

# **School Safety in Florida: An Overview**

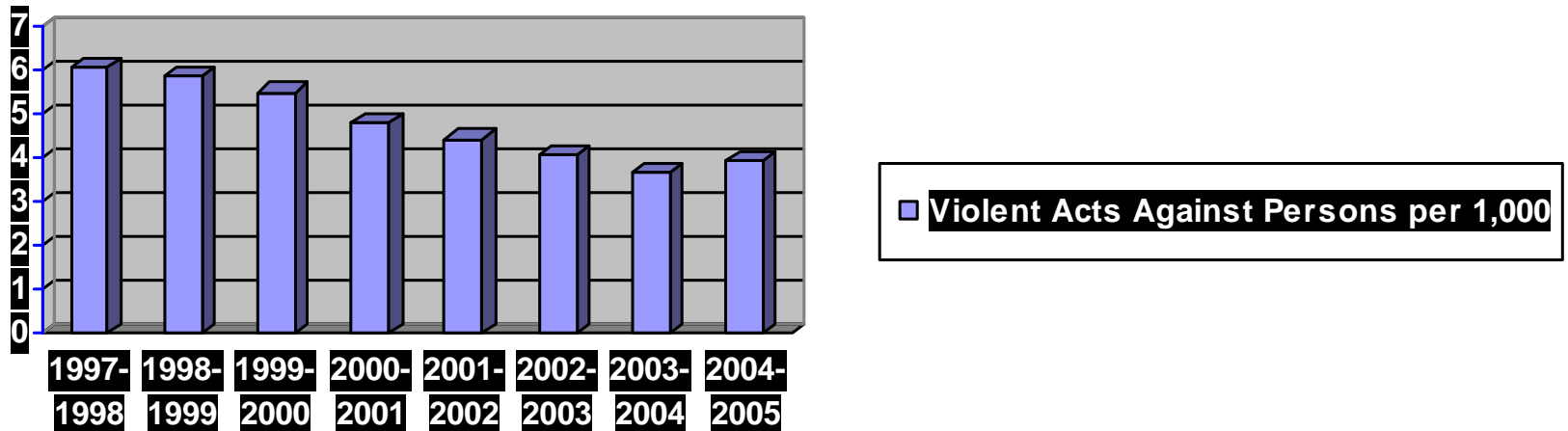
State Board of Education Meeting

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# School Safety in Florida Over Time

## SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT (SESIR) TREND ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT ACTS AGAINST PERSONS (Battery, Homicide, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sexual Battery)

	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
<b>Population</b>	2,458,423	2,502,281	2,550,124	2,556,615	2,607,593	2,650,293	2,705,674	2,765,032
<b>Violent Acts</b>	14,874	14,618	13,980	12,198	11,549	10,732	9,969	10,900
<b>Per 1,000</b>	6.05	5.84	5.48	4.77	4.43	4.05	3.68	3.94



# Rule Summary

## 6A-1.0404 Zero Tolerance for School-Related Violent Crime

- Zero Tolerance Rule for school-related violent crime--adopted by the State Board of Education in 1994.
- The Rule implements the Board's zero tolerance policy on school violence, crime, and the use of weapons.
- It is part of a comprehensive approach to reducing school violence and crime.

# SBE Rule-Code of Student Conduct

Students committing the following offenses on school property shall receive the most severe consequences:

- homicide (murder, manslaughter);
- sexual battery; armed robbery; aggravated battery; battery or aggravated battery on a teacher or other school personnel;
- kidnapping or abduction; arson;
- possession, use, or sale of any firearm; or
- possession, use, or sale of any explosive device.

# SBE Rule Summary

## Mitigating Circumstances

This provision shall not be construed to remove a school board's discretion in cases where mitigating circumstances may affect decisions on disciplinary action.

In other words:

ZERO TOLERANCE  
DOES NOT MEAN  
ZERO JUDGMENT

**“Effective schools invest in systems and strategies that prevent behavior problems rather than relying on compelling consequences to deter problem behavior.”**

Furlong, Morrison, Chung, Bates & Morrison, 1997; Walker et al., 1996

# Need to Update the Rule

- The Zero Tolerance Rule was passed in 1994.
- Students across the U.S., ages 12-18, "were asked if they had been bullied (picked on or made to do things they did not want to do) at school in the past 6 months."
- Although the percentage who had been bullied increased from 5% in 1999 to 8% in 2001, no significant difference was detected between 2001 and 2003, dropping only to 7% of students reporting that they had been victims of bullying at school, meaning in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, or traveling to school and back home.

# Need to Update the Rule

- Cyberbullying is becoming one of the more challenging issues educators and parents are facing as students use the Internet and other mobile communication technologies.
- Cyberbullying\* is when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones, or other cyber technology. This can include:
  - sending mean text, e-mail, or instant messages;
  - posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites;
  - using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone.

# Need to Update the Rule

Although very little research has been conducted on cyber-bullying, studies have found that:

- **18%** of students in grades 6-8 said they **had been cyber-bullied** at least once in the last couple of months; and **6%** said it had happened to them 2 or more times (Kowalski et al., 2005).
- **11%** of students in grades 6-8 said they **had cyber-bullied** another person at least once in the last couple of months, and **2%** said they had done it two or more times (Kowalski et al., 2005).
- **19%** of regular Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17 reported being involved in online aggression; **15%** had been aggressors, and **7%** had been targets (**3%** were both aggressors and targets) (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

# Need to Update the Rule

- According to *Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey* conducted in 2000 by the U.S. Department of Justice “one in five children (10 to 17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online.”

# Cyberstalking

## **Section 784.048(1)(d), F.S.**

"Cyberstalk" means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

## **Section 784.058(5), F.S.**

Any person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows, harasses, or cyberstalks a minor under 16 years of age commits the offense of aggravated stalking, a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. [775.082](#), s. [775.083](#), or s. [775.084](#). Penalties for acts under this statute range from a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony.

# Special Events Addressing Bullying and Cyberbullying

1. DOE Office of Safe and Healthy Schools and the Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida just sponsored Florida's 1st Bullying Prevention Conference on April 27-28, 2006.

# Events Addressing Bullying and Cyberbullying

2. DOE/SDFS is working with *i-Safe America, Inc.* to offer its prevention-oriented Internet safety awareness program to Florida school districts.

This is in an effort to address the cyber-bullying issue by increasing student awareness and critical thinking and decision-making skills regarding cyber-bullying.

# 2006 i-SAFE Regional Training

May 24	Santa Rosa County
May 25	Panama City/ Bay County
June 6	Clay County
June 7-8	Broward County

# **Actions to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying**

3. DOE is updating the School Environmental Safety Incident Report System to include a “Bullying/ Harassment” incident code and a “bullying-related” element to gather data to report on bullying incidents in Florida schools.

# Actions to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying

4. DOE/SDFS DOE/SDFS ordered the *Stop Bullying Now – Take a Stand, Lend a Hand* Communication Kit so Florida can be part of the national campaign and begin a statewide campaign to send a “stop bullying” message.
5. 600 kits, including some in Spanish, were disseminated at the Bullying Prevention Conference as well as 100 *Stop Bullying Now – Take a Stand, Lend a Hand* Resource kits.

# **Actions to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying**

6. DOE/SDFS has dedicated 2 internal staff to concentrate on activities and issues around bullying prevention, including researching model bullying prevention policies.
7. DOE continues to provide technical assistance to SDFS Coordinators in their implementation of violence and drug prevention programming activities.

# **Actions to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying**

8. DOE/SDFS has researched other statewide Bullying Prevention Networks and has been in contact with the state of Pennsylvania regarding their Network as a possible model to emulate if statewide funding is available.
9. DOE/SDFS plans to contact school districts with school safety hotlines to discuss advertising a bullying prevention message as part of their advertisement of their school safety hotlines during school year 2006-2007.

# **Actions to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying**

10. DOE/SDFS is researching and will disseminate Model Bullying Prevention Policies to school districts as well as post them on its website.
11. In 2004-2005, 48 school districts conducted program evaluations of their prevention (ATOD and Violence) programs, which are being reviewed by Department staff.
12. In 2005-2006, 63 Florida school districts implemented 68 violence prevention programs in their district schools.

# New Rule Language to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying

HB 535, sponsored by Rep. Bogdonoff, was hailed as one that “would have been among the most aggressive in the country, advocates say.”

(Naples Daily News, May 8, 2006)

In summary, it would have:

- prohibited bullying and harassment during education programs and activities, on school buses, or through use of data or computer software accessed through computer systems of certain educational institutions;
- provided definitions for bullying and harassment;
- required, by December 1, 2006, each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying and harassment on school property, at a school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, on a school bus, or through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system.
- provided minimum requirements for the contents of the policy;
- provided immunity; and
- provided restrictions with respect to defense of an action and application of the section.

# Code of Student Conduct

## Section 1006.07(2), F.S.

- School Board required to adopt a Code of Student Conduct for Elementary and one for Middle and High Schools
- Section 1006.07(2)(e), F.S., changed in 2002 - Removed “Knife” and Replaced with “weapon as defined in chapter 790”- Consistent with Zero Tolerance Statute (Section 1006.13(2)(a), F.S.)
- Weapon definition in Chapter 790 changed in 2006

# New Rule Language to Address Weapons

HB 1291 states...

"Weapon" means any dirk, knife, metallic knuckles, slungshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon except a firearm or a common pocketknife, plastic knife, or blunt-bladed table knife.

**S. 790.001(13), F.S.**

# HB 1291 Passed 2006

- S. 790.001(13), F.S., adds knife to definition of weapon but exempts common pocket knife, plastic knife, and blunt bladed knife
- S. 790.115(1), F.S., adds common pocket knife, etc. to felony for exhibiting... in rude, careless, angry or threatening manner.
- S. 790.115(2)(b), F.S., adds weapon as defined in 790.001 to “person willfully and knowingly possesses any weapon as defined in s. 790.001 (13)”

# New Rule Language to Address

**Zero Tolerance Policy for Crime and Victimization--  
1006.13(5)(a), F.S.**

A student who commits certain felony crimes against a fellow student and for that crime:

- is adjudicated guilty or delinquent, or
- is found to have committed it, regardless of whether adjudication is withheld, or
- has pled guilty or nolo contendere to it

May not attend the same school as his/her victim or the victim's sibling(s)

Exception provided pursuant to a written disposition order under s. 985.23(1)(d), F.S.

I know how  
to be safe

