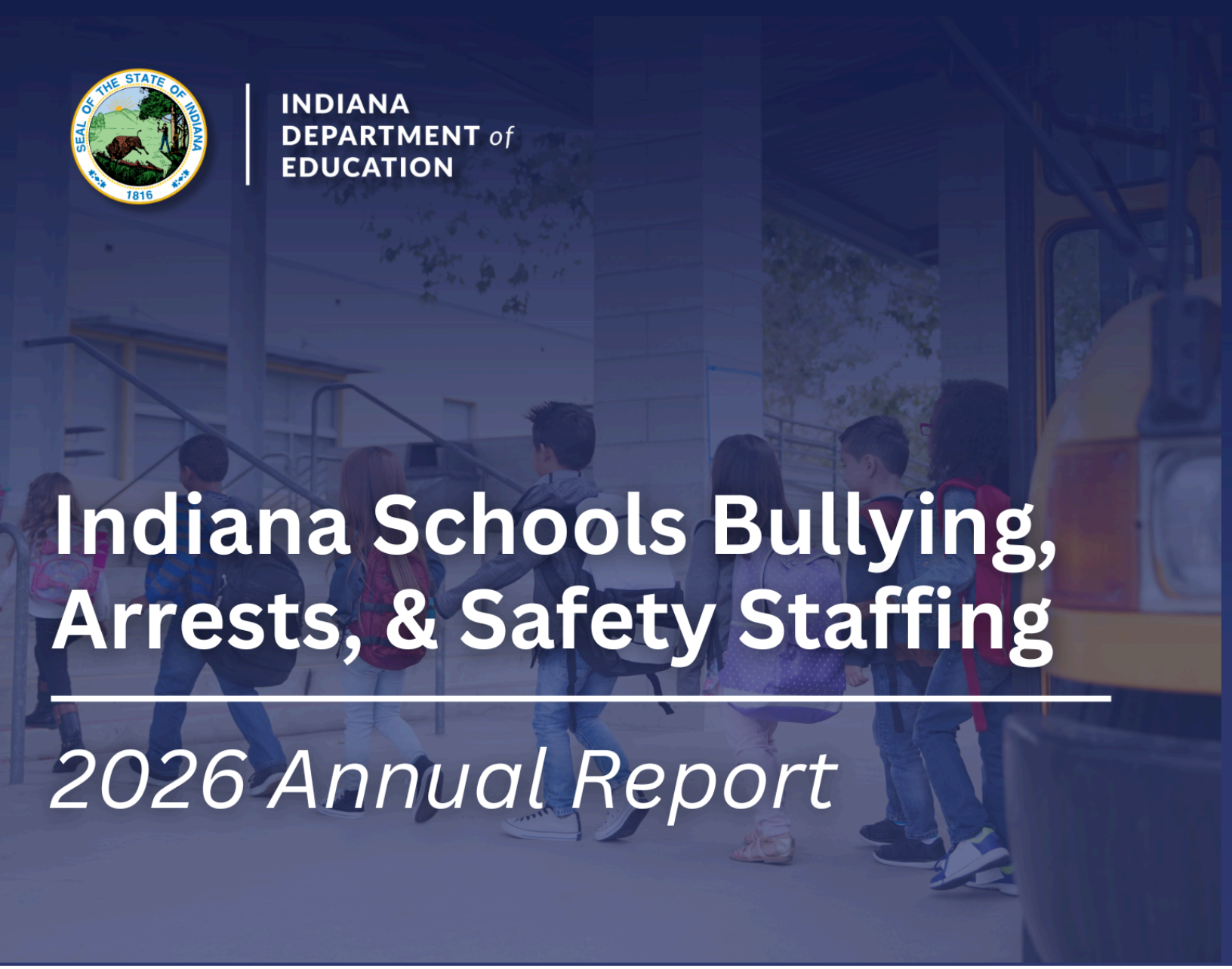

INDIANA DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Indiana Schools Bullying, Arrests, & Safety Staffing

2026 Annual Report

Indiana Department of Education

100 N. Senate Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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Annual Report Overview

As required by Indiana Code (IC) 20-34-6-1, each school corporation must report the number of bullying incidents, by category, involving a student attending a school within their corporation. Further, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is statutorily required to report the following information, reported by each school corporation, to the Indiana General Assembly, the Board for the Coordination of Programs Serving Vulnerable Individuals (established by IC 4-23-30.2-8), and the Criminal Justice Institute:

- The number of arrests of students on school corporation property, including arrests made by law enforcement officers, security guards, school safety specialists, and other school corporation employees, and any citizen arrests.
- The offenses for which students were arrested on school corporation property.
- The number of contacts with law enforcement personnel from a school corporation employee that have resulted in arrests of students not on school corporation property.
- Statistics concerning the age, race, and gender of students arrested on school corporation property, categorizing the statistics by offenses.
- Whether the school corporation has established and employs a school corporation police department under IC 20-26-16, and if so, report:
    - The number of officers in the school corporation police department; and
    - The training the officers must complete.
- If the school corporation employs private security guards to enforce rules or laws on school property, a detailed explanation of the use of private security guards by the school corporation.
- If the school corporation has an agreement with a local law enforcement agency regarding procedures to arrest students on school property, provide a detailed explanation of the use of the local law enforcement agency by the school corporation.
- The number of reported bullying incidents involving a student of the school corporation, by category. However, nothing in this subdivision may be construed to require all bullying incidents to be reported to a law enforcement agency.

This report includes acts of bullying reported during the 2025-2026 school year.

Bullying

IC 20-33-8-0.2 defines bullying as:

- Overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:
    - Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;

    - Has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
    - Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
    - Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.
- The term may not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or include in the definition of the term, the following:
    - Participating in a religious event.
    - Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
    - Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31, of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
    - Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults.
    - Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent.
    - Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

Bullying Criteria

Bullying fosters a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the physical and psychological health of its victims and creates conditions that negatively impact learning. Bullying includes unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time. The imbalance of power involves the use of physical strength or popularity to access embarrassing information to control or harm others. Bullying can occur anywhere (in school or out of school) and at any time – both during and after school hours.

Bullying can include physical bullying, verbal bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication.

- **Physical Bullying:** Involves hurting a person's body or possessions. It includes hitting/kicking/punching, spitting, tripping or pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and/or making mean or rude hand gestures.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Involves saying mean things. It can include teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening to cause harm.
- **Social/relational Bullying:** Involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social/relational bullying involves telling other children not to be friends with someone, leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors about someone, or embarrassing someone in public.

- **Electronic/written Communication:** Involves cyberbullying, collective or group note writing, or any bullying undertaken using electronic devices (computer, cell phones).

Considerations when determining if the behavior meets the definition of bullying:

- **The history between the individuals:** Have there been past conflicts? Have these individuals had a dating relationship? (This may not be considered bullying.)
- **Power differential:** Is there an imbalance of power? (Power imbalance is not limited to physical strength.)
- **Repetition:** Has this or a similar incident happened before? Is the individual worried that it may happen again?
- **Gang affiliation:** Are any of the individuals involved with a gang? (This may result in interventions different from bullying.)

Additionally, bullying is a behavior that will not always be exhibited by one set of actions or categories. When a student has been targeted by a bully, that target may be bullied verbally and physically, or verbally and socially, and so on. Therefore, the category of “Combination Incidents” was added to the collection to include incidents that crossed over more than one type of bullying category. Incidents that qualify as “Combination Incidents” were to be reported once, rather than be reported in multiple fields.

Data Collection

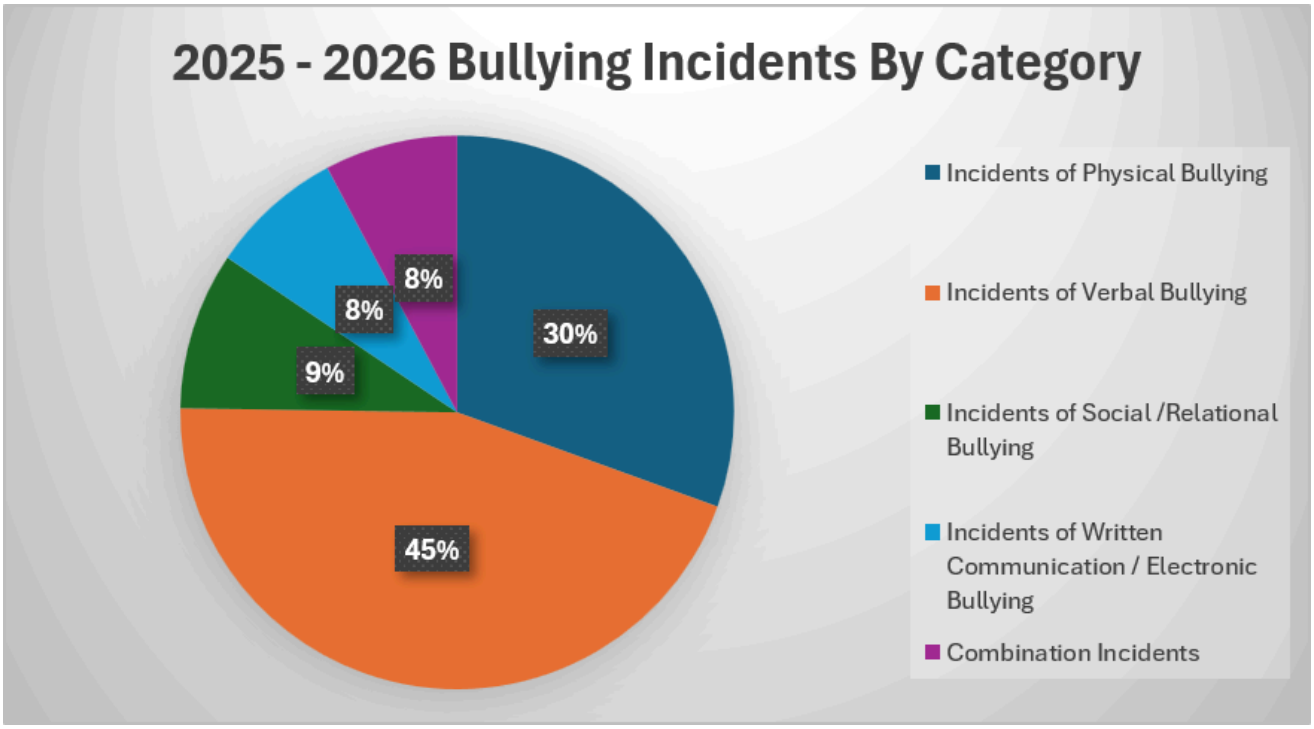
For the 2025-2026 school year, bullying data was collected via IDOE’s Data Exchange platform. Schools reported this data through their chosen student management system.

To increase compliance and understanding of the requirements, throughout the year, IDOE sent frequent reminders to superintendents, principals, school safety specialists, and school counselors through IDOE’s various communication methods. IDOE worked with schools to ensure detailed bullying information was submitted accurately.

Pursuant to IC 20-34-6-2(b), IDOE may conduct an audit of any school corporation to ensure the school corporation’s compliance with the bullying incident reporting requirements and post any findings of discrepancies on IDOE’s website; however, IDOE has no statutory enforcement authority to ensure school corporation reporting compliance.

2025-2026 Bullying Incidents

Overall, there were 6,010 total reported incidents of bullying during the 2025-2026 school year across Indiana’s school corporations, compared to 6,718 incidents reported during the previous school year. Broken down by category, this includes 1,835 physical incidents, 2,687 verbal incidents, 553 social/relational incidents, 468 electronic/written incidents, and 467 combination incidents.

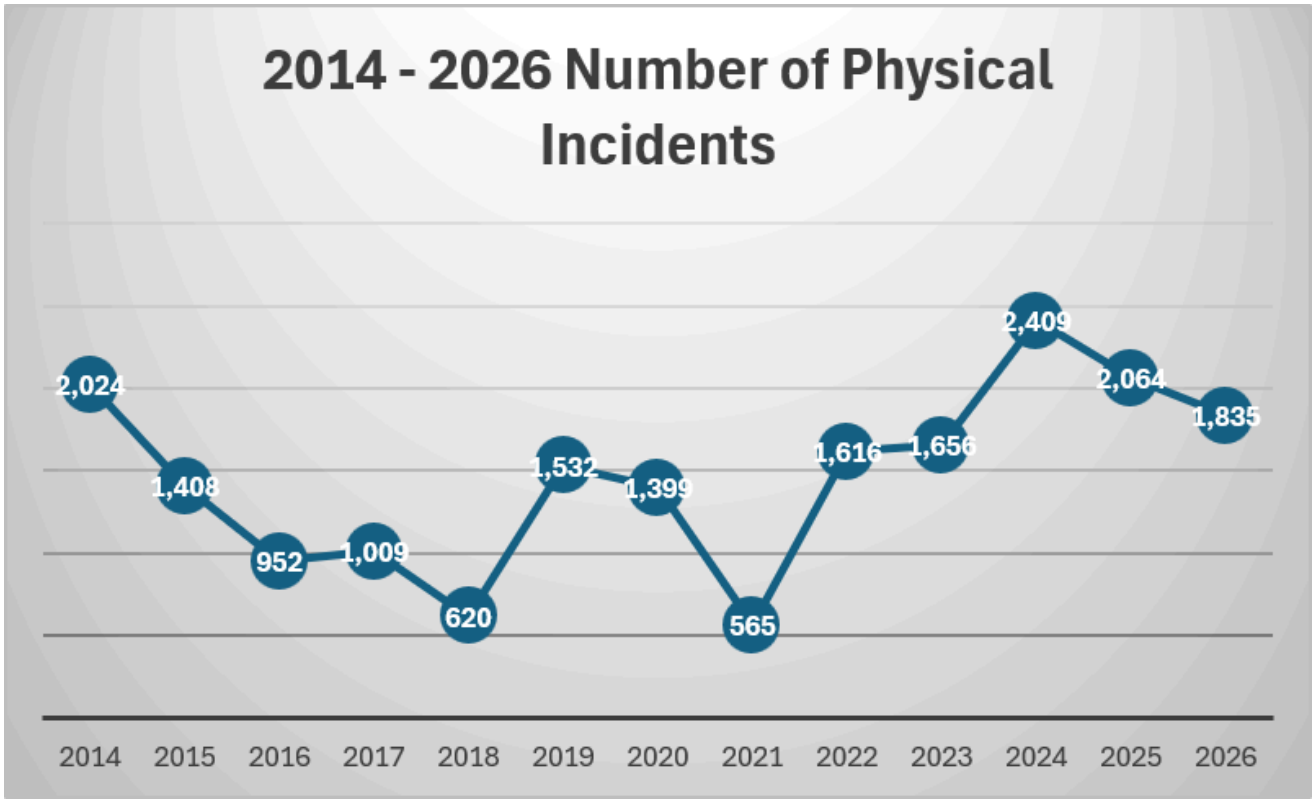


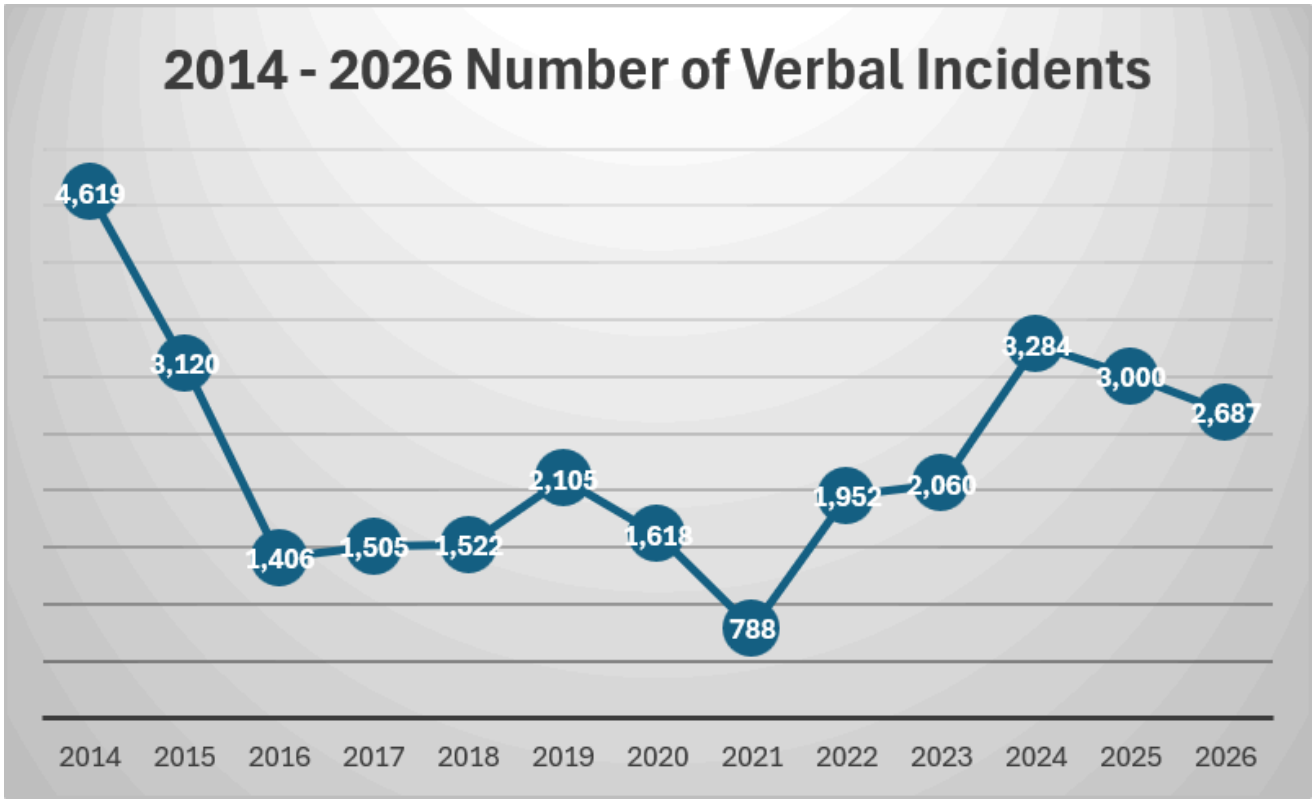
Total Confirmed Bullying Incidents: 2014-2026

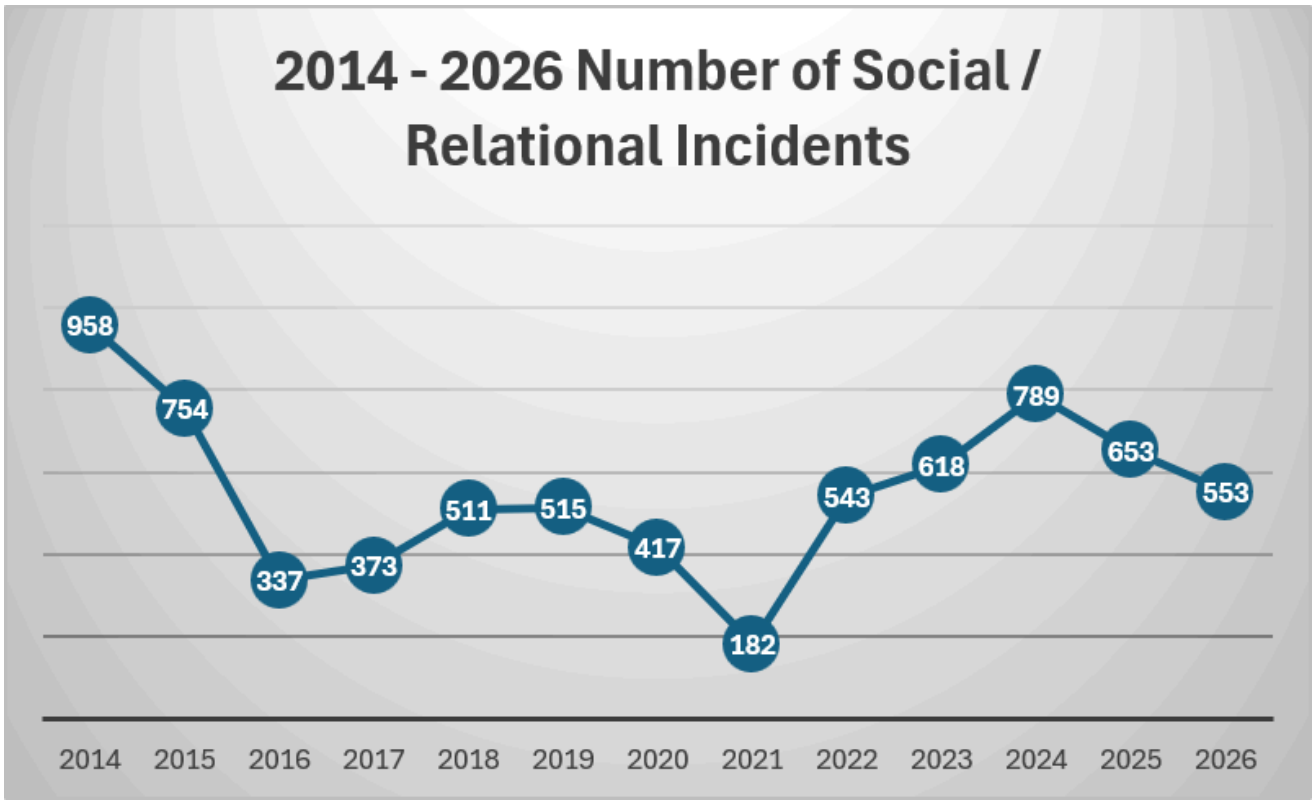
As reflected in the charts and graphs below, bullying incidents declined during COVID-19 pandemic-impacted school years, but have since continued trending towards pre-pandemic rates. The 2025-2026 school year saw a decrease across all bullying incident categories, with verbal incidents representing the greatest number of incidents, as is historically the case.

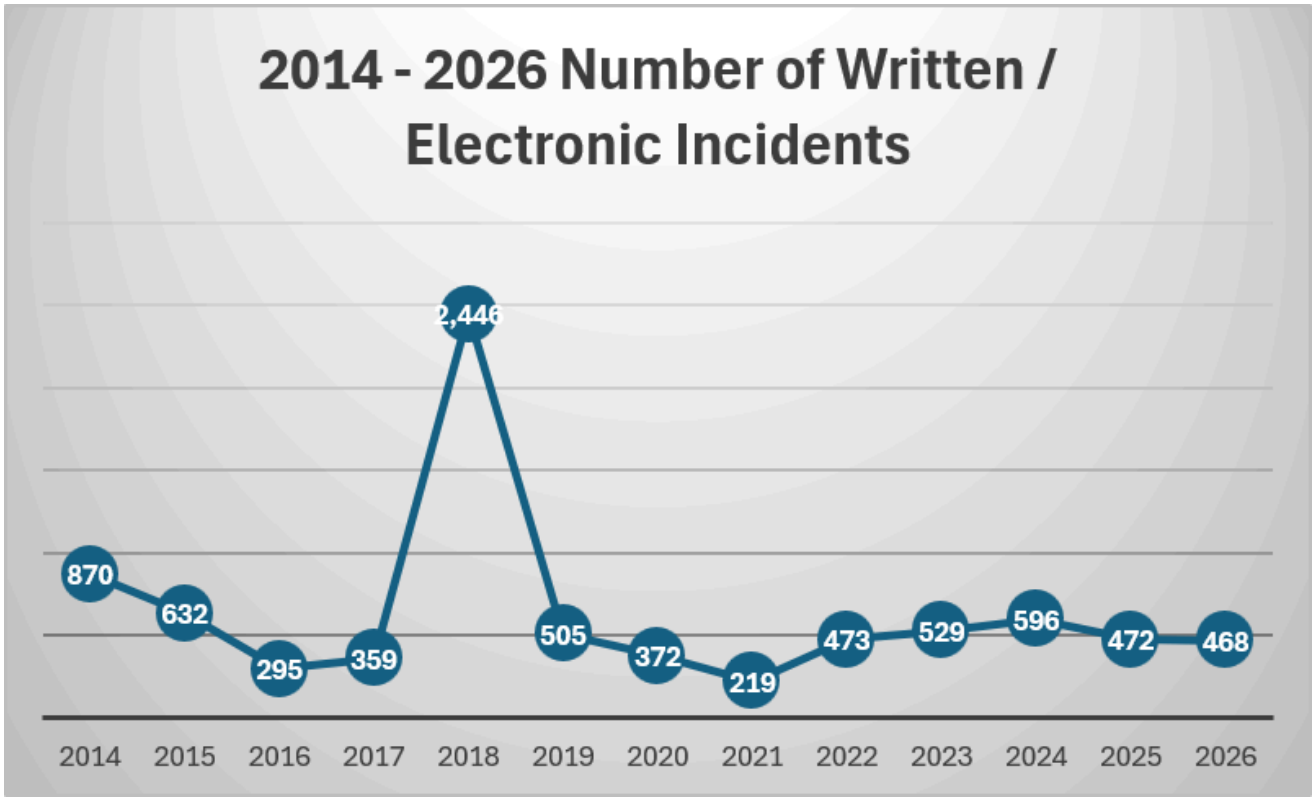
2014-2026 School-Level Data

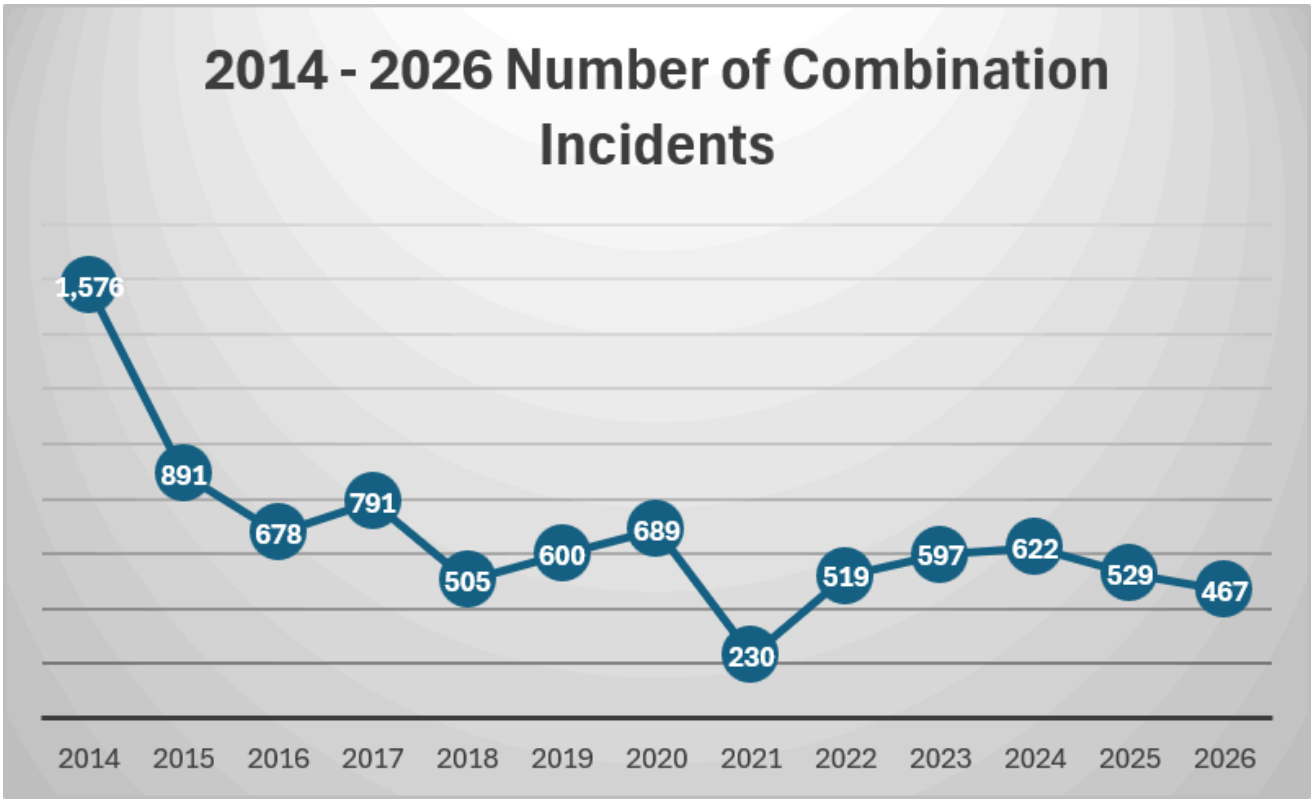
Bullying Incidents By Category													
Incident Type	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Physical Incidents	2,024	1,408	952	1,009	620	1,532	1,399	565	1,616	1,656	2,409	2,064	1,835
Verbal Incidents	4,169	3,120	1,406	1,505	1,522	2,105	1,618	788	1,952	2,060	3,284	3,000	2,687
Social/ Relational Incidents	958	754	337	373	511	515	417	182	543	618	789	653	553
Written/ Electronic Incidents	870	632	295	359	2,446	505	372	219	473	529	596	472	468
Combination Incidents	1,576	891	678	791	505	600	689	230	519	597	622	529	467
Totals	**9,597**	**6,805**	**3,668**	**4,037**	**5,604**	**5,257**	**4,495**	**1,984**	**5,103**	**5,460**	**7,700**	**6,718**	**6,010**


2014 - 2026 Number of Physical Incidents
2,024
1,408
952
1,009
620
1,532
1,399
565
1,616
1,656
2,409
2,064
1,835
2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026


2014 - 2026 Number of Verbal Incidents
4,619
3,120
1,406
1,505
1,522
2,105
1,618
788
1,952
2,060
3,284
3,000
2,687
2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026


2014 - 2026 Number of Social / Relational Incidents
958
754
337
373
511
515
417
182
543
618
789
653
553
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026


2014 - 2026 Number of Written / Electronic Incidents
870
632
295
359
2,446
505
372
219
473
529
596
472
468
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026



Implications of Current Data

As noted above, the 2025-2026 school year saw a decrease in the number of incidents across all categories. Overall, the proportions of incidents remained consistent with previous years, with 2018 being an outlier when electronic/written incidents represented a majority of all bullying incidents.

Despite a reduction in the number of total incidents compared to the 2024-2025 school year, bullying prevention must continue to be a key focus of schools across Indiana. Information on how to prevent, respond to, and report incidents of bullying should be reflected in training provided to educators. Schools should also continue to review/update their bullying policies and procedures and ensure proper implementation in order to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying.

Available Resources

IC 20-19-3-11.5 also requires IDOE to maintain resources regarding the prevention and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying incidents, which can be found on IDOE's Student Safety/Bullying Reporting webpage.

As required by IC 20-26-5-34.2, school corporations must provide training to employees and volunteers who have direct, ongoing contact with students concerning the school's bullying prevention and reporting policies. This should increase the knowledge and capabilities of educators and enable staff to intervene in bullying situations earlier, reduce bullying in classrooms, and ultimately, lead to fewer incidents.

Additionally, every public school is required by law to provide age appropriate, research-based instruction focused on bullying prevention for all students in grades one through 12. Implementation of this training should empower students to directly reduce bullying incidents through peer awareness and bystander intervention before bullying escalates. Local school corporations should continue to partner with local and state agencies to share resources and combat bullying.

Student Arrests

Data Collection

As outlined in IC 20-34-6-1, school corporations are required to report the following data on student arrests to IDOE:

- The number of arrests of students on school corporation property, including arrests made by law enforcement officers, security guards, school safety specialists, and other school corporation employees, and any citizen arrests.
- The offenses for which students were arrested on school corporation property.
- The number of contacts with law enforcement personnel from a school corporation employee that have resulted in arrests of students not on school corporation property.
- Statistics concerning the age, race, and gender of students arrested on school corporation property and categorizing the statistics by offenses.

For the 2025-2026 school year, there were 493 total arrests reported via Data Exchange. Students arrested off school property due to a school-initiated report to law enforcement are included in this number. Additional demographic and offense data were also collected locally. A summary of the data is included below.

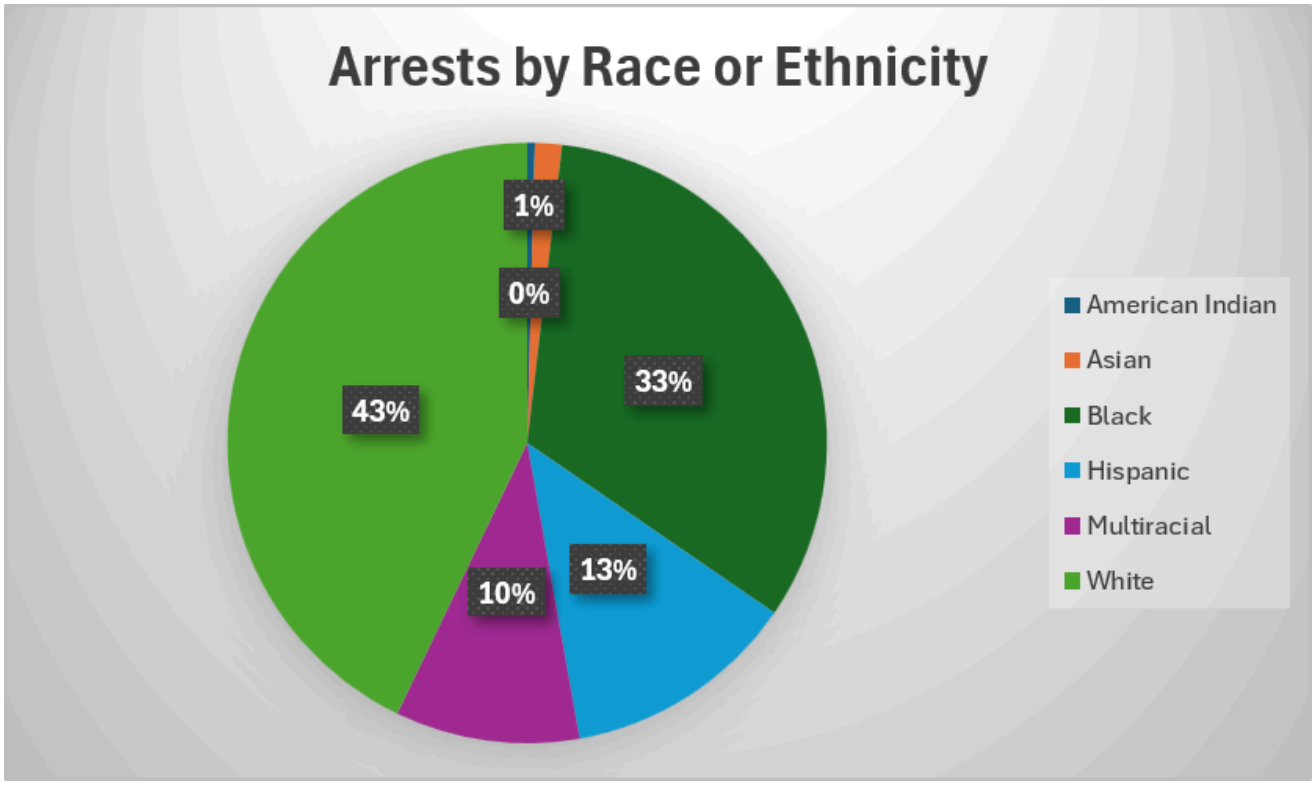
Data Results

There were 493 total arrests reported for the 2025-2026 school year. Of the overall student arrests, 61.5% were male. Those arrested ranged from grade three to grade 13.

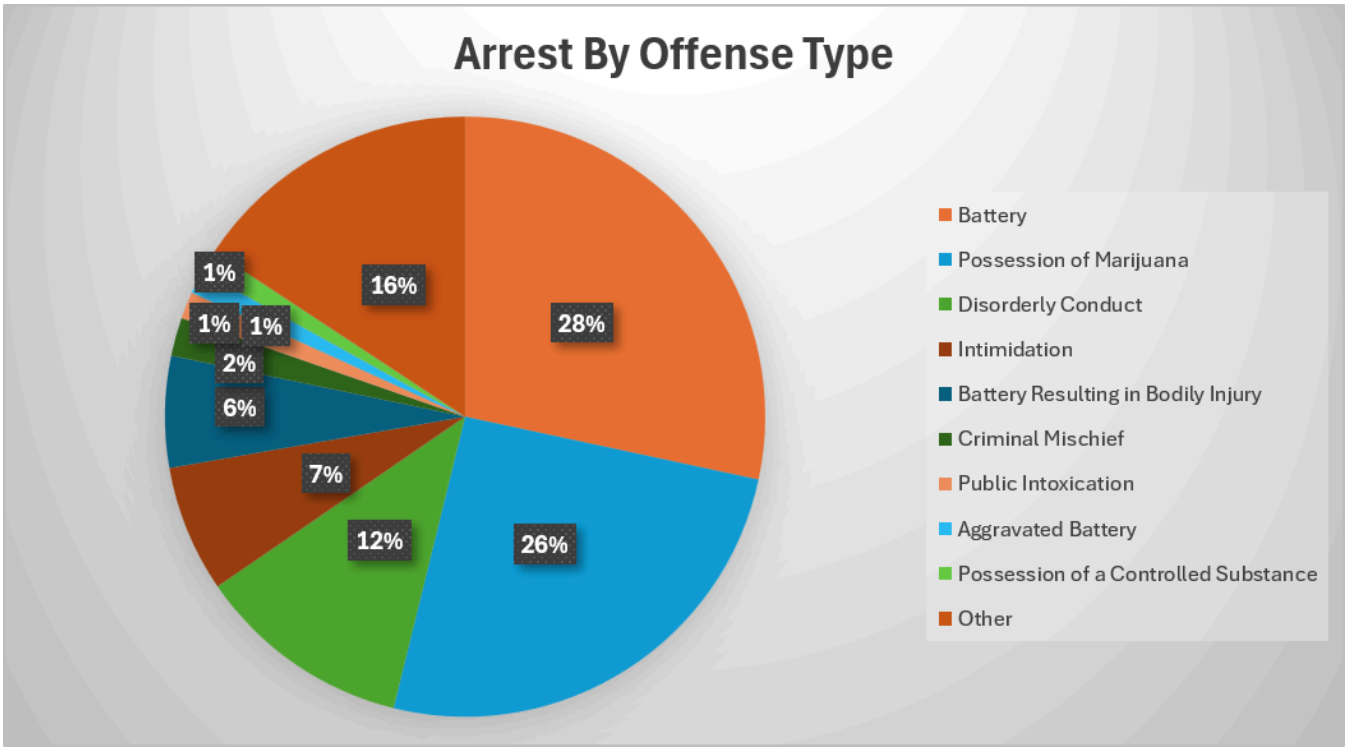
Grade	Number of Arrests
3	4
4	3
5	6
6	24
7	40
8	71
9	108

10	107
11	68
12	51
13	1

Of those arrested, 43% were white, 33% were Black, and 13% were Hispanic of any race.



The most common offenses for arrests were possession of marijuana, battery, and other. Other offenses included, but were not limited to, trespass, robbery, truancy, and theft.

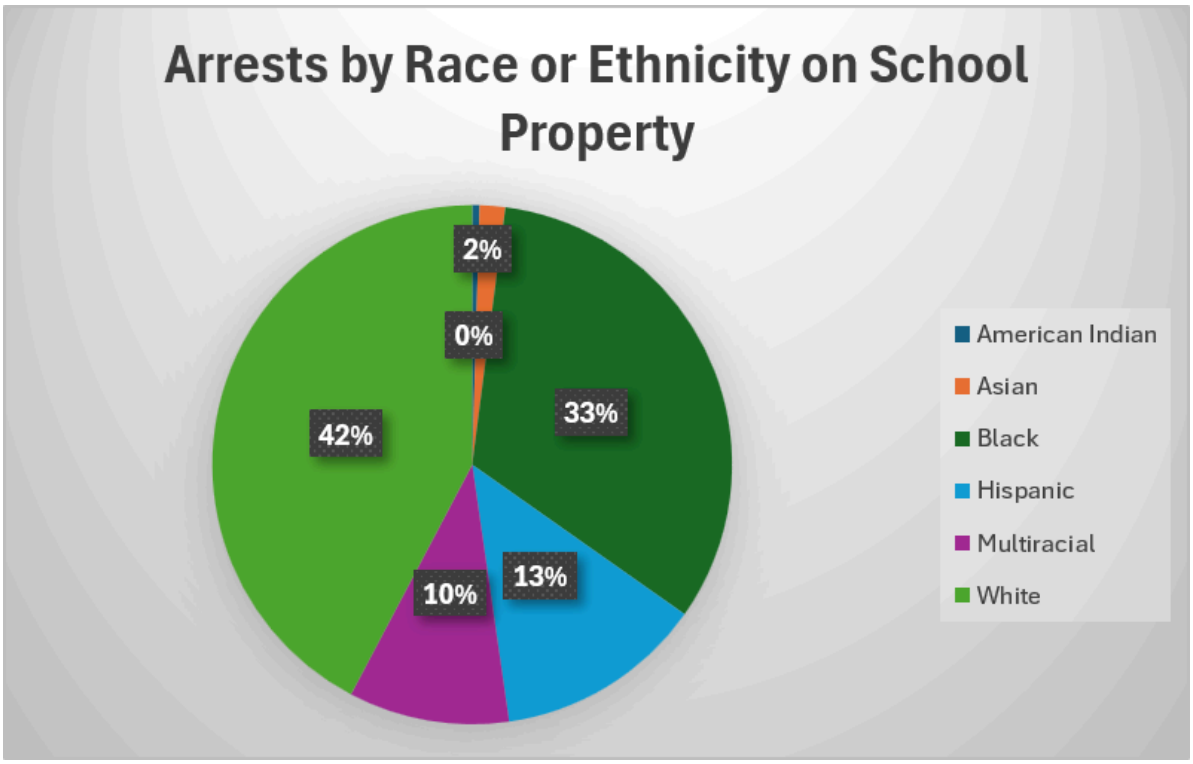


Students Arrested on School Corporation Property

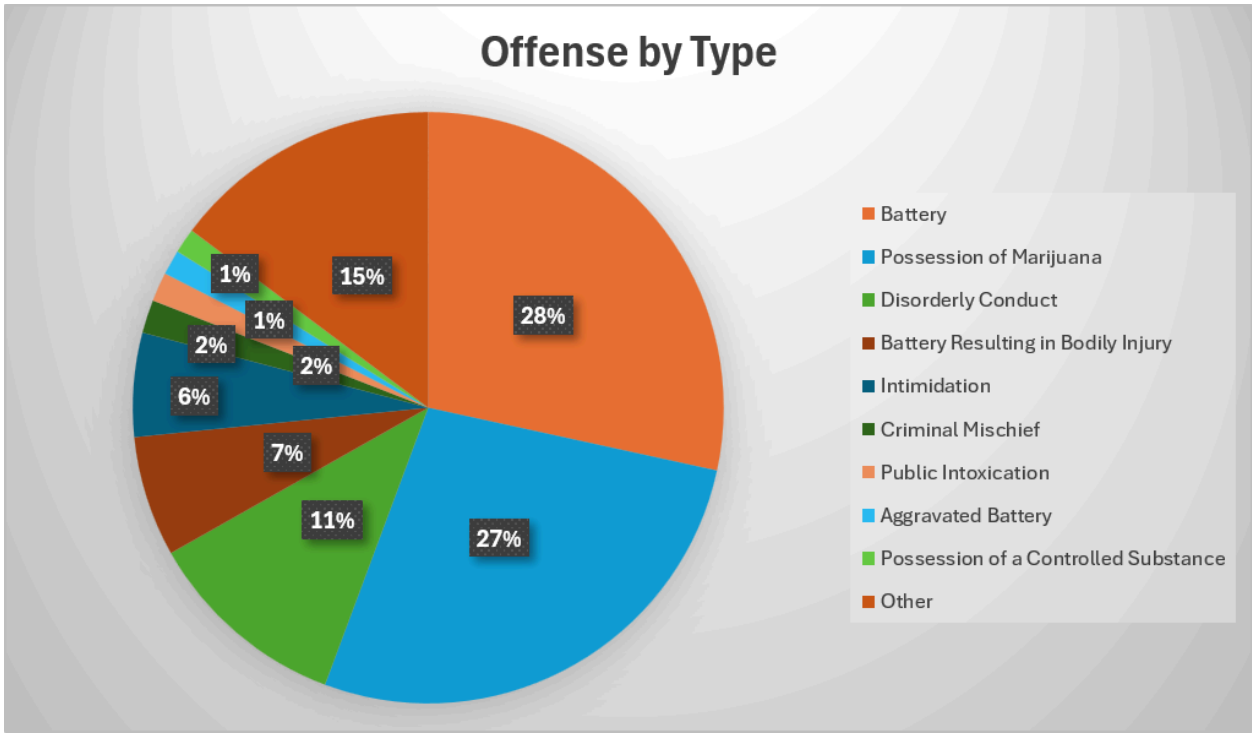
The total number of students arrested on school corporation property totaled 440. Sixty percent of those arrested were male. Those arrested on school property ranged from grade three to 12.

Grade	Number of Arrests on School Property
3	2
4	7
5	10
6	47
7	67
8	93
9	114
10	88
11	39
12	12

Of those arrested on school property, 42% were White, 33% were Black, and 13% were Hispanic of any race.



The most common offenses for arrests on school property were battery, possession of marijuana, and other. Other arrests included, but were not limited to, attempted theft, aggravated battery, and resisting law enforcement.

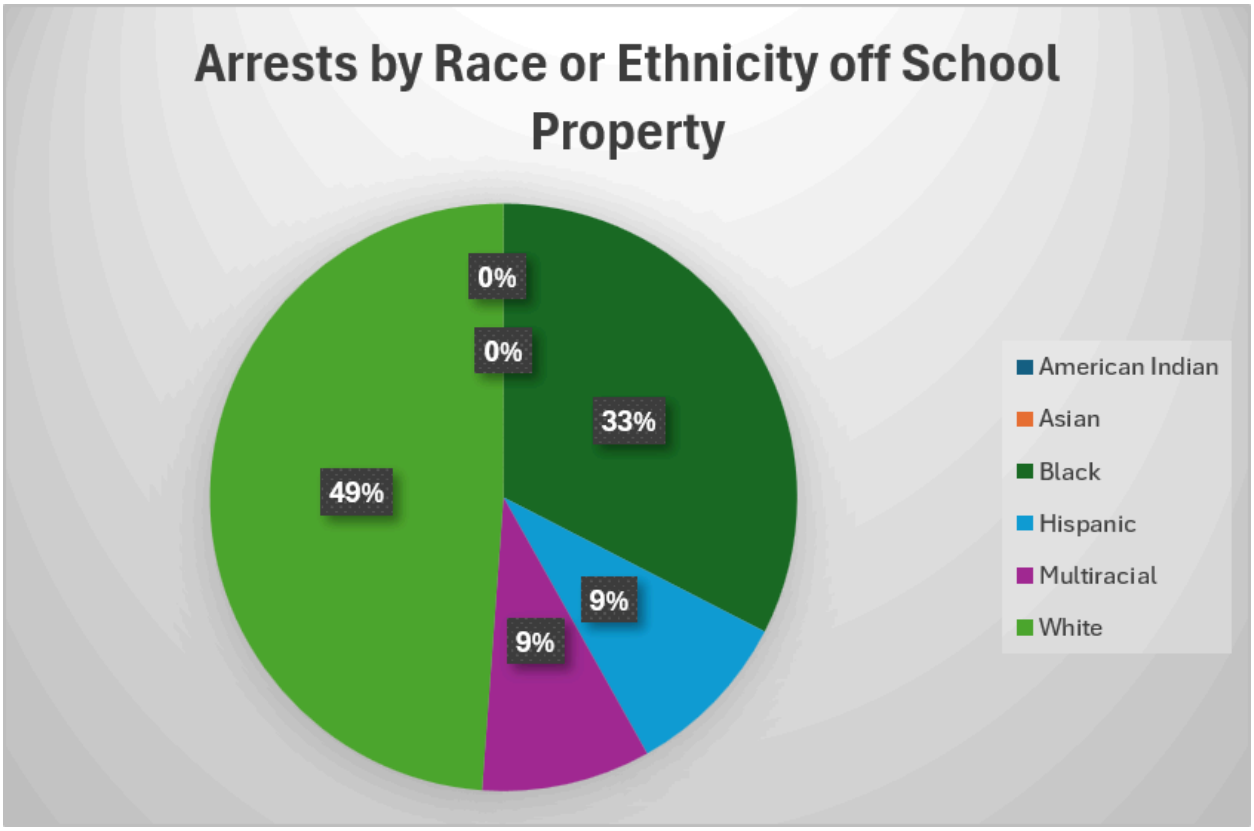


Students Arrested Not on School Corporation Property

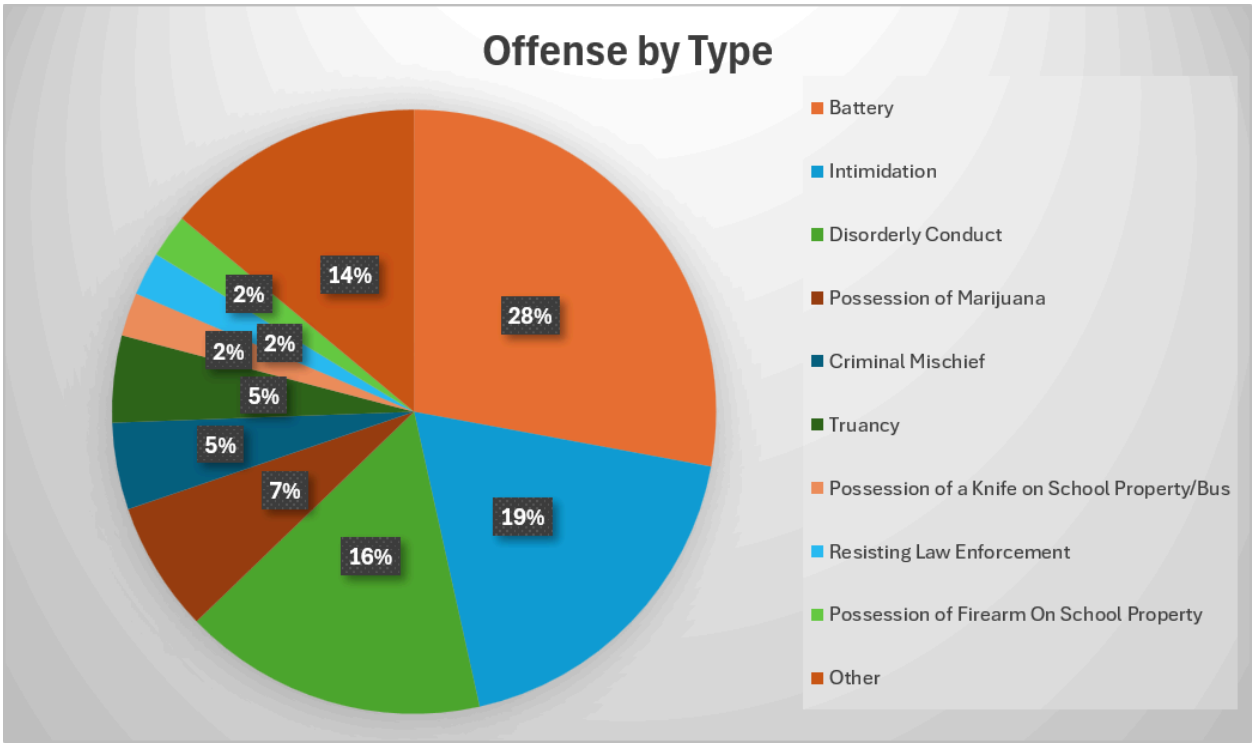
The number of arrests occurring off school property due to the school corporation contacting law enforcement totaled 43. Seventy-two percent of those arrested were male. Those arrested ranged from grade six to 13.

Grade	Number of Arrests Not on School Corporation Property
6	3
7	1
8	9
9	2
10	12
11	8
12	7
13	1

Of those arrested, 49% were White, 33% were Black, and 9% were Hispanic of any race.



The most common offenses for arrests occurring not on school property were battery, disorderly conduct, intimidation, and other. Other arrests included, but were not limited to, harassment, aggravated battery, public intoxication, attempted escape, and truancy.



Safety Staffing

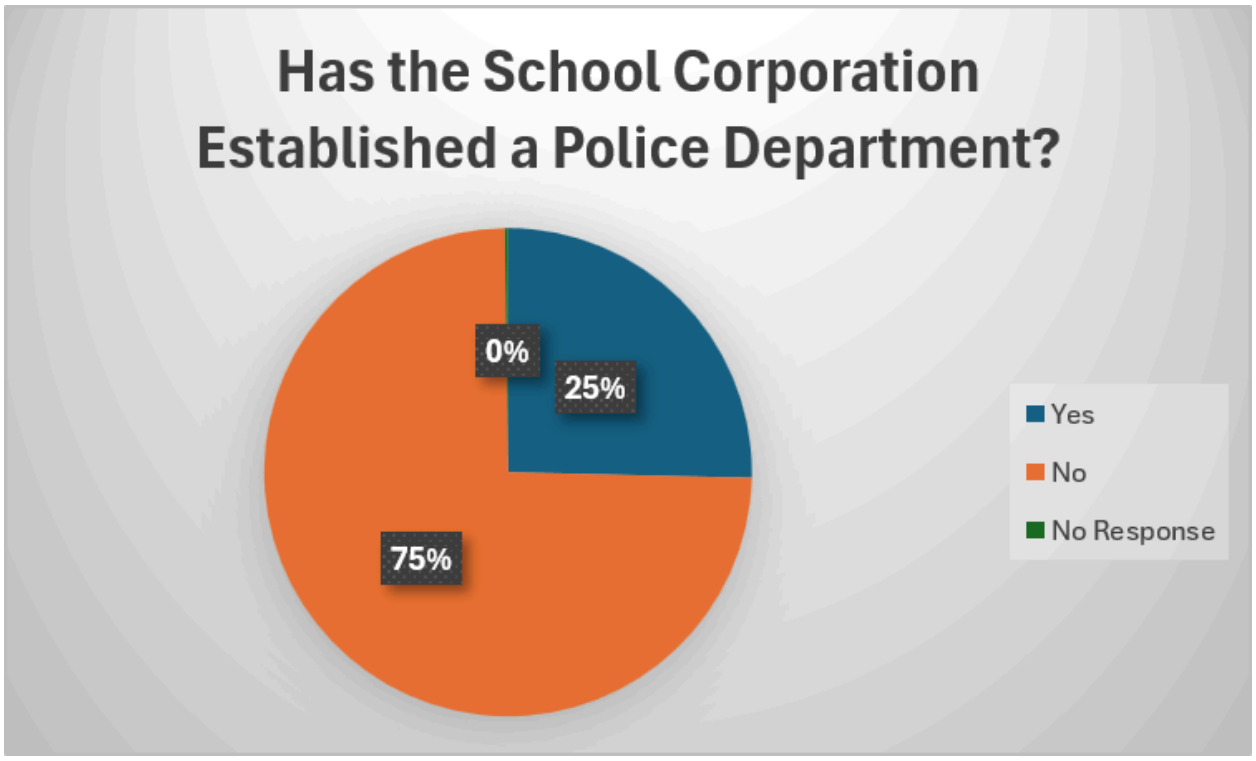
Data Collection

For the 2025-2026 school year, the safety staffing data was collected via Data Exchange. Schools reported this data through their chosen student management system.

The following information represents the safety staffing data collected for the 2025-2026 school year.

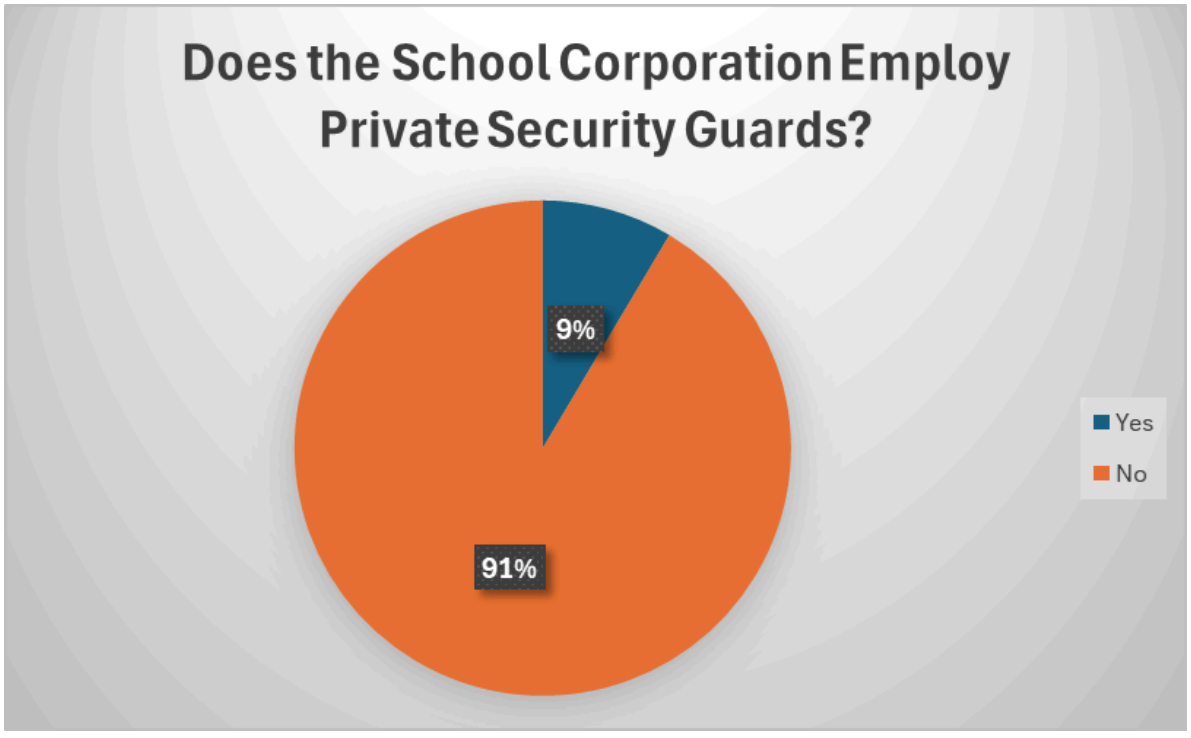
Question 1: Has the school corporation established a school corporation police department?

Yes: 488 **No:** 1,432 **No Response:** 4



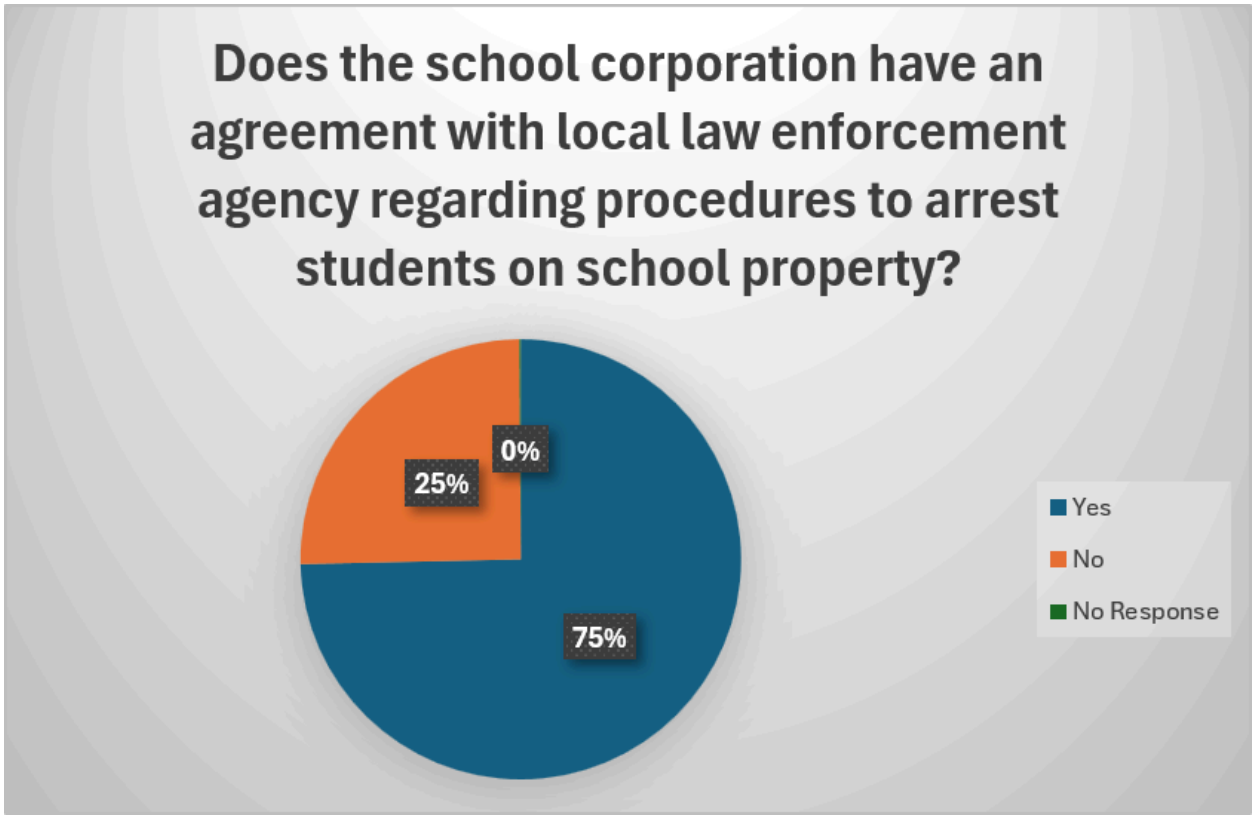
Question 2: Does the school corporation employ private security guards?

Yes: 154 **No:** 1767 **No Response:** 4



Question 3: Does the school corporation have an agreement with a local law enforcement agency regarding procedures to arrest students on school property?

Yes: 1,437 **No:** 486 **No Response:** 2



This report was compiled in July 2026 by the Indiana Department of Education.