



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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*Acting Commissioner*

December 16, 2011

TO: Education Committee of the Senate  
Education Committee of the General Assembly

FROM: Christopher D. Cerf, Acting Commissioner

SUBJECT: Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Public Schools, 2009-2011

The *Commissioner's Report to the Education Committees of the Senate and General Assembly on Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Public Schools*, covering the 2009-2011 school years, is now available for your review at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/vandv>. Two printed copies have been sent to Kathleen Fazzari, section chief of the Office of Legislative Services-Education.

The total number of incidents reported by districts increased 6.4 percent, an increase of 1,048 incidents from 16,338 in 2009-10 to 17,386 in 2010-11. The following changes are noted in the number of incidents reported in the four major reporting categories over the same period: violence increased 7.3 percent, vandalism declined 8.3 percent, incidents involving weapons increased 13.5 percent, and substance abuse increased 9.8 percent. The decline in reported incidents of vandalism continues a four-year trend.

In addition to the data analysis, the report provides a summary of the department's recommendations to reduce school violence and improve school safety through coordinated efforts that include: development and consistent application of clearly defined codes of student conduct; assessment of the immediate school surroundings and the social and emotional learning climates of the school communities; development of comprehensive school safety and security plans that incorporate clearly defined procedures and mechanisms for responding to and recovering from emergencies and crises; implementation of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs; and development of plans for the effective use of available school and community resources. Additionally, the report summarizes actions that will continue to support students, schools and families.

CDC/BG

Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education  
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Dave Hespe  
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District Superintendents  
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