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2015 / 2016 Incidents of Bullying in Idaho Public Schools

The information in this report is the result of the requirements delineated in Idaho Statute 33-1631, which calls for school districts and public charter schools to report incidents of bullying and harassment to the State Department of Education annually. The 2015 / 2016 school was the first year this data was required and as with any new reporting elements a range of efforts were enacted including communicating the requirements, training and the configuration of local student information systems to collect the data in a uniform fashion.

It is important to note some limitations when interpreting this data. Identifying bullying can be subjective and it can be a challenge to differentiate bullying from peer conflict. The SDE put forth guidance on incidents to be included in this report in an effort to establish consistency. The guidance included:

- Bullying definition- *intentional, repeated hurtful acts or words causing fear or harm. Bullying includes the assertion of power over others and can occur electronically.*
- Reporting parameters- *only incidents prompting a formal response such as removal from the classroom, meeting with an administrator, detention, suspension, involvement in special programs were to be included.*

This report contains data from Idaho school districts and public charter schools. The information was collected through a form imbedded in the Safe and Drug Free Schools application for funding in an effort to streamline reporting process and because this funding can be used for bullying prevention activities. The data collection included bullying incidents by grade, gender, new and repeat offenses. This level of specificity aids in targeting prevention efforts. Additionally, a number of fields in the data were redacted per Idaho Code 33-133. An explanation is included in the data spreadsheet.

The law prompting this report was passed during the 2015 legislative session and required “annual” reporting. In February, 2016 the State Board of Education passed an administrative rule that clarified the reporting is to occur “at the end of the school year”. As such, the SDE will prepare to collect data for the 2016 / 2017 school year in June, 2017.

The data are organized by school district / public charter school and include total enrollment for the 2015 / 2016 school year, enrollment by gender, bullying incidents by gender, total bullying incidents and the percentage of incidents based on the enrollment numbers.

It is important to recognize that a school reporting a high number of incidents may be the result of diligence in addressing bullying and enacting consistency in policy enforcement, which are indicators of best practice. Caveats aside, this report does provide a baseline of bullying incidents throughout the state and as attention and activity are raised around this issue a reduction in future years is anticipated.

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