New York State Comptroller
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Violent and Disruptive Incidents and Bullying in New York Schools

A Review of School Safety and Educational Climate Data

February 2026

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Introduction

Parents and teachers, as well as the general public, count on schools to provide students and staff with a safe learning environment. Since 2000, New York State's schools have been required to develop and implement school safety plans, and since 2001, the State Education Department (SED) has monitored school safety in part by collecting self-reported school-level data from districts, charter schools and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) on violent and disruptive incidents in public schools.[1]

In 2019, the Office of the New York State Comptroller (OSC) published a report analyzing the first year of data from the New York State Education Department's School Safety and Educational Climate (SSEC) report, which was implemented in School Year (SY) 2017-18.[2] This report builds on that work by looking at trends in violent incidents, drawing on seven years of SSEC data now available. The analysis presented in this report focuses primarily on statewide and regional rates of certain "violent and disruptive" incident categories used in SSEC reporting.

This report covers SY 2017-18 through 2023-24, which includes the COVID-19 pandemic. This helps explain sharp drops in the number of many types of incidents, during the time when remote learning replaced in-class instruction. In some instances, the analysis presented in the report is based on the schools' grade configuration (e.g. elementary vs. secondary schools). The analysis also looks at schools reporting no "violent and disruptive" incidents for an entire school year.

It is important to note that since SED began collecting SSEC data, some categories of "violent and disruptive" incidents included in the reporting, as well as their definitions, have changed. This complicates trend analysis for the affected categories. This report details certain changes to help the reader understand how they may have impacted incident reporting.

(See the Appendix on pages 20 and 21 for a list of the previous SSEC definitions (implemented in SY 2017-18) and, if applicable, the revised definitions (implemented in SY 2021-22) for each of the current SSEC "violent and disruptive" incident categories.)

School Safety Highlights, School Year (SY) 2023-24

- Statewide rates for certain serious incidents (assault, sexual offense and weapons possession) have fallen to near zero statewide since the definitions of these types of incidents were revised in SY 2021-22.

- Post-pandemic drug-related incidents statewide stood at 6.5 per 1,000 secondary students in SY 2023-24. In upstate schools they were 9.8 per 1,000 secondary students in SY 2023-24, more than double the rate for New York City schools.

- Since the pandemic, New York City has reported much higher rates of bullying than schools throughout the rest of the state.

- The rate of cyberbullying statewide is low. In SY 2023-24, the 4,396 reported incidents amounted to a rate of 1.8 incidents per 1,000 pupils.

School Safety Data

In 2000, New York State enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act to address issues of school safety and violence prevention.[3] The SAVE Act requires public schools across the state, including charter schools, to report "violent and disruptive incidents" that occur on school property, on school buses and at school functions.[4] Additionally, every school board of education, BOCES, county education and extension board, as well as the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools, is required to develop and implement a school safety plan.[5] In response to the SAVE Act requirements, SED developed the Violent and Disruptive Incident Report (VADIR) to collect annual school-level data beginning in SY 2001-02.[6] By SY 2004-05, the VADIR data included 20 "violent and disruptive incident" categories, including homicide, assault, kidnapping, burglary, criminal mischief, riot and false alarms.[7]

In 2010, the State Legislature enacted the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), which took effect in SY 2012-13. DASA amended New York State's Education Law to require that the Commissioner of Education create a procedure for school districts, including charter schools, to report to SED on an annual basis "material incidents of discrimination and harassment on school grounds or at a school function."[8] The following year, the term "bullying" was added to the definition of harassment and "cyberbullying" was included as a category for harassment or bullying that occurs through electronic communication.[9] The DASA data was collected using separate forms from the VADIR data.

Subsequently, in the wake of the tragic 2012 school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, SED's Board of Regents asked the New York State Schools Task Force to develop recommendations for improving school safety across the state. In 2014, the Task Force recommended numerous improvements, including combining the VADIR and DASA reporting requirements into one reporting system, as well as reducing the number of categories reported to include only the most serious violent and disruptive incidents in an effort to make the data more useful for prevention purposes.[10]
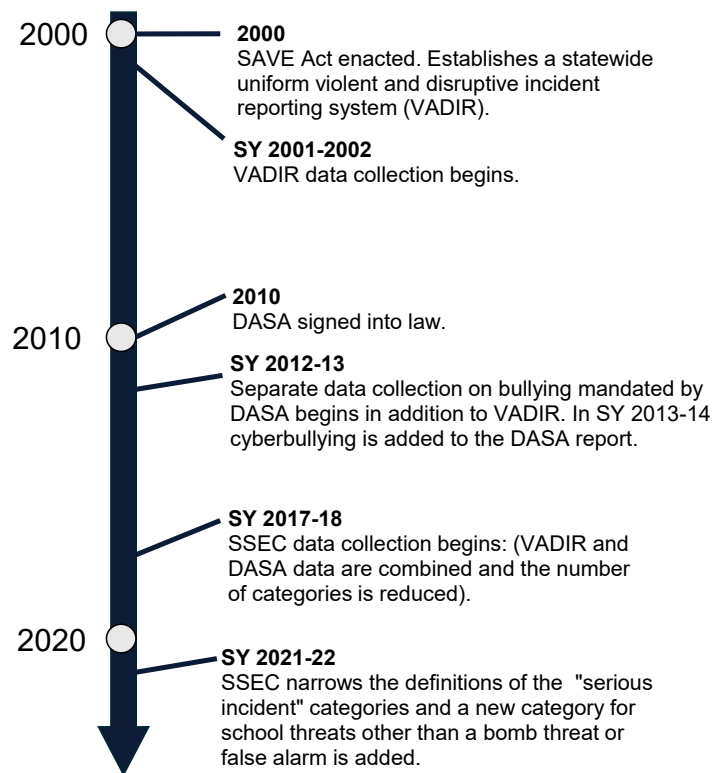
Pursuant to the Task Force's recommendations, the VADIR and DASA reporting requirements were combined into a single SSEC report starting in SY 2017-18. Initially, the SSEC report included the following categories:[11]

- Homicide

- Forcible sexual offenses

- Other sexual offenses

- Assault with serious physical injury

- Assault with physical injury

- Weapons possession (found through routine screenings)

- Weapons possession (found in other circumstances)

- Material incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying (excluding cyberbullying)

- Cyberbullying

- Bomb threat

- False alarm

- Use, possession or sale of drugs

- Use, possession or sale of alcohol

Timeline of Major Changes to Violent Incident Data Collection in New York State

2000
2000
SAVE Act enacted. Establishes a statewide uniform violent and disruptive incident reporting system (VADIR).

SY 2001-2002
VADIR data collection begins.

2010
2010
DASA signed into law.

SY 2012-13
Separate data collection on bullying mandated by DASA begins in addition to VADIR. In SY 2013-14 cyberbullying is added to the DASA report.

SY 2017-18
SSEC data collection begins: (VADIR and DASA data are combined and the number of categories is reduced).

2020
SY 2021-22
SSEC narrows the definitions of the "serious incident" categories and a new category for school threats other than a bomb threat or false alarm is added.

Notes: SAVE Act is the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act. DASA is the Dignity for All Students Act. SSEC is the School Safety and Educational Climate report.

After the first year of SSEC data collection in SY 2017-18, SED identified reporting issues relating to the revised definitions – specifically sharp increases in incident counts in the sex offenses and assault categories. After a second year of reporting in SY 2018-19, concerns with the data continued, so SED reconvened the Task Force in August 2019 to develop and propose further revisions to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education regarding school safety data collection.[12]

The Task Force recommended several changes to address concerns with SSEC reporting. Based on the recommendations, SSEC's two assault categories were combined into a single category, as were the two sexual offenses categories and the two weapons possession categories.

In addition, to help ensure that only the most serious incidents in certain categories were reported, definitions for those categories (assault, sexual offense and weapons possession) were revised to require the following criteria in order for the incident to be included in SSEC reporting:

    (1) the offender must be 10 years of age or older;

    (2) the act would constitute a felony under the Penal Law, taking into consideration the developmental capacity of the person to form intent to commit such act; and

    (3) the incident must have been referred by the school district to law enforcement.[13]

Also, starting in SY 2021-22, a new category was added to capture "threats" (other than bomb threat or false alarm), which includes a verbal, telephoned, written or electronic message of a threat of violence on school property or at a school-related function.

These changes were adopted by the Board of Regents in 2021 and applied to SSEC reporting starting in SY 2021-22.[14] Further clarification was issued by SED regarding DASA-related categories reported in SSEC in SY 2021-22, specifying that DASA reporting applies to all students and not only to protected classes.[15]

The School Violence Index and Persistently Dangerous Schools

The School Violence Index (SVI) was created to identify persistently dangerous schools as required by the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act.[16] Each state is required to establish a method for identifying persistently dangerous schools. As of 2019, most states had never identified any persistently dangerous schools.[17]

As implemented in New York State, schools designated as "persistently dangerous" must develop and implement an Incident Reduction Plan to be submitted to SED, and students who attend a "persistently dangerous" school or are the victim of a violent incident included in the SVI may have the right to transfer to another school.[18]

Since SY 2021-22, New York's SVI formula has included the following incident categories: homicide, felony assault, felony sexual offense and weapons possession. The SVI is the sum of incidents in these four categories divided by school enrollment, multiplied by 100.[19] If the SVI ratio is equal to or greater than 3.0 for two consecutive years then a school can be designated as persistently dangerous. For SY 2024-25 and 2025-26, no schools in New York were designated as persistently dangerous based on data from the previous two school years.[20]

What SSEC Data Tells Us About School Safety

This section presents findings from OSC's analysis of seven years' worth of publicly available SSEC data, including annual school-level "violent and disruptive" incident counts, enrollment, and grade configuration information, to help communities understand what is happening in their public schools with respect to school safety.[21] This section also examines the changes in per-pupil rates of certain serious violent incidents (e.g., assault, sexual offense and weapons possession) before and after the definitions of these categories were revised effective in SY 2021-22, and provides trend analyses for categories whose definitions remained the same. The discussion below omits certain SSEC incident categories. For example, the SSEC category of homicides was not considered given the rarity of such incidents.[22] Other omitted categories include false alarms, bomb threats and other threats of school violence, all of which have low incident rates that show little variation by region or district characteristics. In addition, the analysis examines the share of schools reporting no incidents of any kind (across all SSEC incident categories).

Some Incidents That Harm Students No Longer Need to Be Reported Under the Revised SSEC Definitions Implemented in SY 2021-22

Under the revised definitions for assault, sexual offenses and weapons possession, certain incidents that would have been reported by school districts in the past no longer need to be included in the school's SSEC report. For example, an incident in which a student under 10 years old brings a firearm to school is no longer reportable in the weapons possession category because of the child's age. Fights among high school students that are not referred to police are not reportable as assaults. Sexual assaults that are not determined by school officials to be felony-level offenses are also not reportable. All three criteria must be met (offender aged 10 or older, incident meets the criteria for a felony and the incident was referred to law enforcement) for any of these types of serious incidents to be included in a school's SSEC report.[23]

# Definition Changes May Have Led to Lower Reported Rates of School Violence

The changes to the definitions of the serious incident categories that took effect in SY 2021-22 (e.g., assault, sexual offense and weapons possession) may have resulted in fewer reported incidents and lower reported rates of violence on a per-pupil basis for those categories. (Homicide is also a serious incident category, but homicides are so rare they are excluded from the following analysis of serious incidents.) Because the revised SSEC definitions require that school officials report serious incidents only if the person committing the act is 10 years of age or older, among other criteria, the analysis of these categories is limited to secondary schools (e.g., middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high schools).[24]

Statewide

Prior to the pandemic, some of the most serious violent and disruptive incident categories – assault, sexual offense and weapons possession – experienced low and gradually declining rates from SY 2017-18 to 2019-20. (See Figure 2.) During the pandemic, rates for these categories dropped to near zero as most schools moved to hybrid or entirely remote learning for SY 2020-21, before returning to full in-person learning in SY 2021-22.[25] After the return to in-person learning, the incident rates remained much lower than in the years before the pandemic. However, the drop in incident rates may

FIGURE 2

Serious Violent and Disruptive Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Secondary Schools, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24
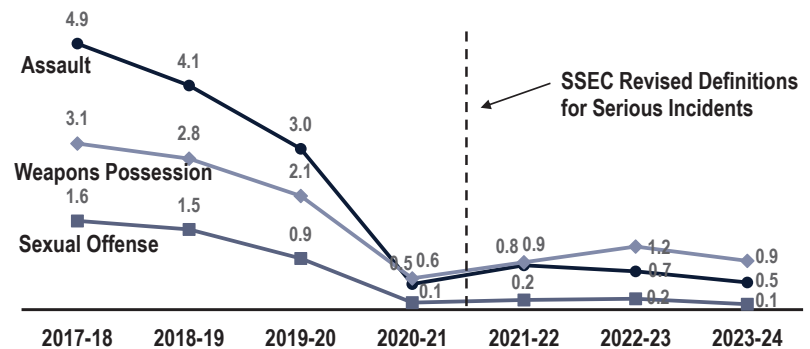
Notes: Includes New York City and charter schools. Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high. Serious incident rates include all sub-categories.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

not be due to changes in student behavior. Rather the revised definitions for assault, sexual offense and weapons possession incidents that took effect in SY 2021-22 mean that some incidents that would have been reportable using the definitions in force for the first four years of SSEC data collection are not reportable using the revised definitions. The definition changes may help explain why incident rates remained low even after students returned to in-person instruction.

Regional

As shown in Figure 3, prior to SY 2020-21 there was some regional variation in incident rates reported under the assault, sexual offense and weapons possession categories. Notably, New York City reported much higher rates in these categories compared to schools throughout the rest of the state.

The main finding from the analysis of these categories, however, is that revising the definitions of what was a reportable serious violent incident for assault, sexual offense and weapons possession, may have resulted in reduced reported incident rates for these categories. Since SY 2020-21, serious incidents dropped to near zero for each of the three categories across all regions and remained low after their definitions were revised.

Serious Violent and Disruptive Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Secondary Schools by Region, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24
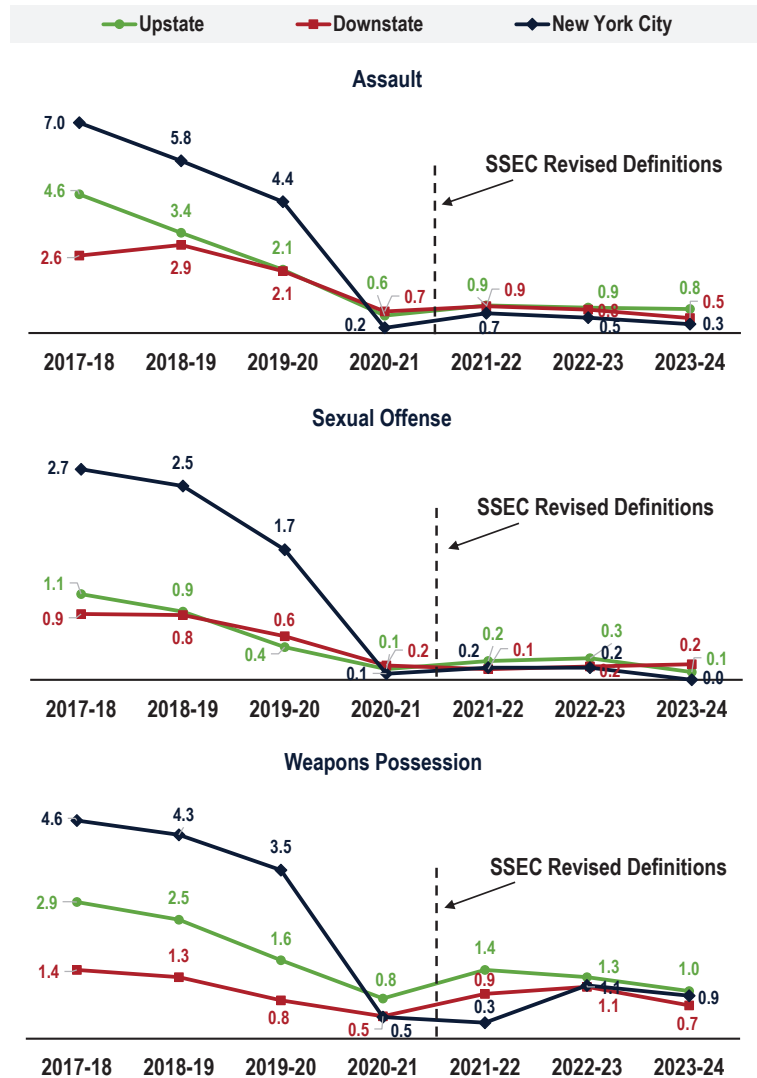
Notes: Includes charter schools. Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high. Serious incident rates include all sub-categories. Downstate counties are located in the Mid-Hudson and Long Island regions, while all other counties outside of New York City are considered upstate. For a list of which counties are in upstate and downstate regions, see the endnotes.

Sources: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

Drugs and Alcohol

The definitions for illicit use, possession and sale of drugs and alcohol, on or around school property, have remained unchanged since SSEC data collection began in SY 2017-18. Combined, a total of 9,133 incidents of drug and alcohol use made up 19 percent of all reported incidents in SY 2023-24, with 94.9 percent of the drug and alcohol incidents occurring in secondary schools. Consequently, the following analysis of drug and alcohol incidents includes only secondary schools.

Statewide

Secondary schools reported 8,664 drug and alcohol incidents in SY 2023-24, which comprised 18 percent of all incidents reported. Drug-related incidents made up nearly all (92.6 percent) of drug and alcohol incidents, while alcohol accounted for 642 total incidents. In SY 2023-24, secondary schools reported 6.5 drug incidents and 0.5 alcohol incidents per 1,000 students. (See Figure 4.) Drug and alcohol incident rates dropped during SY 2019-20 and 2020-21, likely due to the shift to remote learning during this period. When students returned to in-person learning in SY 2021-22, reported drug-related incidents rose above pre-pandemic levels.

FIGURE 4

Drugs and Alcohol Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Secondary Schools, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24
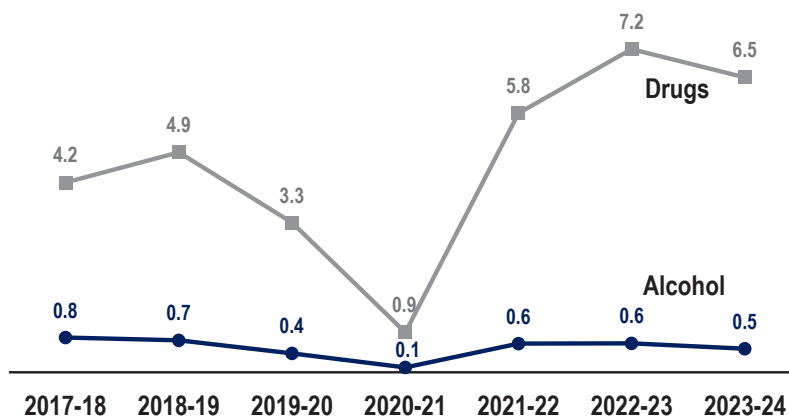
Notes: Includes New York City and charter schools. Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.
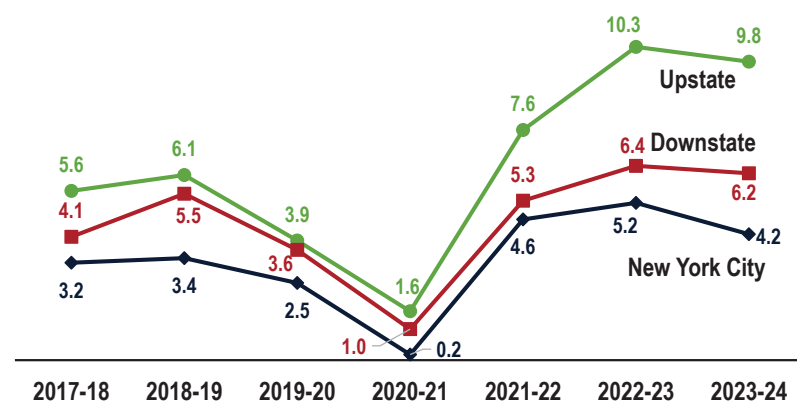
Regional

Alcohol incident rates in secondary schools hover at or below one per 1,000 students in all regions. Drug-related incidents have more variation by region, with higher rates upstate than in New York City or downstate districts. (See Figure 5.) In fact, in SY 2023-24, drug-related incidents were more than twice as high upstate (9.8 per 1,000 students) as they were in New York City (4.2 per 1,000 students). In downstate districts, excluding New York City, the rate was 6.2 per 1,000 students.

Drug-Related Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Secondary Schools by Region, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24

Notes: Includes charter schools. Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high. Downstate counties are located in the Mid-Hudson and Long Island regions, while all other counties outside of New York City are considered upstate. For a list of counties in the upstate and downstate regions, see the endnotes.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

## Prevalence of Bullying and Cyberbullying

The definitions for the DASA-related incident categories of harassment and bullying (referred to in this report as "bullying") and cyberbullying have not changed since SSEC data collection began in SY 2017-18.[26] Both elementary and secondary schools were included in the analysis of these categories. In 2025, State legislation was enacted requiring private elementary and secondary schools to adopt and publish a written anti-bullying and harassment policy. Bullying and harassment incidents are also to be documented and investigated. The legislation, however, does not require private schools to report incidents to SED.[27]

Bullying: Statewide

Bullying is the most frequently reported SSEC incident category. In SY 2023-24, excluding cyberbullying, bullying made up 61.8 percent of all incidents reported. A total of 29,718 bullying incidents were reported, resulting in a rate of 12.4 incidents per 1,000 pupils. Excluding the 1,734 schools that reported no incidents of bullying, this rate increases to 18.2 incidents per 1,000 pupils in schools where bullying was reported.

During the pandemic years, reported incidents of bullying declined for SY 2019-20, perhaps impacted by schools switching to remote learning in the spring of that school year, and declined even further in SY 2020-21 when remote learning was implemented, in some cases, for the entire school year. (See Figure 6.) When students returned to in-person learning for SY 2021-22, rates of reported bullying (among schools that reported any) rose above pre-pandemic levels. In fact, from SY 2017-18 to 2023-24, reported bullying rates grew from 10.2 to 18.2 incidents per 1,000 students statewide.

FIGURE 6

Bullying Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Elementary and Secondary Schools, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24
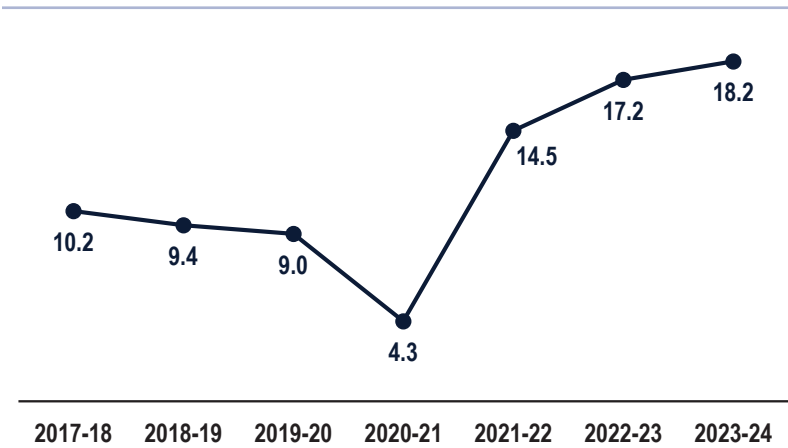
Notes: Includes New York City and charter schools. Excludes schools that reported zero bullying incidents. Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.
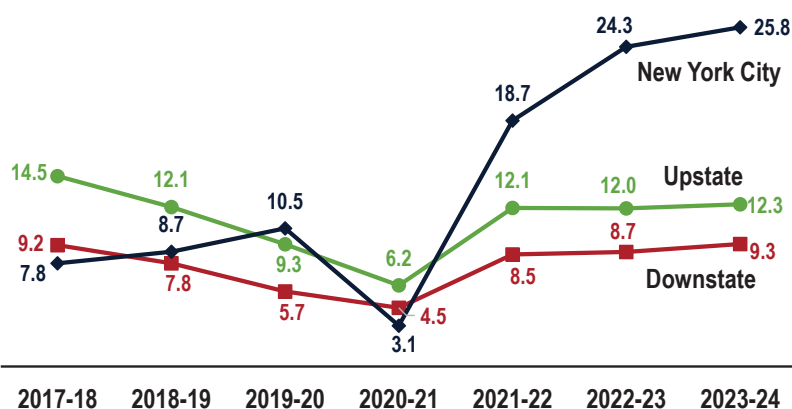
Bullying: Regional

The data shows a difference in reported rates of bullying for schools in upstate regions compared to downstate regions from SY 2017-18 to 2023-24, but the difference is even greater when comparing New York City to regions in the rest of the state.[28]

Reported bullying rates in New York City were on the rise before dropping sharply during the pandemic. In the wake of the pandemic, reported bullying incidents in the city rose rapidly (from 10.5 incidents per 1,000 pupils in SY 2019-20 to 25.8 in SY 2023-24). (See Figure 7.) This increase coincided with New York City revising its Regulations of the Chancellor in October 2021 by, among other things, adding examples of bullying and harassment and clarifying that discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and/ or bullying is prohibited during online learning.[29] Rates of reported bullying in upstate regions remained consistently higher than those reported downstate, though both regions experienced a gradual decline between SY 2017-18 and SY 2020-21, and both saw similar increases after the return to in-person learning. Reported rates of bullying in upstate regions have not exceeded pre-pandemic highs.

FIGURE 7

Bullying Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Elementary and Secondary Schools by Region, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24

Notes: Includes charter schools. Excludes schools that reported zero bullying incidents. Downstate counties are located in the Mid-Hudson and Long Island regions, while all other counties outside of New York City are considered upstate. For a list of which counties are in upstate and downstate regions, see endnotes.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.
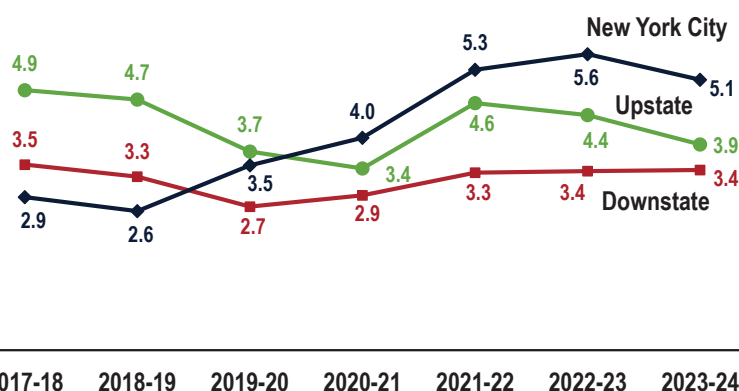
Cyberbullying

In the SSEC data, cyberbullying incident rates are very low. Many cyberbullying incidents may go unreported, since it can be difficult for adults to detect because it happens virtually and can be done anonymously.[30] In SY 2023-24, 4,396 incidents of cyberbullying were reported statewide, amounting to an overall rate of 1.8 incidents per 1,000 pupils. Excluding the 3,104 schools that reported zero cyberbullying, the rate increases to 4.4 cyberbullying incidents per 1,000 pupils in schools where it was reported.

There was some variation in cyberbullying rates by region, including during the pandemic years. (See Figure 8.) Among schools that reported cyberbullying incidents, upstate schools had the highest rate prior to the pandemic, while New York City had the lowest. By SY 2020-21, however, reported cyberbullying rates in New York City increased above rates in other regions and remained higher through SY 2023-24 (5.1 incidents per 1,000 students).

FIGURE 8

Cyberbullying Incident Rates per 1,000 Students in Elementary and Secondary Schools, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
New York City	2.9	2.6	3.5	4.0	5.3	5.6	5.1
Upstate	4.9	4.7	3.7	3.4	4.6	4.4	3.9
Downstate	3.5	3.3	2.7	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.4

Notes: Includes charter schools. Excludes schools that reported zero cyberbullying incidents. Downstate counties are located in the Mid-Hudson and Long Island regions, while all other counties outside of New York City are considered upstate. For a list of which counties are in upstate and downstate regions, see endnotes.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

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Many Schools Report No Incidents of Any Type

OSC audits of school safety programs and SED data collection, as well as OSC's current analysis of the SSEC data, suggest a risk that "violent and disruptive" incidents are underreported. An audit of SED's implementation of the SAVE Act found that incident data submitted to SED through VADIR was underreported, misreported and sometimes not reported at all.[31] Other OSC audits on the implementation of DASA and subsequent data collection found that some DASA incident data submitted to SED was misclassified or unreported.[32] An OSC audit of New York City's Department of Education (NYCDOE) found similar problems, including underreporting, inconsistent classification and late reporting.[33]

Analysis of SY 2023-24 SSEC data shows that 41 percent of public elementary schools and 5.9 percent of public secondary schools (including charter schools) reported no incidents of any type. (See Figure 9.) Stakeholders should keep in mind, however, that a school reporting zero incidents through the SSEC report may have records of individual disruptive and violent incidents that are stored locally. For example, records of an individual incident involving fighting or bullying would be maintained by the district if it resulted in disciplinary action, even if school officials determined the incident did not meet the threshold for SSEC reporting.[34]

FIGURE 9

Percentage of Schools Reporting No Violent and Disruptive Incidents by Type and Location, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24

	School Year						
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Public Schools (Non-Charter)							
New York City	**2.0%**	**3.8%**	**6.1%**	**33.5%**	**7.9%**	**4.7%**	**6.1%**
Elementary	3.0%	6.3%	10.0%	38.6%	12.4%	8.0%	10.3%
Secondary	0.9%	1.2%	1.9%	28.0%	3.1%	1.1%	1.6%
Rest of State	**20.5%**	**24.8%**	**33.9%**	**50.6%**	**37.1%**	**33.4%**	**34.4%**
Elementary	32.3%	38.6%	51.7%	70.2%	57.3%	51.4%	53.5%
Secondary	3.4%	4.9%	8.6%	22.4%	8.2%	7.5%	6.9%
Total	**13.8%**	**17.2%**	**23.8%**	**44.4%**	**26.5%**	**22.9%**	**24.1%**
Elementary	22.6%	27.9%	37.8%	59.6%	42.3%	36.9%	39.1%
Secondary	2.4%	3.4%	5.9%	24.6%	6.1%	4.9%	4.8%
Charter Schools							
New York City	**39.2%**	**45.7%**	**51.3%**	**87.9%**	**57.6%**	**49.8%**	**56.5%**
Elementary	55.6%	60.6%	64.5%	94.4%	70.4%	60.7%	68.6%
Secondary	7.2%	14.7%	20.0%	73.2%	28.4%	25.0%	30.4%
Rest of State	**14.6%**	**12.2%**	**22.4%**	**63.3%**	**34.7%**	**32.7%**	**35.2%**
Elementary	22.6%	18.2%	31.4%	61.8%	37.5%	31.6%	42.1%
Secondary	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	29.4%	35.3%	18.8%
Total	**34.5%**	**39.4%**	**46.3%**	**83.6%**	**53.8%**	**46.7%**	**52.6%**
Elementary	49.4%	52.6%	58.7%	88.7%	65.2%	55.5%	63.8%
Secondary	5.8%	11.9%	16.7%	72.1%	28.6%	26.9%	28.4%
All Schools							
Total	**14.9%**	**18.5%**	**25.2%**	**46.8%**	**28.2%**	**24.5%**	**26.0%**
Elementary	24.3%	29.5%	39.4%	61.8%	44.0%	38.4%	41.0%
Secondary	2.6%	3.8%	6.4%	26.7%	7.2%	6.0%	5.9%

Note: Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high.
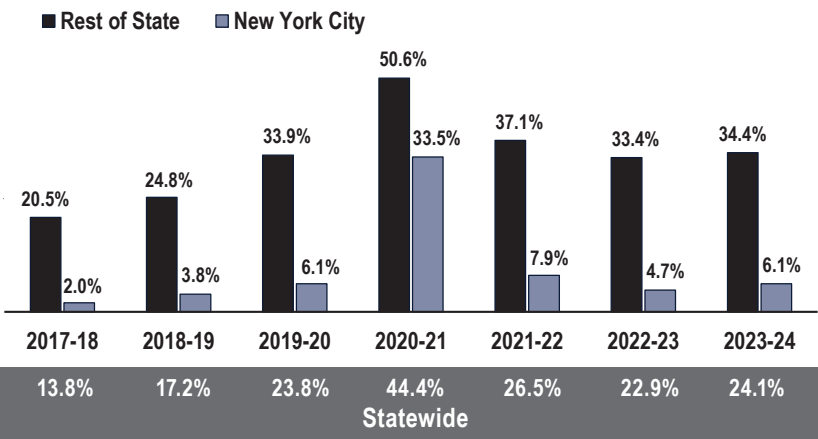
Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

Public schools (excluding charter schools) outside of New York City are much more likely to report zero violent or disruptive incidents compared to schools in the City. In SY 2023-24, for example, 6.1 percent of non-charter public schools in New York City reported zero incidents compared to 34.4 percent of schools in the rest of the state. (See Figure 10.)

Non-charter public schools reporting zero incidents increased rapidly from 13.8 percent in SY 2017-18 to 44.4 percent in SY 2020-21 when the COVID pandemic forced schools to adopt remote learning. Since the mid-pandemic peak, the share of schools reporting zero incidents has fallen by nearly half, to 24.1 percent.

For charter schools, in SY 2017-18, 34.5 percent of schools reported zero incidents and the figure grew to 39.4 percent the following year. (See Figure 11.) The share reached over 80 percent during the peak of the pandemic, when remote learning was implemented, before coming back down when students returned to full in-person learning. In SY 2023-24, 52.6 percent of charter schools reported no incidents. New York City charter schools were much more likely to report zero incidents compared to charter schools in the rest of the state, which had rates closer to those of non-charter public schools.

FIGURE 10

Percentage of Public Schools Reporting No Violent and Disruptive Incidents by Location, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24

Notes: Excludes charter schools. Includes elementary schools, as well as secondary schools with the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

FIGURE 11

Percentage of Charter Schools Reporting No Violent and Disruptive Incidents by Location, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24
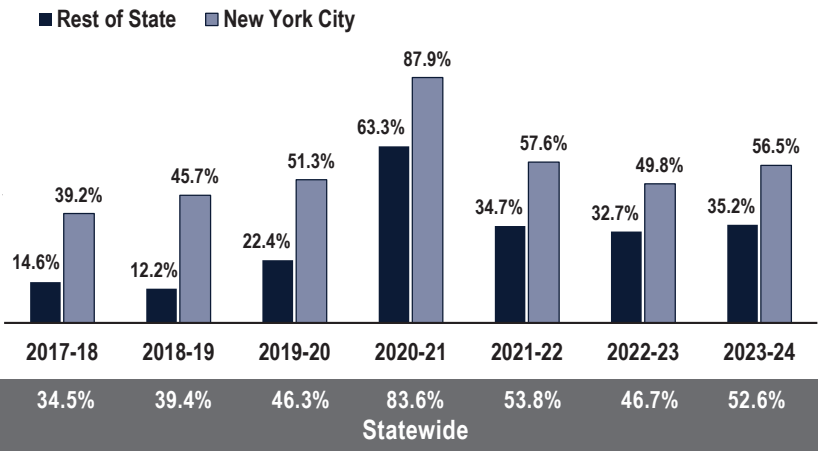
Note: Includes elementary schools, as well as secondary schools with the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

More Than One-Third of Schools Reported No Bullying or Cyberbullying

As shown in Figure 12, over one-third (34.9 percent) of all public schools, including charter schools, reported zero bullying or cyberbullying in SY 2023-24. Nearly one in five public secondary schools (17.8 percent) and nearly half of all public elementary schools (47.7 percent) reported zero bullying or cyberbullying incidents (including charter schools).

Charter schools are less likely to report bullying and cyberbullying than other schools: for example, in SY 2023-24, nearly two-thirds (64.9 percent) of charter schools reported zero bullying or cyberbullying, compared to 32.8 percent of non-charter schools.

FIGURE 12

Percentage of Schools Reporting No Bullying or Cyberbullying Incidents by Type and Location, School Years 2017-18 to 2023-24

	School Year						
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Public Schools (Non-Charter)							
New York City	**21.1%**	**18.9%**	**15.0%**	**41.1%**	**11.5%**	**6.6%**	**7.6%**
Elementary	24.2%	26.1%	21.7%	44.9%	17.5%	10.6%	11.6%
Secondary	17.7%	11.0%	7.7%	37.0%	5.0%	2.4%	3.3%
Rest of State	**35.4%**	**40.6%**	**50.3%**	**65.2%**	**51.2%**	**48.2%**	**47.3%**
Elementary	49.1%	55.2%	66.8%	79.4%	68.4%	62.5%	62.4%
Secondary	15.8%	19.5%	26.8%	44.6%	26.5%	27.7%	25.4%
Total	**30.2%**	**32.7%**	**37.5%**	**56.4%**	**36.7%**	**33.0%**	**32.8%**
Elementary	40.9%	45.5%	51.8%	67.9%	51.3%	45.2%	45.4%
Secondary	16.6%	16.2%	19.2%	41.5%	17.9%	17.4%	16.5%
Charter Schools							
New York City	**56.9%**	**59.5%**	**72.9%**	**90.9%**	**70.0%**	**66.7%**	**66.9%**
Elementary	73.3%	74.6%	83.1%	95.0%	78.7%	74.0%	78.1%
Secondary	24.6%	27.9%	48.6%	81.7%	50.0%	50.0%	43.0%
Rest of State	**31.3%**	**40.8%**	**49.0%**	**75.5%**	**49.0%**	**56.4%**	**55.6%**
Elementary	32.3%	48.5%	57.1%	73.5%	53.1%	57.9%	57.9%
Secondary	29.4%	25.0%	28.6%	80.0%	41.2%	52.9%	50.0%
Total	**52.0%**	**56.0%**	**68.8%**	**88.2%**	**66.4%**	**64.8%**	**64.9%**
Elementary	65.7%	69.7%	78.6%	91.2%	74.6%	71.1%	74.4%
Secondary	25.6%	27.4%	45.2%	81.4%	48.4%	50.5%	44.2%
All Schools							
Total	**31.4%**	**34.0%**	**39.4%**	**58.4%**	**38.6%**	**35.1%**	**34.9%**
Elementary	42.4%	47.2%	53.8%	69.6%	53.1%	47.2%	47.7%
Secondary	17.0%	16.6%	20.3%	43.3%	19.3%	19.0%	17.8%

Notes: Includes any incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying either in person or virtual. Secondary schools include the following grade configurations: middle, junior, junior/senior high and senior high.

Source: New York State Education Department, School Safety and Educational Climate, with calculations by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

Other Methods to Measure School Safety

SSEC reporting is limited. It does not attempt to address whether students feel safe at school, and it excludes incidents that do not come to the attention of school officials. Furthermore, under the current SSEC definitions, some incidents that injure students will not be included in schools' SSEC reports.

Surveys as a Tool for Measuring School Safety

Some school districts use surveys to assess how safe students and faculty feel at school. Asking students and faculty directly about their observations, experiences and perceptions can provide detailed information about the educational climate. Each year, NYCDOE conducts a "NYC School Survey," which asks students, faculty and families what they think about their school. It covers six elements that contribute to student success and school improvement: "rigorous instruction," "collaborative teachers," "supportive environment," "effective school leadership," "strong family-community ties" and "trust." The "supportive environment" element contains questions for students about bullying and how safe students feel in and around their school.[35] In SY 2023-24, just over half of students (51 percent) reported that students harass, bully or intimidate each other in New York City schools.[36]

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention use the biennially administered National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to gather data from a representative sample of public and private school students in grades 9 through 12 on a variety of behaviors relating to health and well-being. One of the questions asks whether students were bullied on school property within the last 12 months. In SY 2022-23, 18.9 percent of New York City high school students reported being bullied. Outside of New York City, the figure is 21.5 percent.[37] Meanwhile, for the same school year, the number of bullying incidents reported in SSEC by schools in New York City represented a rate of 25.8 incidents per 1,000 students, which, assuming each reported incident targeted a different student, equates to 2.6 percent of students (and that excludes the schools that reported no bullying).

The YRBS also asks students whether they have been threatened or injured with a weapon at school, whether they missed school because of safety concerns, and about their alcohol and drug use, among numerous other topics. Nationally, the 2023 survey showed that 9 percent of high school students said they were threatened or injured with a weapon at school, while 13 percent said they did not go to school at least once during the past 30 days because of safety concerns. Over one-fifth (22 percent) of high school students said they used alcohol in the past 30 days, while 17 percent used marijuana and 10 percent used illicit drugs. (These results are not directly comparable to the SSEC reporting because the latter collects data on only school-related drug and alcohol incidents.[38])

Combining Data Sources to Measure School Climate

SED has considered supplementing SSEC data with other information to assess school safety. In 2015, at the same time SED was working on consolidating and streamlining the VADIR and DASA incident categories to create SSEC reporting, it also proposed developing a New York Statewide School Climate Index (SCI). As summarized in a Board of Regents discussion item, "The SCI would provide school administrators with a full picture of a school's climate based on multiple measures aimed at engaging students, school personnel, and the community by analyzing the data and then implementing appropriate programmatic interventions."[39] The proposed measures were to include information from school climate surveys, the violent incident data and a metric for chronic absenteeism.[40] SED did some pilot study work in SY 2016-17 in which a small number of districts used a federal school climate survey. This was to be followed by a larger pilot with more districts.[41] Results from the SY 2016-17 pilot were presented to the Board of Regents in November 2017.[42] However, results from the larger pilot do not appear to have been made public and OSC was informed by SED staff that there are no current plans to develop a school climate index.[43]

Conclusion

Reliable public data about school safety is important to ensure that students have a safe and supportive environment in New York State schools. Over the past seven years, the New York State Education Department has collected data related to school safety through the self-reported school-level SSEC report. Analysis of the public data shows that bullying and drug-related incidents have been on the rise since the COVID-19 pandemic, in many cases exceeding pre-pandemic highs. Although rates remain low on a per-pupil basis, the increase is nonetheless concerning.

With respect to the serious incident categories of assault, sexual offense, and weapons possession – after rates of reporting dropped significantly during the pandemic, changes to SSEC categories and definitions may have resulted in continued lower rates in more recent years for which SSEC data is available. In addition to schools not being required to report all serious incidents that harm students, the differences in the data definitions make time-series comparative analysis difficult, if not impossible.

For these reasons, SED may wish to consider implementing complementary methods of data collection. For example, the New York City Department of Education has demonstrated success with student, staff and family surveys that capture the everyday experiences and perceptions of education stakeholders. Such methods, though more resource intensive, could provide additional understanding of the educational climate throughout the state.

Appendix

School Safety and Environmental Climate Incident Category Definitions		
Category	**Definition as of School Year 2017-18**	**Revised Definition** (As of School Year 2021-22)
Assault	**Physical Injury:** means impairment of physical condition or substantial pain and includes, but is not limited to, black eyes, welts, abrasions, bruises, cuts not requiring stitches, swelling and headaches not related to a concussion.	Any act committed by a person 10 years of age or older which would constitute a felony under Article 120 of the Penal Law, taking into consideration the developmental capacity of the person to form the intent to commit such act, and where the school has referred the person to the police for the act reported.
	Serious Physical Injury: means physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes death or serious and protracted disfigurement or protracted impairment of health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ and requires hospitalization or treatment in an emergency medical care facility outside of school, including but not limited to, a bullet wound, fractured or broken bones or teeth, concussions, cuts requiring stitches and any other injury involving risk of death or disfigurement.	
Bomb Threat	A telephoned, written or electronic message that a bomb, explosive, or chemical or biological weapon has been or will be placed on school property.	No changes.
Cyberbullying	Defined as harassment or bullying that occurs through any form of electronic communication, (Ed. Law §11[8]) including, but not limited to, cell phones, computers, and tablets, or other communication tools, including social media sites, text messages, chat rooms, and websites.(See definition of harassment or bullying as defined in 5a. and Commissioner's regulation 100.2(kk)(1)(viii)).	No changes.
Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying, Excluding Cyberbullying	A single verified incident or a series of related verified incidents where a student is subjected to harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination by a student and/or employee on school property or at a school function.(2) In addition, such term shall include a verified incident or series of related incidents of harassment or bullying that occur off school property, as defined in Commissioner's regulation §100.2(kk)(1)(viii). Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex. Commissioner's regulation 100.2(kk)(1)(viii) provides that harassment or bullying means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse that either: (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional and/or physical well-being, including conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause emotional harm; or (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. Such definition shall include acts of harassment or bullying that occur on school property, at a school function, or off school property where such act creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. For the purposes of this definition the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.	No changes.
False Alarm	Causing a fire alarm or other disaster alarm to be activated knowing there is no danger, or through false reporting of a fire or disaster.	No changes.
Homicide	Any intentional violent conduct that results in the death of another person.	No changes.

Source: New York State Education Department.

Appendix

School Safety and Environmental Climate Incident Category Definitions

Category	Definition as of School Year 2017-18	Revised Definition (As of School Year 2021-22)
Sexual Offense	**Forcible Sex Offenses:** Sex offenses involving forcible compulsion and completed or attempted sexual intercourse, oral sexual conduct, anal sexual conduct or aggravated sexual contact, with or without a weapon including but not limited to penetration with a foreign object, rape and sodomy; or resulting from forcibly touching or grabbing another student on a part of the body that is generally regarded as private, such as buttocks, breast, genitalia. **Other Sex Offenses:** Other non-consensual sex offenses involving inappropriate sexual contact, including, but not limited to, touching another student on a part of the body that is generally regarded as private, which includes, but is not limited to, the buttocks, breasts, and genitalia, removing another student's clothing to reveal underwear or private body parts, or brushing or rubbing against another person in a sexual manner. Other sex offenses shall also include, but not limited to conduct that may be consensual or involve a child who is incapable of consent by reason of disability or because he or she is under 17 years of age, provided that such term shall not include consensual sexual conduct involving only students, and/or non-students 18 years of age or under, unless at least one the individuals participating in the conduct is at least four years older than the youngest individual participating in this conduct.	Any act committed by a person 10 years of age or older which would constitute a felony under Article 130 of the Penal Law, taking into consideration the developmental capacity of the person to form the intent to commit such act, and where the school has referred the person to the police for the act reported.
Threat of School Violence (Other than Bomb Threat or False Alarm)	This category did not exist until School Year 2021-22	A verbal, telephoned, written or electronic message of a threat of violence on school property or at a school related function.
Use, Possession, or Sale of Alcohol	Illegally using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol on school property or at a school function. This includes possessing alcohol on a person, in a locker, a vehicle or other personal space; selling or distributing alcohol on school property or at a school function; and finding alcohol on school property that is not in the possession of any person.	No changes.
Use, Possession, or Sale of Drugs	Illegally using, possessing, or being under the influence of a controlled substance or marijuana, on school property or at a school function, including having such substance on a person in a locker, vehicle, or other personal space; selling or distributing a controlled substance or marijuana, on school property; finding a controlled substance or marijuana, on school property that is not in the possession of any person; provided that nothing herein shall be construed to apply to the lawful administration of a prescription drug on school property.	No changes.
Weapons Possession	**Routine Security Checks:** possession of one or more weapons secured through routine security checks. **Weapons Possessed Under Other Circumstances:** Possession of one or more weapons at a school function or on school property which are not discovered through a routine security check, including but not limited to, weapons found in possession of a student or within a locker.	An act committed by a person 10 years of age or older which would constitute a felony under Article 265.00 of the Penal Law taking into consideration the developmental capacity of the person to form the intent to commit such act, and where the school has referred the person to the police for the act.

Source: New York State Education Department.

Notes

[1] Both New York State and federal law mandate reporting school-level data collection on violent and disruptive incidents. New York laws and regulations are discussed further in subsequent endnotes. In addition, federal law mandates civil rights data collection under the U.S. Department of Education, including suspensions, expulsions, arrests, law enforcement referrals, chronic absenteeism and violent incidents (including bullying and cyberbullying) for all public schools. For more information, see U.S. Department of Education, *Opportunities and Responsibilities for State and Local Report Cards Under The Elementary And Secondary Education Act of 1965, As Amended By The Every Student Succeeds Act*, September, 2019, p. 56, at **www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/03/report-card-guidance-final.pdf**. This report, however, is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as the Office of the New York State Comptroller (OSC) opining on the legality of compliance or non-compliance by public or charter schools identified in this report as it relates to both New York State and federal reporting requirements.

[2] OSC, *New York State School Safety: A Statewide and Regional Review*, August 2019, at **https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/nys-school-safety-statewide-regional-review.pdf**. To download historical School Safety and Educational Climate (SSEC) data, go to **www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/school_safety/school_safety_data_reporting.html**.

[3] The Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act was enacted as Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2000. For more information and resources related to the SAVE Act, see New York State Education Department (SED), "The Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act" at **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/safe-schools-against-violence-education-act-save**.

[4] Education Law, Section 2802 mandates the creation of a statewide Uniform Violent Incident Reporting System. Many of the specifics regarding the system, including its current alias as the SSEC reporting system, are set forth in regulations: 8 New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR), Section 100.2(gg). The regulations establish definitions of "school function," "school property" as well as the definitions of the incident categories.

[5] Regulations regarding school safety plans are set forth in regulations: 8 NYCRR 155.17.

[6] To access Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) reports from school years (SY) 2001-02 to 2011-12, see SED, "VADIR Incident Reporting - Previous Years" at **www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/school_safety/vadir_archive.html**.

[7] Archived VADIR data is available at **www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/school_safety/vadir_archive.html**.

[8] The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) is set forth in article two of the New York State Education Law. (See, Education Law, sections 10 to 18, enacted by Chapter 482 of the Laws of 2010).

[9] DASA was subsequently amended by chapter 102 of the Laws of 2012, effective July 1, 2013, to, among other things, amend the definition of "harassment" to include "bullying" and "cyberbullying". Based on the legislation, incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying can be based on, but not limited to, a person's actual or perceived race, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, mental or physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and sex. For more information, see SED, "The Dignity for All Students Act" at **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/dignity-all-students-act-dasa**.

Notes

[10] With respect to the Task Force being charged with the responsibility of advising SED on aspects of improving school safety, including how to reframe the existing VADIR and DASA reporting requirements to better identify key safety issues and establish a safe school climate see, e.g. SED, Board of Regents P-12 Education, Regents discussion item, October 11, 2013, at **www.regents. nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/1013p12d1%5b1%5d.pdf**. See also, SED, Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee, *Proposed Amendment of Section 100.2(gg) of the Commissioner's Regulations, Relating to the Uniform Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting System (VADIR)*, December 1, 2016, at **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/1216p12a2.pdf** and *Update on the Department's Efforts to Improve School Safety, including Implementing the New York State Safe Schools Task Force Recommendations*, April 25, 2019, p. 3, at **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/519p12d1.pdf**. A Board of Regents "Consent Agenda" item from April 1, 2021 provides a brief history of the VADIR and DASA systems: **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/4211brca12.pdf**.

[11] The requirements for the statewide uniform violent incident reporting system are set forth in New York State Education Law, Section 2802, along with the uniform violent or disruptive incident reporting system also known as the "School safety and educational climate reporting system", set forth in NYCRR, Title 8, Section 100.2(gg). The definitions of a violent or disruptive incident are categorized in 8 NYCRR, Section 100.2 (gg)(1)(iv).

[12] The charge to the New York State Schools Task Force by the Board of Regents also included reassessing the formula for calculating the School Violence Index used to identify persistently dangerous schools and assessing the need to collect data on threats of school violence. For more information on the Task Force and the subsequent changes to the Commissioner's regulations, see Board of Regents, *Proposed Amendment to Sections 100.2(cc), (gg) and 120.3(a) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the Uniform Violent or Disruptive Incident Reporting System, Also Known as the School Safety and Educational Climate Report*, April 1, 2021, at **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/ regents/files/4211brca12.pdf**. Somewhat confusingly, the memorandum uses the acronym VADIR when referring to the new SSEC definitions. The proposed changes recommended by the Task Force were approved, as submitted, by the Board of Regents and took effect on July 1, 2021. The April 1, 2021 memorandum notes that the proposed changes were published to the State Register for a 60-day public comment period. No public comments were received.

[13] The glossary used for SY 2017-18 SSEC data collection is available at **www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/ schoolsafety/vadir/glossary201718.html**. The revised definitions that went into effect for SY 2021-22 are available at **www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/student-support- services/ssecglossaryofterms11.10.21.pdf**. For more information, see SED, *SSEC Forms, Guidance, and Instructions*, at **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/ssec-forms-guidance- and-instructions**.

[14] For more information on the implementation of the changes, see July 21, 2021 letter issued by SED Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Student Support Services at **www.nysed.gov/sites/default/ files/programs/student-support-services/ssec-definitions-memo-2021.pdf**.

[15] For more information on DASA guidance, see June 16, 2022 letter issued by SED Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Student Support Services at **www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/ programs/student-support-services/ssec-reporting-memo-2021-22.pdf**.

Notes

16 The federal mandate for "Unsafe School Choice" is set forth in United States Code (see, 20 USCS Section 7912). New York State Education Law, Section 2802(7) generally sets forth the rights of students who attend "persistently dangerous" public elementary or secondary schools to attend a safe public school within the same local educational agency. The Commissioner's regulations provide further details with respect to the implementation of ensuring students attend a safe school (see, e.g. 8 NYCRR Section 120.3).

17 As of 2019, only eight states and Puerto Rico had ever identified any schools as "persistently dangerous." For more information, see Carolyn Phenicie, "The 20-Year-Old Federal Education Provision You've Never Heard Of: For Decades, Students Have Had the Right to Transfer Out of 'Persistently Dangerous' Schools," *The 74*, April 23, 2019, at **www.the74million.org/article/the-20-year-old-federal-education-provision-youve-never-heard-of-for-decades-students-have-had-the-right-to-transfer-out-of-persistently-dangerous-schools/**. New York State has designated schools as persistently dangerous. See, for example, "State Education Department Identifies 16 Schools as Persistently Dangerous," Press release, August 27, 2010, at **www.nysed.gov/news/2017/state-education-department-identifies-16-schools-persistently-dangerous**.

18 For more information on persistently dangerous schools, see SED, "Persistently Dangerous School Designation" at **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/school-safety-and-educational-climate-ssec#PDS**, as well as 8 NYCRR, Section 120.3. In accordance with SED guidance, local educational entities with a school that are have been identified as "persistently dangerous" or "potentially persistently dangerous" may request that violent SSEC incidents, attributable to a student's classified disability, be removed from the School Violence Index (SVI) calculation by submitting documentation through the Violent Incident Exemption Process. See **www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/student-support-services/ssec-viep.docx**. Once a school has been designated, the local educational agency may petition to have its designation removed for the following school year based on evidence that conditions at the school have improved (see, e.g., 8 NYCRR, Section 120.3(i)).

19 For more information on the SVI revision, see July 22, 2021 letter issued by SED Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Student Support Services at **www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/student-support-services/ssec-definitions-memo-2021.pdf**. For information on the current SVI calculation, see also, SED, "Criteria for Designating Persistently Dangerous Schools using SVI," May 11, 2023, at **www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/schoolsafety/vadir/CriteriaforDesignatingPersistentlyDangerousSchoolusingSV.html**.

20 See SED, *Persistently Dangerous Schools Designation*, updated September 9, 2024, at **www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/schoolsafety/vadir/PDSchoolsDesignation.html**. Also, **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/persistently-dangerous-schools-designation**, accessed on August 21, 2025.

21 All analysis of SSEC reporting data in this report excludes schools with unconventional grade configurations, including Pre-K only, K-12 and special, as well as schools with unknown or unavailable grade configurations. The SSEC form collects additional information that is not reported publicly. This includes categorical identification of bias-related incidents, gang-related incident counts as well as the location of incidents and disciplinary actions taken. For more information, see SED, "SSEC Forms, Guidance and Instructions", June 6, 2024, at **www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/school_safety/school_safety_data_collection.html**. Click on the "SSEC Reporting Form" link to access the form. See also, **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/ssec-forms-guidance-and-instructions**.

22 Homicides, although rare, did appear in the SSEC data three times from SY 2017-18 to 2023-24.

Notes

[23] SED, "Glossary of Terms for the School Safety and Educational Climate (SSEC) Reporting System" at **www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/student-support-services/ssecglossaryofterms11.10.21.pdf**.

[24] To provide a measure of prevalence, most figures are presented as an incident rate per 1,000 students. For example, if a school of 2,000 students had four weapons possession incidents in a year, that would equal a rate of 2 incidents per 1,000 students.

[25] For more information on schools during the pandemic, see SED, "COVID-19" at **www.nysed.gov/early-learning/covid-19**. For more information on the return to in-person learning, see New York State Governor's Office, "Video & Audio: Governor Cuomo Announces All New York State Schools to Reopen in September," May 24, 2021, at **www.governor.ny.gov/news/video-audio-governor-cuomo-announces-all-new-york-state-schools-reopen-september**.

[26] For definitions of "discrimination," "harassment" and "bullying," see Education Law, sections 11(7) and 8 NYCRR, sections 100.2(kk)(1)(vii), (viii).

[27] The "Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act" was enacted pursuant to Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2025. For information related to this law, see **www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/A5403/amendment/A**.

[28] For this report, "downstate" schools are in the counties of Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester. "Upstate" schools are in the counties of Albany, Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, St. Lawrence, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates. "New York City" includes schools under the New York City Chancellor's Office.

[29] New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), Regulation of the Chancellor A-832, issued October 7, 2021, at **https://pwsblobprd.schools.nyc/prd-pws/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a-832-student-to-student-discrimination-harassment-intimidation-and-or-bullying.pdf?sfvrsn=f4a65b_51**.

[30] See National Bullying Prevention Center, "Cyberbullying" at **www.pacer.org/bullying/info/cyberbullying/**. See U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "What is Cyberbullying," October 7, 2024, at **www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it**.

[31] See OSC, *Compliance with the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education: State Education Department* (Report 2013-S-71), January 13, 2015, at **www.osc.ny.gov/state-agencies/audits/2015/01/13/compliance-safe-schools-against-violence-education-act** and *State Education Department: Reporting of Violent and Disruptive Incidents by Public Schools* (Report 2005-S-38), 2005, at **https://web.osc.state.ny.us/audits/allaudits/093006/05s38.pdf**.

[32] See OSC, *State Education Department: Implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act*, October 13, 2017, at **www.osc.ny.gov/files/audits/2018-02/SGA-2018-16s28.pdf** and *Implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act (Follow-Up)*, November 21, 2019, at **www.osc.ny.gov/files/state-agencies/audits/pdf/sga-2020-19f32.pdf**.

Notes

[33] OSC, *Implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act: New York City Department of Education* (Report 2017-N-6), March 2019, at **www.osc.ny.gov/files/state-agencies/audits/pdf/sga-2019-17n6.pdf**.

[34] The State Archives' Local Government Schedule (LGS-1) calls for school districts and BOCES to retain many disciplinary records for three years (and potentially longer in certain cases). See **www.archives.nysed.gov/records/local-government-record-schedule/student-records-miscellaneous**. For incidents reported in the SSEC, the New York State Archives' Local Government Schedule (LGS-1) calls for school districts and BOCES to maintain violent and disruptive incident reports until the youngest person involved in an incident reaches the age of 27. See **www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/instructions-regarding-school-safety-and-educational-climate-ssec** and **www.archives.nysed.gov/records/local-government-record-schedule/school-safety**.

[35] See NYCDOE, "Framework & School Survey Scoring Technical Guide 2023," June 13, 2023, at **https://infohub.nyced.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/framework-school-survey-scoring-technical-guide480f281f74ce4eb78053b41c9da5fcb2.pdf**.

[36] The 2024 NYC School Survey was administered from February 12, 2024 to April 19, 2024. For more information and survey data, see NYCDOE, *2024 NYC School Survey Results, 2024*, at **https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/students-and-schools/school-quality/nyc-school-survey**.

[37] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "High School YRBS." The CDC's YRBS Explorer tool allows people to view survey item results by year for New York City and the rest of the state. The YRBS Explorer is available at **https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/**.

[38] CDC, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report, 2013-2023*; pp. 26, 41 and 43, at **www.cdc.gov/yrbs/dstr/index.html**.

[39] SED, Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee, *New York State Safe Schools Task Force: Status Update*, October 19, 2015, pp. 2-3, at **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/meetings/Oct%202015/1015p12d1.pdf**.

[40] Ibid., pp. 3-5. Attachment B (pp. 12-13) offers an example of how a school climate index could be calculated.

[41] SED, Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee, *Status Update on the Implementation of the New York State Safe Schools Task Force Recommendations*, June 1, 2017, pp. 3-4, at **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/617p12d1.pdf**.

[42] SED, Board of Regents, *Summary of the November 2017 Meeting*, "Attachment 1: Promoting Healthy School Climates," at **www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/1217bra2_0.pdf**.

[43] Based on a March 25, 2025 conversation between OSC and SED staff.

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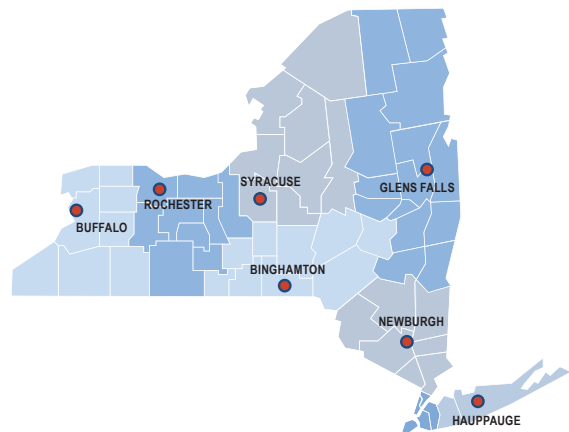---
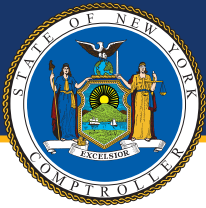
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