employs two safety and security planners under the grant and a state-funded position to provide services to schools for the planning, coordination and maintenance of safety and security for students, staff and school facilities. These dedicated positions provide technical support to school staff for the implementation of the School Sector's Best Practices outlined in the *School Safety and Security Manual: Best Practices Guidelines* and the *School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents* publications developed in support of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1, School safety and security plans. These staff members, who comprise the NJDOE's School Security Unit, created a comprehensive training plan that resulted in regional trainings that concentrated on crisis preparedness, including tabletop exercises.

The NJDOE's training and technical assistance activities have facilitated effective school crisis and emergency management planning, preparedness, and responses. The training and technical assistance also have improved local collaboration and expertise on best practices for school safety and security. During the 2008-2009 academic year, the NJDOE provided approximately 2,600 people with training and services dedicated to school safety and security. These interactions have helped the NJDOE identify areas of development and revision for statewide policies and protocols intended to assist with statewide safety and security coordination.

The staff members of the School Security Unit address safety and security needs of schools identified by the NJDOE, in cooperation with the School Security Task Force (SSTF) and the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force (DSPTF). The School Security Unit staff conducts school site visits, reviews school safety plans and procedures, provides direct technical assistance to schools statewide and provides statewide, regional, and local training to educators on safety and security issues. These NJDOE staff members also collaborate with the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the Office of the Attorney General, Office of Emergency Management, New Jersey State Police, other state, county, and local agencies, and critical infrastructure sectors identified by the SSTF and DSPTF for the statewide coordination of services designed to support school safety and security.

Target Population: All public and nonpublic school administrators and staff serving grades K-12.

Time Period: September 1, 2008 through December 31, 2010.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$194,030 in State Homeland Security Program grant funds.

Supportive Resources:

- The New Jersey School Security Web site can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/>.
- The publications titled *School Safety and Security Manual: Best Practices Guidelines* and *School Administrator Procedures: Responding to Critical Incidents* are confidential documents and are not deemed to be public records under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 *et seq.* or the common law concerning access to public records. These documents are accessible to school administrators and school safety and security staff. They can be found in a secure section of the School Security Web site at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/safetycenter/>.
- N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1 and other school safety and security regulations can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/regs/>.
- Information on the School Security Task Force, its final report and key recommendations can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/links/sstf.htm>.
- PowerPoint presentations from school safety and security trainings can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/training/pres.htm>.

Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS)

Description: Regulations for CCCS (N.J.A.C. 6A:8) in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education were adopted by the State Board of Education in June 2009. The CCCS in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (CHPE) contain specific strands and indicators:

- Standard 2.3: Drugs and Medicines: Medicines; Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs; and Dependency, Addiction, and Treatment;
- Standard 2.1: Wellness: Personal Growth and Development; Nutrition; Disease and Health Conditions; Safety; Social and Emotional Health);
- Standard 2.2: Integrated Skills: Interpersonal Communication; Decision Making and Goal Setting; Character Development; Advocacy and Service; and Health Services and Information); and
- Standard 2.4: Human Relationships and Sexuality: Relationships; Sexuality; Pregnancy and Parenting.

The standards require public schools to teach substance abuse and violence prevention skills, including media resistance, peer pressure resistance, peer leadership, problem-solving, conflict resolution and stress management. Topical strands infused in each of the CCCS in CHPE help teachers locate specific content and skills related to substance abuse and violence prevention. The standards are further defined by progress indicators at grades pre-K (not all Standards), two, four, six, eight, and twelve.

Target Population: All public school students in grades Pre-K-12 (although pre-K is not always available for all CCCS).

Time Period: Ongoing. The standards were revised and readopted in June 2009. Local curricula must be aligned by 2012.

Supportive Resources:

- The *Core Curriculum Content Standards* regulations can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap8.pdf>.
- The 2004 standards and related support materials can be accessed at <http://njcccs.org>. Classroom application documents (CADS) and sample unit plans are available at this site. Go to <http://www.njcccs.org/search.aspx> to search the standards for key words or to review sample materials.
- *The Curriculum Framework for Health and Physical Education* (1999), which can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/frameworks/chpe/index.html>, includes 140 suggested sample lessons for educators to use to address topics related to violence prevention and positive social and emotional development. The New Jersey CCCS in CHPE provide an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive focus that helps students develop the knowledge and skills that lead to healthy, active lifestyles. While not aligned to the current version of the standards, the sample activities provide examples of how teachers address these issues in New Jersey's classrooms.

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Initiatives

Description: The NJDOE's I&RS initiatives support implementation of the I&RS regulations at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8. The regulations require the establishment of building-based (grades K-12) multidisciplinary problem-solving teams to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students' learning, behavior, or health needs. The technical assistance to I&RS teams provided by the NJDOE includes the following activities:

- *I&RS Technical Assistance Project* – This cooperative project between the NJDOE and Stockton College is designed to provide telephone, on-site and Web-based support, guidance, technical assistance and consultation; administer and deliver statewide, regional and local professional development programs; provide regional, county, local and Web-based forums for school staff to network and share information; and develop and disseminate materials to support school building and school district staff in the effective implementation of the I&RS regulations and the NJDOE's best practices in support of the regulations.
- *I&RS Resource Materials*
 - *Resource Manual for Intervention and Referral Services* – The manual was developed by the NJDOE to provide school staff with resources for fulfilling their obligations under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8 and for implementing I&RS best practices. The NJDOE is currently revising the manual, which is planned to be disseminated in the spring of the 2010-2011 school year.
 - *I&RS Program Materials* – This set of materials, distributed by the NJDOE to all school districts in September 2005, was created to support school-based I&RS team members in fulfilling the requirements of the I&RS regulations; to assist in the provision of professional development programs for staff; and to increase community awareness of the I&RS regulations. The set of materials includes:

- A four-part series, prepared in VHS videotape and DVD formats, with the following titles – Program Overview (Part 1), Planning and Organizing the Program (Part 2), The I&RS Process (Part 3) and Innovations and Best Practices (Part 4);
 - An I&RS program flyer, which contains concise descriptions of the I&RS technical support materials made available by the NJDOE; and
 - A CD-ROM containing an electronic file of the *Resource Manual for Intervention and Referral Services*, sample forms and other supportive information and resources.
- *Professional Development* – The NJDOE, in collaboration with Stockton College, continues to provide professional development programs to prepare I&RS team members to perform basic I&RS functions and to supplement the NJDOE’s I&RS team training program by assisting school districts in addressing their ongoing professional development needs in support of I&RS teams, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.2(a) 4 and 5.
 - *I&RS Team Training* – Teams of staff from approximately 1,554 schools have been trained in the establishment of building-based I&RS teams since April 2000, with teams from 710 of the schools receiving training since 2008. In addition to providing annual team training, since April 2000 the NJDOE also has trained 1,046 school staff joining their school’s I&RS teams subsequent to initial team training, with 113 being trained in 2009-2010.
 - *Supplemental I&RS Training*
Delivered in 2009-2010:
 - “Principles of Brain-Based Learning” (77 participants);
 - “Planning and Implementing a Successful I&RS Program for School Administrators” (104 participants); and
 - “Data-Driven Decision-Making for Teams of Intervention and Referral Services” (66 participants).
 - Newly delivered since 2008:
 - “Structuring the Classroom: Utilizing Functional Behavior Assessment to Minimize Off-Task Behavior in Middle Schools and High Schools” (64 participants);
 - “Managing Mental Health Disorders in the Classroom” (207 participants);
 - “Engaging the Disaffected Student: Analyzing and Responding to Student Behavior Issues” (87 participants);
 - “Behavioral Management Strategies for Creating a Productive Learning Environment and Minimizing Behavioral Disruptions” (42 participants);
 - Provided since 2005:
 - “One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing Strategies to Address Learning and Behavior Problems of Elementary School Students” (456 participants);
 - “One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing Strategies to Address Learning and Behavior Problems of Middle School Students” (434 participants); and
 - “One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing Strategies to Address the Learning and Behavior Problems of High School Students” (242 participants).
 - Provided between 2005 and 2008:
 - “One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing Strategies to Address the Learning and Behavior Problems of Students in Grades K-4 Follow-up” (45 participants);

- “One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing Strategies to Address the Learning and Behavior Problems of Middle Grades Students Follow-up” (45 participants); and
- “One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing Strategies to Address the Learning and Behavior Problems of High School Students Follow-up” (45 participants).

A course titled, “A Crash Course in the Brain: Using Current Knowledge to Understand Students’ Difficulties and Help Them Succeed” (400 participants), was provided in each year from 2005-2008.

- *I&RS Data Collection Project* – This project was designed to gather information on the degree, quality and effects of the implementation of the regulations at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8, Intervention and Referral Services and the NJDOE’s best practices model for implementing the I&RS regulations. Through the use of surveys and interviews of school district and school building staff, the project provided the NJDOE with information for planning programs, services, materials and other activities to support schools in establishing and maintaining an effective coordinated system, using a multidisciplinary team approach, for the planning and delivery of I&RS to assist students who experience learning, behavior or health difficulties and to assist staff who experience difficulties in addressing students’ learning, behavior or health needs, in accordance with the regulations at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.

Target Population: Building-based I&RS team members, school administrators, and other school staff responsible for or involved with I&RS team operations.

Time Period:

- I&RS Technical Assistance Project – September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2010.
- I&RS Data Collection Project – May 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008.

Funding (Amount and Source):

- \$400,000 for the I&RS Technical Assistance Project in federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds.
- \$75,000 for the I&RS Data Collection Project) in federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds.

Supportive Resources:

- Information on the *Intervention and Referral Services Technical Assistance Project* can be found at <http://www.etc.net/Intervention/index.html>.

- The *Resource Manual for Intervention and Referral Services* can be found at both <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/irs/> and <http://www.etc.net/Intervention/Resources.html>.
- The *Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Data Collection Project Final Report* can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/students/safety/behavior/data.pdf>.
- The set of *I&RS Program Materials* is available either through each district's chief school administrators' office, the county office of education or the Learning Resource Center, or can be viewed online at <http://www.etc.net/intervention/inrsVideo/index.html>.
- Information on *I&RS Professional Development Programs* can be found at <http://www.etc.net/Intervention/index.html>.

Developing Safe and Civil Schools: A Coordinated Approach for Social-Emotional and Character Development (DSACS)

Description: The NJDOE is collaborating with Rutgers University to provide technical support to schools in fully integrating social-emotional and character development (SECD) throughout their educational programs. A primary tenet of the project is that successful performance of students can be enhanced through supportive SECD programs and services that are designed to increase coordination and decrease program and service gaps and overlap among SECD and other educational initiatives.

The training, technical assistance, and other supportive services and resources provided or coordinated by Rutgers University under the fifth and final year of this project are intended to assist school staff in organizing the various resources, programs, and services to create strong SECD conditions, designed to result in reduced at-risk student behavior, the development of positive learning climates and improved academic performance among students in participating schools. A key component of the final year of this project is the comprehensive evaluation of DSACS services in a cohort of 60 schools by tracking particular behavior indicators both prior to and after DSACS services have been provided and the SECD programs in the schools have been cohesively administered: this is in addition to the ongoing services provided to the 186 schools that participated in any of the first four years of the project.

Target Population:

- 60 schools in the evaluation component for years four and five.
- 283 schools or school districts in various stages of participation in years one through four.

Time Period: July 1, 2009 through January 31, 2011.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$438,394 in federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds.

Supportive Resources: Information can be obtained at the DSACS project Web site found at <http://teachsecd.com/>.

Other Relevant Resources: Research, articles, publications and other information on SECD can be found at the Web site of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning found at www.casel.org.

Character Education Initiatives

Description: The Federal Partnerships in Character Education Program (PCEP) grant awarded to the NJDOE in 2006 supports efforts designed to incorporate character education into the mainstream of changes occurring in curriculum standards and student services by addressing the following purposes: 1) increasing the capacity of New Jersey school systems to implement and sustain social-emotional and character education (SECD) programs in the context of current state reform efforts; and 2) evaluating the impact of character education on the social inclusion of students with disabilities. Through this initiative, the NJDOE has convened a Statewide Advisory Board, which facilitates collaboration among multiple offices within the NJDOE on SECD issues; and has created, at Rutgers University, the Center for Social and Character Development (CSCD) to provide school staff with in-depth technical assistance and opportunities for professional development and skill enhancement.

Under the PCEP grant, the following activities are being implemented for the purpose of informing best practices and/or targeted technical assistance regarding SECD:

- *Fostering Change in School Culture through Character Education* - Through an application process, five partner teams were selected to participate in this opportunity to improve the quality of their SECD programs. The teams focused on improving professional practice and student outcomes utilizing the Professional Learning Communities model through guidance, support and assessment activities and participated in orientation and project meetings and will share their results at a final showcase event in May 28, 2010.
- *Caring Schools Inclusion Project (CSIP)* - Twelve school districts were identified to participate in this four-year project that is designed to increase the quality and success of each school's inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education program. The CSIP initiative examines the effectiveness of implementing an evidence-based character education school-wide intervention, *Community of Caring*, to create a school culture that provides opportunities for growth and development for all children and to improve engagement, social participation, and a perceived sense of autonomy of children with disabilities.

Funding: \$622,149 (\$407,891 in Federal Character Education funds; \$67,392 in federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds; and \$146,866 in *IDEA Part B* funds).

Time Period: October 1, 2009-June 30, 2010.

Support Resources: Resources, best practices and other information can be obtained at the CSCD Web site located at <http://www.rucharacter.org/>.

Truancy Reduction Pilot Project

Description: The NJDOE provided funding and resource and technical support for this project, designed to reduce student truancy and increase student engagement in learning in the schools of six cities in New Jersey.. The project was led by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) in partnership with the NJDOE, the Juvenile Justice Commission, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Department of Children and Families and the Department of State, as well as with the teams of school and community stakeholders in each of the six pilot cities. Consultation services were provided to the partner state agencies and to the pilot cities by the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE). An attendance “toolkit” is planned to be disseminated to all school districts in the 2010-2011 school year, and an on-line course is planned for anyone interested in learning more about student unexcused absences and truancy and school responses to these occurrences.

Target Population: Asbury Park, Paterson, Newark, Camden, Vineland, and Trenton.

Time Period: January 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$104,800 in federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds.

Supportive Resources: The following Web site contains information related to the project:

- Information on Web-based professional development, data collection and a document titled *Tool Kit for Creating Your Own Truancy Reduction Program* can be found at the National Center for School Engagement’s Web site at <http://www.truancy prevention.org/>.

Time Period: December 1, 2009 through January 31, 2011.

Social Norms Project

Description: The NJDOE continues to collaborate with the Center for Addiction Studies and Awareness (CASA) at Rowan University to implement the fifth and final year project of this project that uses established social psychological principles concerning the influence of group norms on individual behavior to achieve the following purposes: 1) reduce bullying, harassment, and intimidation behavior among students in participating New Jersey middle schools; and 2) reduce the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs among students in participating New Jersey high schools. Under the Social Norms Project, CASA performs assessments to determine actual norms regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and bullying, harassment, and intimidation behavior in participating schools, as appropriate, and develops and implements marketing campaigns to inform students, school staff, parents and other community members of these norms.

Target Population: 14 New Jersey middle schools and 12 high schools.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$300,000 in Federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds.

Supportive Resources: Information can be found at the project Web site located at <http://www.rowan.edu/casa/currentprojects/njdesnp.html>.

Other Relevant Resources: Additional information on the social norms approach to the prevention of problem behavior can be found at the Web site of the National Social Norms Institute found at <http://www.socialnorms.org/>.

Title IV-A and Unsafe School Choice Option Policy Training and Technical Assistance Project

Description: This initiative, in collaboration with the Center for Applied Psychology at Rutgers University, provides school district and NJDOE staff with technical assistance, training programs, resource development, support and information services for the successful implementation of the requirements of the federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* (SDFSCA) and *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-3, 4, 6 and 7*. The project also provides assistance to schools identified as either persistently dangerous or in early warning status as well as to special services schools identified under the NJDOE's federally-mandated Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) policy for the purpose of developing corrective action or school safety plans, as appropriate, to reduce the number of incidents of violence in the identified schools, as determined based on the data collected in the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System.

Approximately 6,500 school staff members have participated in workshops offered by project staff since 2007. Workshops have been provided on the following topics:

- “Planning and Implementing a Comprehensive Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Abuse Prevention Program” (618 participants);
- “Conducting Practical Needs Assessments” (425 participants);
- “Evaluating the Comprehensive ATOD Abuse Program for Results” (374 participants);
- “Reviewing Your District’s Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy” (241 participants);
- “Effective Collaborations with Parents and Community Members and Community Organizations” (277 participants); and
- “Addressing Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying from Policy to Practice” (2,969 participants).

Two additional programs were provided in 2009:

- The “Comprehensive Planning Institute” (65 participants); and
- “Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Technical Assistance Sessions” (440 participants).

Target Population: General project services are available to all school staff (grades K-12). Services provided in support of the USCO policy are available to all school and NJDOE staff responsible for implementation of the NJDOE’s USCO policy.

Time Period: November 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$397,152 in federal *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* funds.

Supportive Resources: Project information, including Web-based resources (e.g., a searchable database of scientifically research-based programs), workshop videos, PowerPoint presentations, guides, tip sheets, and program handouts are available on the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Project* Web site at <http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu/index.php>.

21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs

Description: Under Title IV, Part B of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) are defined as centers that offer academic remediation and enrichment activities in tandem with a broad array of other enrichment activities in the areas of arts and culture, youth development, physical activity and parental involvement to students and their adult family members when school is not in session. The program aims to provide engaging and enriching extended learning opportunities in a safe and welcoming environment for all youth and their families that encourage positive social skills, innovative thinking, exploration, creativity and problem-solving skills, while assisting the students in attaining the skills necessary to meet New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. Currently, there are 42 programs throughout 121 sites across New Jersey that have enrolled over 19,000 students.

Target Population: The purpose of the 21st CCLC Program is to supplement the education of students in grades 4-12, who attend schools eligible for Title I school-wide programs or schools where a minimum of 30 percent of the students are from low-income families.

Time Period: July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010

Funding (Amount and Source): \$22,306,604 in federal NCLB, Title IV, Part B funds.

Supportive Resources:

- New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs,
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/21cclc>.
- US Department of Education, 21st CCLC Program,
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>.

Other Relevant Resources:

- New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing,
www.state.nj.us/dcf/divisions/licensing/index.html.
- New Jersey School Age Care Coalition, www.njsacc.org.
- National Afterschool Association, Standards for Quality School-Age Care,
<http://naaweb.site-ym.com/>.
- National Center for Summer Learning, www.summerlearning.org.

New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition

Description: Since 2003, OESS has contracted, through a cooperative grant agreement, with the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition (NJSACC) to provide training and technical assistance, in the areas of program quality, sustainability and networking for 21st CCLC grantee recipients and other afterschool providers throughout the state in an effort to build the capacity of staff, thereby increasing the quality of these programs. Through this cooperative grant agreement, NJSACC has provided trainings and technical assistance that included: building fun, innovative, and academically-enriching activities; implementing the 21st Century Afterschool Science Project designed to enrich student learning through inquiry-based, interactive science experiences using every day materials; strategies to communicate and coordinate effectively with schools and parents about children's learning; Get Moving, Get Healthy with New Jersey 4H and Opening Doors to Inclusive Programs. Additionally, NJSACC coordinated a statewide training, "Soaring Beyond Expectations: A Statewide Afterschool Showcase", utilizing the currently funded 21st CCLC programs to highlight successful strategies that support program quality in New Jersey, such as, linking to the school day, designing engaging activities, developing effective partners and collaborations, and effective evaluation.

Target Population: 21st CCLC grantees and other potential applicants.

Time Period: October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$150,000 in federal NCLB, Title IV, Part B funds.

Supportive Resources:

- New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, www.njsacc.org.
- National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks, www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net .
- New Day for Learning, www.newdayforlearning.org.

Other relevant resources:

- Afterschool Alliance, www.afterschoolalliance.org.
- National Afterschool Association, <http://naaweb.site-ym.com>.

New Jersey Afterschool Network

Description: Since April 2007, five New Jersey organizations: the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition (NJSACC), New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJDHS), New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NJACCRRA), and New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF), believing in the need for a coordinated effort of after-school funds, policy and school-community connections, applied for funding from the Charles S. Mott Foundation as the New Jersey Afterschool Network (NJAN). NJDOE provided a third of the required match funding for this project.

The New Jersey Afterschool Network is designed to build lasting public support for quality afterschool programs across New Jersey. The focus of NJAN is on building public awareness and support; offering guidance for parents, providers and advocates; strengthening relationships with policymakers, funders, practitioners and parents; and sharing best practices in the field. The New Jersey School Age Care Coalition is serving as the coordinating and fiduciary agent of NJAN. Through a cooperative grant agreement with NJSACC, they were able to successfully implement the following activities: expand the network of afterschool providers; build awareness of the need for afterschool in New Jersey, through the Taking the Temperature of Afterschool survey; and identify and develop “Afterschool Ambassadors” within each county.

Target Population: All after-school programs throughout New Jersey.

Time Period: October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010.

Funding (Amount and Source): \$31,000 in federal NCLB, Title IV, Part B funds.

Supportive Resources:

- New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, www.njsacc.org.
- National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks,
www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net.

Other relevant resources:

- New Jersey Department of Children and Families, www.state.nj.us/dcf.
- New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJDHS),
www.state.nj.us/humanservices/children.html.
- New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, www.njaccrra.org.

Drug Abuse Education Fund Project

Description: As required under *N.J.S.A. 2C:43-3.5* and *N.J.S.A.54A:9-25.12 et seq.*, a Drug Abuse Education Fund was established from portions of taxpayer-designated refunds and penalties assessed against individuals adjudicated or convicted of certain crimes. A portion of the resources accumulated in the fund are appropriated annually to the NJDOE for distribution to nongovernmental entities for the use of law enforcement personnel in providing drug abuse education to students in grades kindergarten through twelve on a statewide basis. Under the appropriation for these statutory provisions, funds have been provided annually to D.A.R.E. New Jersey, Inc. for the provision of substance abuse education to students in New Jersey schools.

Target Population: All public school students in grades K-12.

Time Period: FY10

Funding (Amount and Source): \$375,000 in State Drug Abuse Education Funds.

Supportive Resources: D.A.R.E. New Jersey, Inc. at <http://www.darenj.com/>.

Collaboration and Technical Support

New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign

In partnership with the America's Promise Alliance, New Jersey launched the *New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign* to help combat the high rate of high school dropouts. The campaign involved 500 partners from across New Jersey, representing schools, businesses, non-profit and faith-based organizations. The NJDOE will review the findings and recommendations in the first-year report, *Forging New Jersey's Cradle to College and Workforce Pipeline for All Children*, to inform next steps in New Jersey's commitment to improving the graduation rates for all New Jersey students and to enhancing the NJDOE's collaboration with America's Promise Alliance.

Resources:

- Information on the *New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign: Keeping Kids In School* can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases08/pr20081014a.html>.
- Information on *America's Promise Alliance* can be found at <http://www.americaspromise.org/>.

Truancy Focus Group

Description: In April 2010, the NJDOE convened a focus group discussion among a broad cross-section of staff from New Jersey schools to advise the NJDOE on critical issues pertaining to student unexcused absences and truancy. The school issues, concerns, practices and recommendations that were generated during the discussion will aid the NJDOE and other state agencies and will be considered by the State Interagency Truancy Working Group in addressing issues regarding related statutes, regulations, policies, practices and resources.

Supportive Resources:

- The compulsory education statute (*N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27*) can be found at http://lis.njleg.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=289267&Depth=2&depth=2&expandheadings=on&headingswithhits=on&hitsperheading=on&infobase=statutes.nfo&record={7487}&softpage=Doc_Frame_PG42.
- The attendance regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8*) can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap16.pdf>.

State Interagency Truancy Working Group

Description: In April 2010, the NJDOE convened an ongoing state interagency working group to continue to study and manage issues, concerns, practices and recommendations regarding student unexcused absences and truancy. Emphasis is being placed on considering the findings from the NJDOE's Truancy Focus Group, assessing and addressing the effects of existing statutes and regulations on unexcused absences and truancy and on examining and advancing the

effectiveness of the courts, schools, human services agencies and other resources in addressing truancy cases.

Supportive Resources:

- The compulsory education statute (*N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27*) can be found at http://lis.njleg.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=289267&Depth=2&depth=2&expandheadings=on&headingswithhits=on&hitsperheading=on&infobase=statutes.nfo&record={7487}&softpage=Doc_Frame_PG42.
- The attendance regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8*) can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap16.pdf>.

Collaboration with Law Enforcement

Description: The NJDOE coordinates with the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety on matters related to safety and the illegal use or possession of substances and weapons through the Attorney General's Education and Law Enforcement Working Group. As set forth in *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6*, each school district is required to establish a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with local law enforcement authorities. The MOA, which is reviewed and signed annually by local education and law enforcement officials, forms the basis for information sharing among education and law enforcement representatives and sets parameters for law enforcement investigations on school grounds. The MOA must be consistent with the format and content established by the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Education in the *Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials*.

In November 2007, the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Education issued a revised MOA, which contains new information on school safety and security, including information on school security plans and training; gang threats, recruitment and information sharing; harassment, intimidation, and bullying; offenses involving computers; offenses involving hazing; reports of child abuse or neglect; law enforcement units; inquiries regarding law enforcement operations, stationhouse adjustments, and notification of arrests or charges filed against school personnel; notification of emergencies; and School Violence Awareness Week.

The NJDOE coordinates with the Office of the Attorney General on the Gang Awareness Initiative. On October 12, 2007, *N.J.S.C. 52:17B-4.7* was enacted, which requires the Attorney General, in coordination with the Commissioner of Education, to develop seminars to teach school administrators to recognize signs of gang involvement or activity. The law also requires that a seminar on gang awareness be held annually in each county for all public and nonpublic school administrators. These training sessions are offered by each county prosecutor's office in conjunction with the county office of education, and the training programs address gang awareness and related topics and are facilitated by trainers from various law enforcement agencies.

Supportive Resources:

- The current *Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials* can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/regs/agree.doc>.
- A question and answer document on the MOA can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/regs/agreefaq.pdf>
- Information on the Gang Awareness Training can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/regs/>.
- N.J.S.C. 52:17B-4.7 can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/security/bulletins/bulletin16.pdf>.

Collaboration with Human Services Agencies and Student Support Staff

Description: One of the conclusions drawn from widely publicized violent incidents in our society is that schools should examine how they collaborate with local mental health agencies and how they utilize existing student support services staff. The effective use of student support services staff and the development of cooperative relationships between them and mental health providers are important components of schools' responses to violence. Therefore, the NJDOE continues to forge links among New Jersey schools, mental health, and other human service and health providers to establish effective working relationships, identify areas of concern, and consider strategies for improving the delivery of student support services.

Specifically, NJDOE staff collaborates with the leadership of the Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey, the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists and the New Jersey School Counselors Association on comprehensive student support services issues. Representatives of these organizations serve on advisory committees for NJDOE projects, including the Social Norms Project and the Developing Safe and Civil Schools: A Collaborative Approach to Social-Emotional and Character Development initiative.

Supportive Resources:

- Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey (<http://www.asapnj.org/>).
- New Jersey Association of School Psychologists (<http://www.njasp.org/>).
- New Jersey School Counselors Association (<http://www.njsca.org/>).

Collaboration with Child Welfare Agencies

Description: In an effort to provide supportive services and resources that address the needs of the whole child, the NJDOE has increased its efforts to collaborate with child welfare agencies for the purpose of information-sharing, support and access to schools and policy development. The NJDOE coordinates with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) in a number of ways:

- New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect - The department remains a member in good standing on the Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, which consists of key

stakeholders, including state agencies, community representatives and child advocates. NJDOE's participation on this task force has facilitated increased information-sharing, collaboration and prevention planning on issues related to the welfare of children in New Jersey.

- Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Children and Families (DCF) Workgroup - The NJDOE co-chairs the DOE-DCF Workgroup which was created to address the issues regarding educational barriers for children in out-of-home placement raised by the Child Welfare Citizens Review Panel (CWCRP) at the 2007 Roundtable. This workgroup, composed of a number of external stakeholders, including, but not limited to, representatives from the Association of Children of New Jersey (ACNJ), Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Legal Services, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) has worked over the past two years to establish a standardized training program about reporting child abuse and neglect to increase and improve communication and collaboration between education and child welfare agencies to support the educational needs of children in out-of-home placements. As a result, the workgroup has:
 - Developed training for reporting child abuse and neglect entitled: *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: What School Personnel Need to Do*. The purpose of the training is to provide all school staff with the content necessary to ensure that local school district staff members consistently implement the requirements established in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children, and to foster collaboration among DCF and other external agency training to school staff on reporting abuse and neglect. The training was piloted and identified as a comprehensive training tool that would prove useful to districts in implementing the training requirements at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11(a)8. Drafted a *Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Families (MOA)*. The MOA is designed to promote, develop and enhance collaboration between school, child protective, behavioral health and prevention agencies and other interested organizations and parties to improve the well-being of children in New Jersey. The MOA achieves this objective by creating a framework for promoting interagency collaboration and communication that supports educational stability and continuity for children in out-of-home care by outlining specific activities of each partner agency as well as those of local school districts and DCF personnel. The draft MOA is currently being reviewed by DOE and DCF.
 - The DOE coordinated with the DCF and OCA in the development of proposed Legislation to comply with the federal *Fostering Connections Act*, which is designed to foster educational stability for children in out-of-home placements. Both a Senate and Assembly bill have been drafted and are currently being reviewed by the New Jersey Legislature.

Supportive Resources:

- The training protocols document titled *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: What School Personnel Need to Do* is available at
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/socservices/abuse/training/>.

Other Collaborative Partnerships

Description: The NJDOE aims to continue to collaborate with the following groups: New Jersey School Boards Association, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, New Jersey Education Association, New Jersey School Counselors Association, Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey, New Jersey Association of School Psychologists, New Jersey Association of School Social Workers, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), including the Violence Institute of New Jersey at UMDNJ and the County Traumatic Loss Coalitions for Youth administered by UMDNJ, the Departments of State, Health and Senior Services, Human Services, Children and Families and Law and Public Safety, including the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force and affiliated committees and work groups, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Attorney General's Office, including the Education and Law Enforcement Working Group, and other organizations, associations and agencies.

The NJDOE continues to be represented on the following organizations and their subgroups: Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Governor's Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council, Governor's Advisory Council on Domestic Violence, Governor's Advisory Council on Sexual Violence, New Jersey Association of County Youth Services Coordinators, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Committee and School-based Probation Committee, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention, Childhood Drinking Coalition and intends to continue to support the various collaborative initiatives described above.

The NJDOE coordinates with the New Jersey Alliance for Social and Character Development (NJASECD) on information and resource-sharing and technical assistance to local school districts regarding social-emotional and character development. The NJDOE has served as a collaborator in annual conferences held by the organization, and continues to serve as a resource to the NJASECD Advisory Board.

Supportive Resources:

- Information on the New Jersey Alliance for Social and Character Development can be found at <http://www.eirc.org/website/Programs-and-Services/NJASECD-Character-Ed.html>
- The NJDOE also actively served on the Commission on Bullying in Schools. The Commission's report, issued in December 2009 and titled *There Isn't A Moment To Lose An Urgent Call for Legal Reform and Effective Practices to Combat Bullying in New Jersey Schools*, can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/childadvocate/publications/PDFs/Bullying%20Report%20December%202009%20-%20Final.pdf>.

Appendix A

Public School Safety Law

AN ACT concerning violence in the public schools and amending P.L.1982, c.163.

C.18A:17-46 Reporting of act of violence by school employee; annual report; public hearing.

Any school employee observing or having direct knowledge from a participant or victim of an act of violence shall, in accordance with standards established by the commissioner, file a report describing the incident to the school principal in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, and copy of same shall be forwarded to the district superintendent.

The principal shall notify the district superintendent of schools of the action taken regarding the incident. Annually, at a public hearing, the superintendent of schools shall report to the board of education all acts of violence and vandalism which occurred during the previous school year. Verification of the annual report on violence and vandalism shall be part of the State's monitoring of the school district, and the State Board of Education shall adopt regulations that impose a penalty on a school employee who knowingly falsifies the report. A board of education shall provide ongoing staff training, in cooperation with the Department of Education, in fulfilling the reporting requirements pursuant to this section. The majority representative of the school employees shall have access monthly to the number and disposition of all reported acts of school violence and vandalism.

Approved February 15, 2007

18A:17-47. Discharge of, or discrimination against, school employee who files report

It shall be unlawful for any board of education to discharge or in any manner discriminate against a school employee as to his employment because the employee had filed a report pursuant to section 1 of this act. Any employee discriminated against shall be restored to his employment and shall be compensated by the board of education for any loss of wages arising out of the discrimination; provided, however, if the employee shall cease to be qualified to perform the duties of his employment he shall not be entitled to restoration and compensation.

L.1982, c. 163, s. 2, eff. Oct. 28, 1982.

18A:17-48. Annual report to legislature

The Commissioner of Education shall each year submit a report to the Education Committees of the Senate and General Assembly detailing the extent of violence and vandalism in the public schools and making recommendations to alleviate the problem.

L.1982, c. 163, s. 3, eff. Oct. 28, 1982.

Appendix B

Data Collection Form

Appendix C

Figures 1-9

[**Figure 1.** Total Incidents for Major Reporting Categories](#)

[**Figure 2.** Frequency of Types of Violence, 2007-2008, 2008-09](#)

[**Figure 3.** Count of Schools by range of HIBT* Incidents, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09](#)

[**Figure 4.** Summary of HIBT* Student Offenders by Grade Level, 2008-09](#)

[**Figure 5.** Frequency of Types of Vandalism, 2007-2008, 2008-09](#)

[**Figure 6.** Incidents by Location](#)

[**Figure 7.** Types of Incidents Occurring in the Classroom](#)

[**Figure 8.** Number of Suspensions by Duration, 2007-08, 2008-09](#)

[**Figure 9.** Program Provided as Part of Disciplinary Action Taken, 2008-09](#)

* Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying/Threat

Appendix D

District Totals by County

Types of Violence, Vandalism, Weapons Offenses, and Substance Abuse

Violence

Simple Assault
Aggravated Assault
Fight
Robbery
Extortion
Sex Offense
Criminal Threat
Kidnapping
Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying/Threat

Vandalism

Arson
Bomb Threat or Fake Bomb
Burglary
Damage to Property
Fireworks Offense
Theft
Trespassing

Weapons

Firearm
Possession of, assault with, or sale/
distribution of a handgun or rifle.

Substance Abuse

Use
Possession
Sale or Distribution

Bomb Offense (exploded/did not explode)

Other Weapon

Possession of, assault with, or sale/
distribution of weapon other than a firearm

Total

Unduplicated count of incidents. May not sum to the total of the four categories.

Appendix E

Substance and Weapons Detail, 2006-07 - 2008-09

	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		Three-Year Change
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Weapons							
Handgun	11	0.8%	9	0.8%	4	0.4%	-7
Rifle	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Air Gun	74	5.3%	81	6.9%	48	4.8%	-26
Imitation Gun	90	6.5%	35	3.0%	27	2.7%	-63
Bomb - Exploded	4	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	-4
Bomb - Unexploded	3	0.2%	1	0.1%	2	0.2%	-1
Knife	980	70.8%	858	72.9%	755	75.3%	-225
Pin	36	2.6%	45	3.8%	28	2.8%	-8
Chain	27	1.9%	36	3.1%	22	2.2%	-5
Pepper Spray	18	1.3%	11	0.9%	18	1.8%	0
Other	142	10.3%	101	8.6%	98	9.8%	-44
Total Weapons (duplicated*)	1,385	100.0%	1,177	100.0%	1,002	100.0%	-383
Substances							
Alcohol	496	17.6%	446	15.6%	507	16.5%	11
Marijuana	1,809	64.1%	1,886	66.1%	1,977	64.4%	168
Amphetamines	30	1.1%	28	1.0%	29	0.9%	-1
Party Drug	8	0.3%	9	0.3%	10	0.3%	2
Cocaine	105	3.7%	98	3.4%	45	1.5%	-60
Hallucinogens	16	0.6%	14	0.5%	20	0.7%	4
Narcotics	74	2.6%	50	1.8%	51	1.7%	-23
Depressants	28	1.0%	40	1.4%	44	1.4%	16
Steroids	5	0.2%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	-2
Prescription Drugs	149	5.3%	195	6.8%	238	7.7%	89
Inhalants	8	0.3%	9	0.3%	5	0.2%	-3
Drug Paraphernalia	93	3.3%	74	2.6%	90	2.9%	-3
Over-the-counter drug**			41	1.4%	53	1.7%	12
Total Substances (duplicated*)	2,821	100.0%	2,852	100.0%	3,072	100.0%	251

* More than one type of weapon or substance may be associated with an incident.

** Three-Year trend column based on change over two years.