

# Elizabeth Public Schools Report Decrease In Violence And Vandalism

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ELIZABETH – Incidents of violence, vandalism, weapons, and substance abuse have decreased from the prior year in Elizabeth Public Schools according to the most recent available statistics on the New Jersey Department of Education’s website. These statistics indicate a 51% decrease in violent acts and vandalism across the district.

Compared with Union County school districts having one-third the number of students, Elizabeth Public Schools had the lowest incidence of violent acts, officials said. Elizabeth Public Schools also ranks the lowest in incidents of violence and among the lowest in vandalism in comparison with large urban school districts statewide, including Camden, Jersey City, Paterson, and East Orange.

Several initiatives have contributed to this decline in violence and vandalism, officials explained. One of these initiatives is the implementation of school uniforms. With over 18,000 students in school uniforms, they experience a sense of pride and community which helps to promote a safe, orderly environment in which they can concentrate on learning, officials said.

Teachers across the district have been trained in methods to address bullying and harassment and are teaching students problem solving techniques, officials said. Elizabeth Public Schools remains committed to a partnership with the Guardian Angels providing workshops on gang violence and conflict resolution, officials said. The Safe Schools’ Tip Line is available to open up lines of communication promoting prevention and intervention of aggression.

Elizabeth Public Schools has incorporated comprehensive security measures in all of its new school buildings, and is continually updating security systems in its existing schools, officials said. In addition, the district’s transportation system has been made safer through the installation of GPS tracking systems on all school buses, officials noted.

Superintendent of Schools Pablo Muñoz said, “I am very proud of the continuous progress we are making in reducing our incidents of violence and vandalism. We are committed to promoting conflict resolution strategies and reaffirming our zero tolerance policy on bullying, harassment, and violence throughout the district.

“Our students and schools are continuously working to make positive contributions to the community through fundraising and service projects. Elizabeth Public Schools, with the support of parents and community leaders, will continue to reduce incidents of violence providing all our students a safe environment in which to learn and achieve.”