

**The Florida Safe and Drug-Free Schools
Quality Data Management Project**

Final Report

2007–08

Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research
Florida State University

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The following acronyms are used throughout this annual report.

CBO	Community-based Organization(s)
DJJ	Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
DOE	Department of Education (FL or U.S. is noted when “DOE” is used)
FSES	Florida School Environment Survey
FYSAS	Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey
IRDAR	Incident and Resultant Disciplinary Action Report
LEA	Local Education Agency
MTF	Monitoring the Future (survey)
SDFS	Safe and Drug-Free Schools
SDFS– QDM	Safe and Drug–Free Schools Quality Data Management Project (also referred to as the “Project”)
SESIR	School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting
UMIRS	Uniform Management Information and Reporting System
YRBS	Youth Risk Behavior Survey

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Florida Department of Education (Florida DOE) contracted with the Florida State University Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research to conduct the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Quality Data Management Project (SDFS-QDM). The purpose of the project is three-fold:

1. assess local- and state-level prevention information management and reporting systems currently in place in Florida
2. develop protocols and recommendations for improving those prevention systems
3. train personnel in methods of data collection and reporting, and in the use of empirical evidence to evaluate and improve their drug and violence prevention programs

The importance of the project is reflected in the vision articulated by the staff: To ensure safer schools and effective prevention programs in Florida through data accuracy and improvement. Over the past three years, the objectives and activities of the project worked towards the realization of this vision by expanding the capacity of the Florida DOE, local school districts, and community-based organizations in Florida to collect, analyze, and use data to improve the quality of drug and violence prevention programs. School safety is a legitimate concern for students, parents, and educators. The SDFS-QDM Project focused on accurately measuring school safety to provide policy-makers and practitioners the necessary tools to monitor levels of school safety and to ensure that available resources for prevention and intervention services are used appropriately and efficiently.

This final report of the SDFS-QDM Project describes the major activities associated with the project and presents the results of the final year of assessing the current status of data collection and reporting in Florida. This introduction is divided into four sections. Section 1 provides background information and places the project in the larger context of school reform and accountability. Section 2 outlines the scope of the project and describes three interrelated components. Section 3 presents a discussion of the concept of “data quality” and how it is defined within the context of this project. Section 4 provides an overview of the remainder of the report.

Background

The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) grant that supports the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Quality Data Management (SDFS-QDM) Project was made available by way of federal legislation that evolved from a long line of education-related legislation and reform. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and set in motion a nationwide effort by state education agencies (SEAs) to implement policies and processes by which they could

meet its tougher standards. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA), Part A of Title IV of NCLB, descends from the ESEA via the marriage of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1988¹ and the 1994 Safe Schools Act. The 1994 legislation authorized funding “for federal, state, and local programs to assist schools in providing a disciplined learning environment free of violence and drug use, including alcohol and tobacco” (Cooper, 2003). The 2002 passage of NCLB amended and reauthorized SDFSCA within ESEA and reinforced the accountability aspect of the Act with its requirement of a Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) for all states.

Table 1: Chronology of Major Education-Related Federal Legislation in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Year Enacted	Title	Purpose/Goals
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	“Allocated large resources to meet the needs of educationally deprived children, especially through compensatory programs for the poor” (Schugurensky, 2006)
1967	Elementary and Secondary Amendments of 1967	Title IV – General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)
1986	Anti-Drug Abuse Act	Title IV, Subtitle B, created the DFSCA
1988	Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) Act	Drug Abuse Prevention
1994	Goals 2000: Educate America Act	Title VII created the Safe Schools Act
1994	The Safe Schools Act	“To help local school systems achieve Goal Six of the National Education Goals, which provides that by the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning, by ensuring that all schools are safe and free of violence” (Title VII, Sec. 701. Short Title; Statement of Purpose)
1994	Improving America’s Schools Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reauthorized the ESEA • Extended, amended, and renamed the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) of 1988 • Added violence prevention by incorporating the Safe Schools Act • “Funding was authorized for federal, state, and local programs to assist schools in providing a disciplined learning environment free of violence and drug use, including alcohol and tobacco” (Cooper, 2003)

¹ Title IV, Subtitle B, of the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act.

Year Enacted	Title	Purpose/Goals
1994	Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA)	Title IV of the <u>Improving America's Schools Act</u> provides for Federal assistance to support programs to meet Goal 7 of Goals 2000 by preventing violence in and around schools and by strengthening programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and are coordinated with related Federal, State, and community efforts and resources.
2002	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended and reauthorized SDFSCA within ESEA as Part A of Title IV – 21st Century Schools • “to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools; that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; that involve parents and communities; and that are coordinated with related Federal, State, school, and community efforts and resources to foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that supports student academic achievement . . .”

Table 1 presents a chronology of the major education–related federal legislation that preceded NCLB and the purpose/goals of each piece. In his announcement of “No Child Left Behind,” newly-elected President George W. Bush expressed concern that despite the billions of federal dollars designated for educational programs since the passage of the ESEA, “too many of our neediest children are being left behind” (Bush, 2001)². In an effort to address this situation, “the President called for bipartisan solutions based on accountability, choice, and flexibility in Federal education programs” (Ed.gov, 2006).

² See “The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” at www.ed.gov/nclb.html for a full summary of President Bush’s address.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS)

The Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS), described in section 4112(c) (3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by NCLB, has been the guiding document by which the SDFS-QDM Project has prioritized its goals and objectives for the three-year period of the grant. The Federal reporting requirements outlined in this section of the NCLB legislation include data related to:

- truancy rates
- frequency, seriousness, and incidence of violence and drug-related offenses resulting in suspensions and expulsions in elementary schools and secondary schools
- incidence and prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk, and perception of social disapproval of drug use and violence by youth in schools and communities
- types of preventative curricula, programs, and services provided by the state’s chief executive officer, the state education agency, local education agencies, and non-governmental entities

To assist states in meeting these reporting requirements, the U.S. DOE issued an invitation for applications for “Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs” (Federal Register, 2004). Specifically these grants were to “provide support to states to explore strategies that will address the challenges faced in collecting and using data to manage the implementation of drug and violence prevention programs” (p. 1). The Florida DOE was among the first of the state agencies to receive funds under this initiative, which it used to establish the SDFS-QDM Project. Subsequent to the allocation of the data quality grants, the U.S. DOE has provided further assistance in the form of a report prepared by WESTAT and EMT (2005), which presents a draft plan for the establishment of a uniform data set (UDS) for the UMIRS that can be adopted by every state in the nation.

The Florida SDFS-QDM Project and the Broader Scope of U.S. DOE’s Data Quality Grants

In addition to assisting states in meeting the explicit reporting requirements of NCLB, the U.S. DOE “data grants” have the stated purpose of assisting states:

to expand the capacity of local educational agencies and community-based organizations that receive SDFSCA funds to use data to assess needs, establish performance measures, select appropriate interventions, monitor progress toward established performance measures, and inform the public about drug and violence prevention programs.

(Federal Register, 2004)

This second purpose of U.S. DOE’s initiative is much broader in scope and potentially more complex than the goal of meeting the requirements of UMIRS. This second *purpose* involves separate and distinct local agencies responsible for data collection—local education agencies and community-based organizations—directed by separate and distinct state-level agencies—the Florida DOE and the Governor’s Office of Drug Control (ODC). In addition, the second purpose articulates five possible uses of data, without prioritizing these uses or providing for separate benchmarks for each use. In essence, the stated second *purpose* of the “Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs” is a conglomeration of 10 various *purposes*. The chapters of this final report provide an overview of the measures initiated by this project to assess and improve the current status of Florida’s capacity to meet these objectives.

Scope of the SDFS-QDM Project

Since the passage of the NCLB Act, the U.S. DOE has elaborated on the President’s call for “solutions based on accountability, choice, and flexibility” by outlining and defining the “Four Pillars of NCLB”:

1. Stronger accountability for results
2. More freedom for states and communities
3. Proven education methods
4. More choices for parents

(ED.gov, 7/18/2006)

The accountability component of NCLB is the core of the SDFS-QDM Project; however, the project also has strong ties to the other three NCLB’s “Four Pillars.” “More freedom for states and communities” also means more competition for federal education funds. Over the past three years, the SDFS-QDM Project sought to provide accurate and useful data to Florida’s local school districts to enable LEAs to demonstrate prevention needs with empirical evidence. “Proven education methods” refers to “programs and practices that have been proven effective through rigorous scientific research” (ED.gov, 2006). Prevention programs, too, are expected to meet this standard, and the SDFS-QDM Project worked to ensure the documentation and reporting of the evidence-based prevention programs that have been implemented in Florida. “More choices for parents” means that not only can parents choose to transfer their children based on measures of academic quality, they can also choose to transfer their children based on measures of school safety.

As delineated in the SDFS-QDM grant, the project has the broad goals to: ensure the quality and timeliness of reporting incidents of school crime and violence and disciplinary actions and to ensure the provision of accurate data for identifying persistently dangerous schools.

Florida's SDFS-QDM Project was authorized in a grant from the Florida DOE utilizing flow-through U.S. DOE funds to improve the state's data collection, management, and reporting systems related to safe and drug-free schools and communities. Florida was one of eleven states to receive funding for data improvement from U.S. DOE in 2004, with a proposal that encompassed both data collection and reporting and the effective use of data among local education agencies and community-based organizations supported with SDFSCA funds. Florida DOE's contract with the Florida State University (FSU) Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research to implement the grant involved a three-year commitment of close to \$1.5 million for personnel, travel, technical assistance, training, development, and support services.

The main first-year goals of the SDFS-QDM Project were: (1) develop relationships with stakeholders, and (2) assess the current state of data collection, management, and reporting. Toward achieving the first goal, project staff provided updates to Florida DOE on the progress of the activities with local school districts. In addition, project staff convened meetings with representatives of the Florida DOE's Safe Schools Office, the ODC, and the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

As noted above, NCLB outlines specific safe and drug-free schools-related information, divided into four categories as mandated by UMIRS. These separate categories are mirrored in the structure of the project staff organization and primary focus areas. In working toward the second goal of Year 1, the SDFS-QDM Project examined the current status of data collection and reporting in Florida as it relates to each of the four components of UMIRS and made recommendations for immediate changes, where possible, and/or developed strategies to address specific areas in which the Florida system has yet to implement sufficient measures to meet U.S. DOE standards. The project activities associated with Year 1 goals were detailed in the 2005–06 SDFS-QDM Annual Report. These activities included the development of school and self-report data collection, a survey of districts to identify technical assistance and training needs, and the development of a plan for the standardization of the data collection process for community-based organizations.

The goals for the second year of this project included: (1) addressing the findings from needs assessment through the provision of training and technical assistance; (2) developing and administering a web-based SESIR training module; (3) conducting software system site visits with districts; (4) analyzing SESIR and discipline data for the department; (5) analyzing data for community-based organizations that received SDFS funding; (6) develop a plan to provide individualized data reports for district use; and (7) begin analyzing newly collected outcome data from CBOs that are funded through the ODC. The activities associated with Year 2 goals are detailed in the 2006–07 Annual Report.

The goals for the third and final year of the project included: (1) updating and expanding the accessibility of the SESIR Annual Statewide report; (2) continue administering and monitoring the web-based SESIR training module; (3) continue the delivery of train-the-

trainer workshops for district administrators on the use of the web-based SESIR training module; (4) continue conducting software system site reviews with additional school districts; (5) generating individualized district data quality reports for school districts (district profiles); (6) analyzing outcome data for community-based organizations that received SDFS funding through the ODC; and (7) continue the administration and analysis of self-report survey data at the school level.

Data Quality

The concept of “data quality” is central to this project and is indicated by its prominence in the title of the grant itself. “Data quality” has been the primary focus of each year of project activities. However, the phrase needs to be defined within the context of this particular project. This section presents that definition and some of the arguments for defining “data quality.”

In the social sciences, *data* quality is closely associated with *measurement* quality, the criteria for which include precision and accuracy but weight more heavily considerations of reliability and validity (Babbie, 2004). For the purposes of this project, these same criteria were used to assess the quality of Florida’s data on incidents of crime and violence in its public schools; the self-reported delinquency, attitudes, and perceptions of its youth; and the “the types of preventative curricula, programs, and services provided” (WESTAT/EMT, 2005) to its schools and communities. The project’s ultimate goal of improving the quality of the data that are collected, reported, and used for measuring prevention needs was pursued with a common definition of data/measurement quality that includes precision, accuracy, reliability, validity, and utility.

One of the documents that guided the project’s activities and plans is a report prepared by WESTAT and EMT for the U.S. DOE entitled “The Uniform Data Set: A Review Draft of Data Elements for the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System” (December 5, 2005). According to this report, data quality is primarily a function of data accuracy, which is primarily a function of common definitions and measures—a.k.a. *uniformity*.

Regarding the component of the project concerned with self-report data to measure “the incidence and prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk, and perception of social disapproval of drug use and violence by youth in schools and communities” (WESTAT/EMT, 2005), Year 1 activities included a review of the literature on self-report survey data to assess the advantages and limitations of using this data to measure crime and delinquency. Year 2 activities involved developing and administering a self-report survey for middle and high school students. Year 3 activities included refinements to the self-report survey instrument and further administration of the instrument. For community-based organizations that provide prevention services, the data quality issues uncovered in the first-year assessment are primarily related to the availability and utility of the data being reported. During Year 2 of the project, staff worked with the Office of Drug Control to address data accuracy and uniformity to a greater degree.

Overview of Report Chapters

This report is divided into chapters that correspond with the major components of the SDFS-QDM Project: youth self-report data (Chapter 1), SESIR training and technical assistance (Chapter 2), SESIR and discipline data (Chapter 3), and analyzing outcome performance measure data from community-based organizations funded with SDFS grants (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 provides a summary of the project activities that expanded the scope of work. This chapter highlights activities that were not delineated in the grant but were provided to further meet the needs of the Florida DOE and LEAs. Finally, Chapter 5 presents recommendations for the continued improvement in the collection, maintenance, and analysis of school environmental safety incident reporting data.

Chapter 1 reviews existing self-report surveys in Florida and discusses the development and administration of the Florida School Environment Survey (FSES) developed through the duration of this project. The FSES is a school-level self-report survey for prevention planning and needs assessment. Data is not presented in this chapter; however, it was provided in the SDFS–QDM Project’s 2006-07 Annual Report.

Chapter 2 describes the SESIR and discipline data collected by Florida DOE. Topics discussed include the history and purpose of the SESIR system, the data elements collected and reported, improvements made to the SESIR system during the course of the project, and supplemental data reporting elements that were incorporated into the SESIR Annual Statewide Report by project staff.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the SESIR training and technical activities for each of the three years of the project. The primary activities involved the development and administration of a SESIR on-line training module, SESIR software system site reviews, and the creation and dissemination of customized district data quality reports (district profiles).

Chapter 4 presents the collaboration with the Office of Drug Control to refine the data collection process for community-based organizations. In addition, an analysis of the performance measures for CBOs is presented by comparing the six month updates with the year-end data (for the 2007 funding cycle).

Chapter 5 presents examples of work conducted by the project that expanded the original scope of work. It also includes recommendations to further improve the quality of the SESIR data.

CHAPTER 1

SELF-REPORT DATA: THE FLORIDA SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

1.1 Introduction

One objective of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Quality Data Management (SDFS-QDM) Project was to develop a middle and high school self-report survey. The Florida School Environment Survey (FSES) was designed to integrate with current data sets in Florida and to provide information that was not previously available and would be beneficial for program planning. The FSES has the goal of improving state self-report data quality in five key ways: (1) provide *school-level* self-report data; (2) support the School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) data by providing self-report data on many incidents that conform to SESIR codes and definitions; (3) provide self-report data on bullying prevalence and victimization; (4) provide a cost-efficient tool for school administrators to self-administer and generate school-level, targeted needs assessment data; and (5) provide schools with cross-sectional and longitudinal data at the school level regarding substance use, bullying, peer behavior, and other forms of delinquency when administered annually. Over the course of the project, multiple versions of the FSES were pilot tested. The pilot test results provided important information about the survey instrument and design as well as the procedures for administering the FSES.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the FSES and initial findings. Section 1.2 presents an overview of the current student surveys in Florida. Section 1.3 reviews the goals of the Florida School Environment Survey. Section 1.4 examines design and administration of the FSES including mode of administration, procedures, parental consent, and survey validation. Section 1.5 provides some recommendations for administering the FSES, and Section 1.6 provides a brief conclusion.

1.2 Existing Student Surveys in Florida

Currently, there are several student self-report surveys conducted in Florida that gather data regarding alcohol, tobacco use, drug use, and other delinquent behaviors. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Monitoring the Future (MTF), and the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) [formerly the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA)] are three nationally representative self-report surveys that are administered in Florida and supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, the State of Florida supports a number of state level surveys such as the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), a state and district level survey of youth delinquency; the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), a district level survey of youth attitudes and behaviors regarding tobacco use; and a state level YRBS in Florida. In Florida, the YRBS is administered by the Department of Health, while the

Department of Children and Families administers the FYSAS. A detailed review of each of the self-report student surveys in Florida was provided in Chapter 4 of the 2005–06 SDFS-QDM Project’s “Annual Report to the Florida Department of Education.

1.3 FSES Goals

As previously mentioned, one of the main goals of the FSES was to provide school-level data. Schools within the same district can vary widely in terms of student behaviors, organizational structure, and student populations. Indeed, schools often develop their own communal culture and organizational structure that can have both direct and indirect effects on delinquency (Payne, 2004). From a prevention standpoint, school-level data facilitates the identification of needs and targeted program efforts rather than taking a common prevention programming approach for all schools. While there are some districts in Florida that already collect school-level data (e.g. Hillsborough), many other districts (particularly mid-size districts) would benefit from school-level self-report data.

The second goal of the FSES was to provide self-report data on incidents that conform to SESIR codes and incident definitions. The aim of creating uniformity in measurements of incidents was to facilitate the comparison and integration of FSES data into existing data sets in Florida, thus providing a multidimensional understanding of youth behavior and attitudes toward delinquency. Providing self-report data of incidents that conform to the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) (mandated by the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools) reporting requirements and SESIR incident definitions enabled comparisons of the FSES data with other school-level data (such as SESIR) and state and national data (such as UMIRS). Thus, the FSES integrated with other data sources in Florida to provide a more complete measurement and understanding of school safety.

The third goal of the FSES was to provide self-report data on bullying prevalence and victimization. Currently, there is limited empirical data on bullying, particularly data describing female bullying and bullying through the use of new technologies, such as digital communication and computerized public forums (Morrison, 2006; Simmons, 2002).

Fourth, the FSES provided a cost efficient, self-administered data collection tool for local education agencies (LEAs). One of the factors that prevents LEAs from implementing school-level self-report surveys has been the prohibitive cost associated with conducting survey research. The FSES is designed to be a lower cost alternative to private survey companies and is designed to provide a straightforward data collection tool that can be self-administered by school administrators. With that said however, even the most basic survey requires some complexity in analyzing results and, thus, it is likely that LEAs will need some form of continued technical assistance in using the FSES.

The fifth goal of the FSES was to provide LEAs with cross-sectional and longitudinal data at the school level regarding substance use and other forms of delinquency. The FSES includes a number of other variables associated with delinquency and school

environment issues (e.g., low self control, peer association, use of free time, parental monitoring, perceptions of safety) and additional demographic variables. The FSES was also designed for LEAs to have the ability to assess changes in behaviors over time, at the school level. These five goals shaped the design and administration protocols of the FSES.

1.4 FSES Survey Design and Administration

Survey design and administration involved a number of procedures including:

- constructing questions and response categories,
- ordering the questions appropriately within the instrument,
- designing the layout of the pages,
- assessing the length and age appropriateness of the survey instrument,
- providing clear instructions for the administration,
- complying with institutional policies,
- creating sampling protocols,
- addressing ethical concerns regarding human protections from harm and violations of privacy,
- field testing, and
- analyzing results for future revisions.

Over the course of the SDFS-QDM Project, the FSES was developed (individual survey items), designed (ordering of questions, length of instrument), and field-tested (to identify key methodological issues). This section provides an overview of the FSES pilot test including mode of administration, the evaluation of survey validity, and protocol for survey.

1.4.1 Mode of Administration

Three modes of survey administration were developed for the FSES: paper and pencil, Optical Mark Read (OMR) scanning, and Internet-based surveying. This section describes the modes of survey administration in order to provide some guidance in the transition of the FSES to the Office of Safe Schools at the Florida Department of Education (Florida DOE). All three modes of administration have been sent to the Office of Safe Schools and are available on request.

The 2006–07 administrations of the FSES used paper and pencil administration, where students marked directly on the survey by circling the response and then “coders” entered survey responses into a computer spreadsheet. To ensure a high degree of accuracy, each survey was recoded twice by two different individuals. Paper and pencil survey administration has several benefits over other survey methods, such as the ability to read written text, record “scratched out” responses, and make notations. One disadvantage of paper and pencil surveying relative to other methods is that hand coding individual surveys is more time and labor intensive which likely translates into increased costs.

The FSES used OMR survey scanning for the 2007-08 administrations. OMR required students to mark boxes or “bubbles” corresponding to survey responses. Surveys were

machine recoded or coded by an OMR scanner. OMR has the ability to recode survey results faster than paper and pencil surveying, however there is less opportunity for evaluation of individual responses and greater risk of recording error because OMR software is unable to accurately identify “scratched out” responses, stray pencil marks, and written text.

Prior to the start of this SDFS-QDM Project, the Office of Safe Schools administered the School Needs Assessment Survey, a self-reported drug and alcohol survey of middle school students in one Florida school district. The School Needs Assessment Survey used both OMR surveys and Internet-based surveys. Analysis of these survey results provided some insight into the effectiveness of Internet-based surveys delivered in a classroom setting. Students who took the computer-based survey had a non-completion rate 76 percent greater than the OMR survey counterparts. In fact, mode of taking the survey was the strongest predictor of incompleteness, compared to other variables including grade level. There are a number of explanations as to why the Internet-based survey was unsuccessful. Many schools lacked the computer resources to complete an Internet-based self-report survey within a class time period. Additionally, technical assistance was needed to provide computer support. Although there is some evidence that computer based surveys provide greater accuracy in results on surveys of drug use and delinquency relative to other survey forms (Harris, 2000), currently all of Florida’s schools do not have the computer infrastructure and staff to make Internet-based surveying a viable alternative to traditional paper and pencil and OMR survey methods. The FSES was available in an Internet version for schools that had the computer resources to administer the survey, however during the 2007-08 school year, no school selected the Internet form of the FSES.

1.4.2 Survey Administration

Over the past 2 years, the FSES has been administered 3,982 times in 7 schools across 4 Florida school districts. The target population of the FSES was the student population of the school, thus the survey sought to provide various estimates at the school level. Ideally, all the students in a school would participate in the FSES to provide the most accurate data. This is sometimes referred to as convenience sampling, because the aim is to try to include as many people as possible in the survey to avoid systematically excluding a particular group through a complex sampling design. In 2006–07 the participation rate was 84.4 percent³. This rate is relatively high. For example, in 2006, the FYSAS had a student participation rate of 80 percent for middle school students and 75 percent for high school students. Of course, as with all surveys, results should be viewed as a generalized indicator of attitudes and behaviors and not as an absolute or “true” assessment scale.

Protocol for administering the pilot test followed a standard survey methodology. Once a district agreed to participate in the FSES pilot test, project staff contacted school district administrators to discuss the survey and review the district’s policies. Next, in collaboration with the school principals, dates and school periods were chosen for the

³ The 2007-08 participation rate was not calculated because the FSES was administered at two times to the same school using both active and passive consent.

administration of the survey. Additionally, a count of students and classrooms were obtained to prepare for survey copying and distribution.

One week prior to survey administration, parent permission forms were distributed in each classroom. Classes received the parent permission forms in a large envelope with instructions for the teacher attached to the outside of the envelope as well as the inside. One day before survey administration the surveys, pencils, and teachers' instructions were delivered to the classrooms. Again, teacher instructions were attached to the outside of the envelope as well as inside. After students completed the survey, the surveys were placed back into the envelopes and sent to a central location (e.g. office, school library, school counselors' office). Extra surveys and materials were also kept at this location and the schools' daily attendance count was recorded. Surveys were packed in boxes and securely returned to SDFS-QDM Project staff.

1.4.3 Active vs. Passive Consent

The SDFS-QDM Project did not directly administer the FSES, rather each school district administered the FSES in accordance with its own survey policies. Generally, one of the most important variants in student surveying is parental consent. Parental consent can take the form of active consent, which requires that students provide a signed consent form from a parent or guardian to participate in a survey or passive consent, which does not require the return of a consent form to participate. Thus with passive consent the de facto position is parental approval, whereas with active consent an assumption of parental disapproval is taken.

In an examination of sampling bias created by active consent for school self-report surveys relative to passive consent, Frissell and colleagues (2004) found that response rates fell from 91–93 percent to 45 percent, even after mailing a consent form to parents and sending another form home with students. Additionally, Frissell and colleagues' results indicated that active consent requirements decrease the rate of reported delinquency.

In the 2007–08 school year, the FSES was administered using two different consent procedures in the same middle and high school. In fall 2007, a school district required active parental consent for surveys; however in spring 2008 the school district reversed its policy and allowed for passive consent thus creating a “natural experiment.” In a comparison of survey consent procedures, active consent limited the overall student participation in the survey (70 percent of students participated with active consent and 93 percent of students participated with passive consent). Additionally, older students and students of color participated at higher rates with passive consent verses active consent and, after holding constant age, students with passive consent reported higher rates of delinquency relative to active consent procedures. Interestingly, no gender differences were found between consent procedures. Overall, findings suggest that passive consent provided a more accurate representative sample of the student population relative to active consent.

1.4.4 Survey Validity

Survey validity was assessed using three methods: (1) a comparison of FSES data to the prior years' data for FYSAS; (2) an examination of survey items designed to measure inaccurate responses, or the *discriminant validity*, and (3) an examination of survey items in aggregate, referred to as *construct validity*. Comparisons of results from three key items (current alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use) from the FSES and the 2006 FYSAS indicate a high level of consistency or *concurrent validity* (results presented in Figure 1.4.1, Figure 1.4.2, Figure 1.4.3, and Figure 1.4.4). Empirical analysis indicates that there is high probability that there were no meaningful differences between the FYSAS and the FSES on the key items of interest.

Figure 1.4.1 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

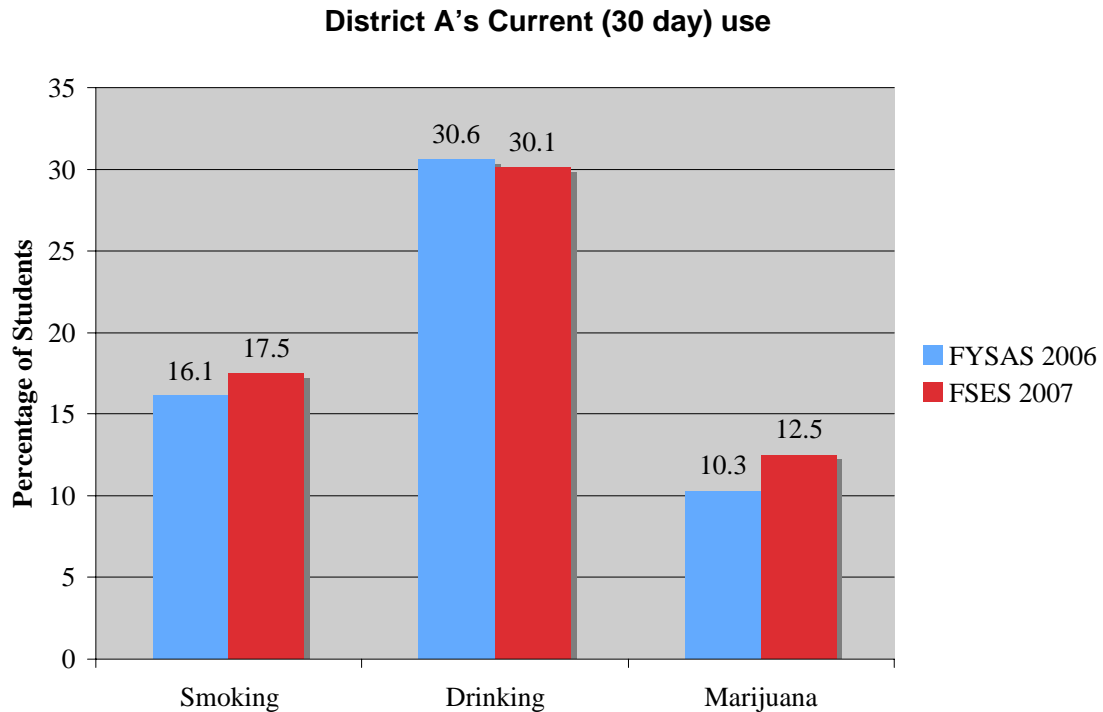


Figure 1.4.2 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

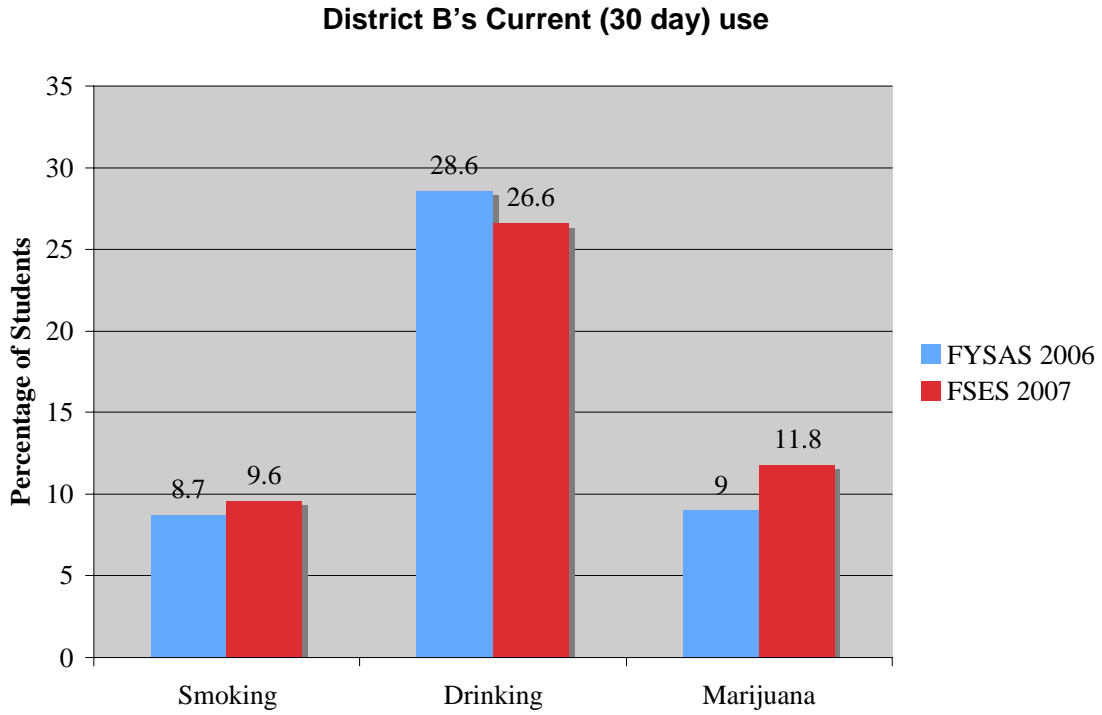


Figure 1.4.3 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

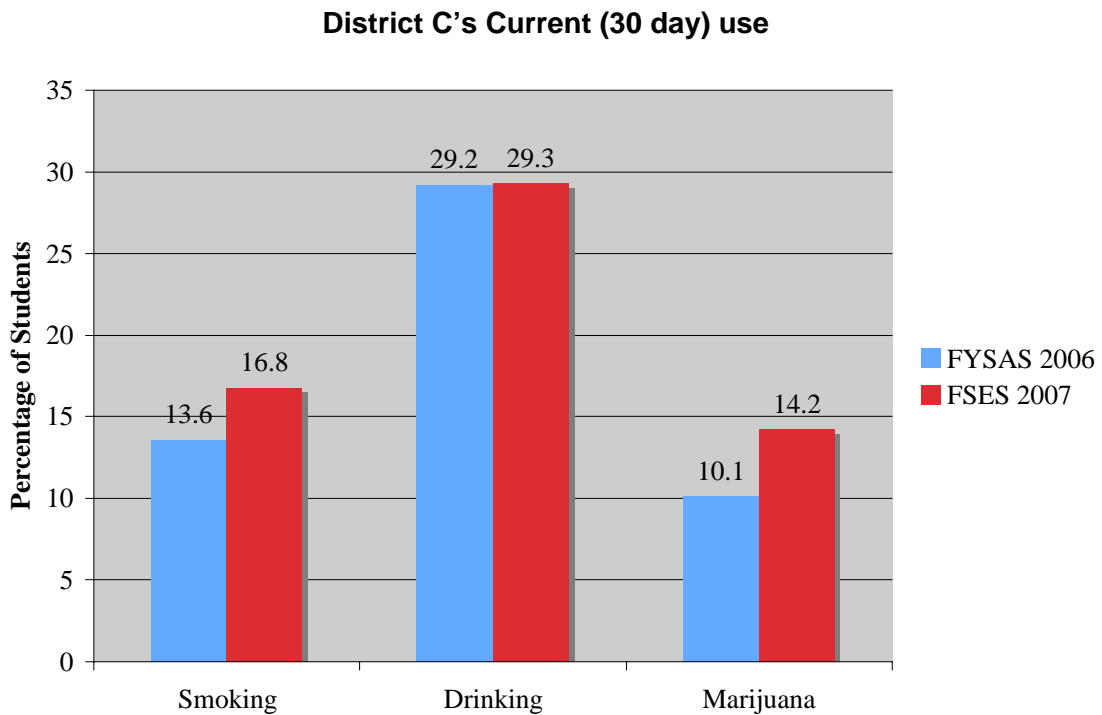
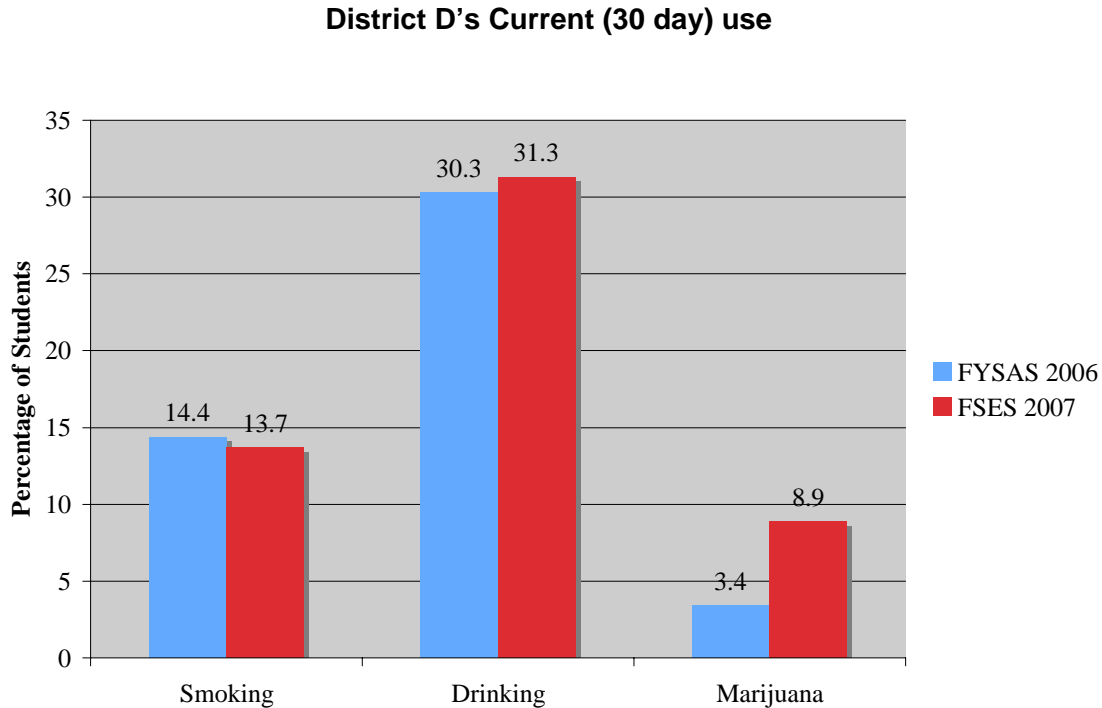


Figure 1.4.4 Comparison of FSES and FYSAS on Key Items of Interest

Examining false response items on the survey also served as a means of assessing the validity of the FSES. Most surveys of adolescents and young adults have some form of validity check to identify false responses. The FSES data was analyzed for logical inconsistencies in responses. For example, if a participant responds that they have never had a drink of alcohol on one item and also responds that he/she engaged in binge drinking on another item, then the respondent's answers would be marked for further assessment. The second validity check was participants' selection of implausible response categories. For example, a participant responds that he/she used a highly potent drug or combination of drugs everyday over the last thirty days would be examined for validity across other responses.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the FSES was designed as a cost efficient, user friendly, school-level survey. Pilot testing provided the opportunity to present the Office of Safe Schools with a valid and reliable survey that can be administered using multiple survey formats in diverse school environments. Upon the conclusion of the SDFS-QDM Project, survey materials (e.g. teacher scripts, check-lists, sample consent forms) and three versions of the FSES (paper and pencil, OMR forms, and Internet-based) will be transferred to the Office of Safe Schools at the Florida DOE. Additional copies of these materials can be made available on request.

1.5 Recommendations

The pilot testing of the FSES generated several key recommendations for assisting in the administration of the FSES and other self-report youth surveys.

- **Revise FSES items to reflect changes in knowledge.** Existing knowledge of the causes and correlates of delinquency has advanced greatly in recent years. Additionally, recent studies on new topics, such as bullying and digital communication have changed our understanding of the lives of youth. Thus, it is important to revise the FSES to remain current with existing empirical knowledge and best prevention practices.
- **Work closely with existing surveys in Florida.** As discussed in Section 1.2, there are several student self-report surveys in Florida. Each of these surveys serves different data collection purposes. Coordinating the FSES with other student surveys in Florida avoids duplication of data collection and improves data quality. Indeed, the FSES was designed with the specific goal of providing information that is not covered by existing survey efforts. Additionally, to avoid biasing the student sample, the FSES should not be administered at the same location and time as other youth surveys.
- **Administer the FSES in the early fall or late spring.** Simply put, schools' primary mission is to provide educational services to youth. Surveying can improve the overall educational environment for youth, but administering surveys can disrupt the academic curriculum. Thus, it is beneficial to students and teachers to administer surveys when it is less disruptive of coursework. Generally, the beginning and end of semesters are natural breaks in the academic year to administer school surveys.
- **Provide schools with all necessary materials.** Schools should not be expected to make copies, score surveys, provide pencils, or other surveying materials. The aim is to reduce barriers to survey administration. This issue is important for increasing the participation rate as well as defraying hardships on school administrators and students.
- **Limit Internet-based surveys to schools that have available resources—let the schools opt in.** It seems obvious, but it is worth noting that the Internet-based FSES will only be successful when the resources are available to complete the survey. If a school has a limited number of computers, it is unreasonable to expect every classroom to have the opportunity to complete the FSES in a timely manner.

1.6 Summary Discussion

This chapter provided a general overview of the design and pilot testing of the FSES including: (1) a discussion of the goals for data improvement; (2) a review of the pilot test procedures, validity issues, consent procedures, and mode of administration; and (3) recommendations for future administrations. In summary, the five main goals of the FSES are:

- 1) Provide school-level data to meet the needs of specific communities,
- 2) Maintain the ability to integrate survey items with other state self-report and official data sources such as SESIR, UMIRS, YRBS, and FYSAS,
- 3) Focus particular attention on bullying offending and victimization, and virtual communications and behaviors
- 4) Provide a cost efficient, school-level survey as a tool for school administrators to identify prevention needs and target limited resources, and
- 5) Provide an instrument that will facilitate an examination of trends and patterns through year-to-year data collection.

Additionally, there are a number of key findings from this chapter that shape the future development of the FSES:

- LEAs will likely need continued technical support to implement the survey after the completion of this project, particularly in data analysis and summarizing results.
- Passive consent procedures seem to provide a less biased sample of student as opposed to active consent.
- Internet-based surveys should be limited to schools with adequate computer resources and support.

The transition of FSES to the Office of Safe Schools at Florida DOE during the 2008-09 school year provides an opportunity to administer the survey in a year that the FYSAS is not being administered at the district level. The FSES has the potential to be an effective means of expanding and integrating data and, as a result, guiding empirically targeted prevention efforts to more effectively match programs with appropriate populations. It is important to enlist schools early during the school year to participate in Spring 2009.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY INCIDENT REPORTING (SESIR) SYSTEM

2.1 Introduction

The Florida DOE has collected data on the most serious incidents of crime, violence, and disruptive behavior since the 1995-96 school year through the *School Environmental Safety Incident Report (SESIR)* system. The SESIR system collects data on incidents that occur on school grounds, school transportation, and at off-campus, school-sponsored events during any 24-hour period, 365 days per year. The primary goal of the SESIR system is to standardize the collection and reporting of incidents in order to assess the levels of safety in Florida's schools. A secondary goal of the SESIR system is to make the information accessible to the educational community and the public. Educational professionals and organizations utilize the data to inform resource allocation and program planning processes. School district SDFS coordinators, other school personnel, and community-based organizations use this data for intervention and prevention planning, as well as to measure program progress and evaluation. In addition, SESIR data meets the federal reporting requirements outlined in Title IV and Title IX of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Currently, SESIR data are reported statewide and by district in the annual *Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data*⁴, which summarizes the most recent three years of incident and discipline data that were reported through an automated system to the Florida DOE by the 67 school districts in Florida. This data is also used to produce the *Incidents and Resultant Disciplinary Actions Report (IRDA)*, which presents the frequency of incidents by type and the associated disciplinary actions (by action type) for each district by school, as well as a *Persistently Dangerous Schools Report* to meet the Title IX requirements for the Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) Policy.

A primary goal of the SDFS-QDM Project and its predecessor, the Florida Safe Learning Environment Data (FSLED) project, was to improve the quality of data and maximize the utility of SESIR and other school climate data for decision-making by educational leaders. The initial goal of assessing the status of SESIR data quality in Florida was carried out in the first year of the SDFS-QDM Project, and staff members continued to address data quality issues through further analysis and district data reviews, and by providing ongoing training and technical assistance. Project staff also analyzed the SESIR data at the state, district, and school level and examined reporting rates for

⁴ This report can be accessed via the Florida DOE website (fldoe.org) or the SDFS-QDM Project website, hosted by the FSU Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research (www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu/sdfs). The SESIR reports can be accessed through a new interactive web-based system.

different incident types and disciplinary actions. Unusual trends and outliers detected through this analysis were subjected to further examination in an effort to identify and address possible sources of error.

This chapter details the elements of the SESIR incident and discipline data files and presents a descriptive analysis of the SESIR data. The analysis presented in this chapter addresses issues related to SESIR incidents and resultant disciplinary actions in Florida schools during the 2006-07 school year.

1. Statewide rates for SESIR incidents
2. Frequencies of the various types of disciplinary actions that were administered
3. Resultant disciplinary actions administered specifically for SESIR incidents
4. Variation in SESIR incidents rates by districts and school types

The remainder of this chapter is divided into five sections. Section 2.2 describes the data elements related to SESIR incidents and the disciplinary actions reported by the school districts, as well as the changes to the SESIR data. Section 2.3 provides an analysis of the incident and discipline rates at the state level. Section 2.4 introduces a new data reporting element, bullying, and reports the trends for this incident type. Section 2.5 presents a comparative assessment of SESIR incidents and discipline rates by school district. Finally, Section 2.6 concludes the chapter with a summary discussion of the SESIR data.

2.2 Data Elements and Changes

The SESIR system was designed to collect information about serious incidents of crime, violence, and disruption in Florida's public schools. Minor violations of local codes of conduct are not included in SESIR, and the data are reported at the incident-level—not individual student-level. The advisory group responsible for designing the initial SESIR system identified and defined twenty-one incidents on which schools would report. These incident types and definitions were based on Florida's criminal code and were adapted to make them appropriate for school-aged youth in a public school setting. The SESIR reporting system is comprised of two areas of interest: incident data and disciplinary data. The following sections detail the data elements included in these two reporting areas.

2.2.1 Incident Data

Each incident reported through the SESIR system is automatically assigned an incident number that is unique to the district, school, and incident. The incident number links the incident to one or more disciplinary actions. In addition to an incident number, several data elements describing the incident are included in the data file. Table 2.2.1 presents a list of these incident-related data elements.

Table 2.2.1: Incident Data Elements Reported to Florida DOE

DATA ELEMENTS			
LEVEL I		LEVEL III	
Arson*		Drug Use/Possession-Excluding Alcohol*	
Battery*		Disruption On Campus-Major*	
Homicide*		Fighting**	
Kidnapping*		Larceny/Theft*	
Sexual Battery*		Other Major Incidents* [†]	
		Sexual Harassment**	
		Sexual Offenses (Other)*	
		Threat/Intimidation*	
		Trespassing*	
		Vandalism*	
LEVEL II		LEVEL IV	
Breaking & Entering/Burglary*		Alcohol*	
Drug Sale/Distribution-Excluding Alcohol*		Bullying/Harassment** [†]	
Robbery*		Tobacco**	
Weapon Possession*			
RELATED ELEMENTS			
Gang Related		Drug Related	
Alcohol Related		Hate-crime Related	
Bullying/Harassment Related [†]		Weapon Related	
WEAPON DESCRIPTION (weapon- related)		DRUG DESCRIPTION[†] (Drug related)	
Handgun	Knife	Marijuana/Hashish/Other Cannibinoids	
Rifle or Shotgun	Other Weapon	Other	
Firearm, Other	Unknown Weapon		
OTHER DATA ELEMENTS			
Location		Time of Day	
Type of Offender		Reported to Law Enforcement	

* Incident types required to be reported to law enforcement,

** Incident types not required to be reported to law enforcement

[†] New element as of 2006-07 school year.

The incident categories in the SESIR system were designed to be a mutually exclusive and exhaustive array of serious crime, violence, and disruption incident types that may occur in a school setting. The complexity of some incidents created the need to develop a seriousness level ranking (1 through 4) for each incident type. This seriousness level ranking is used to distinguish the main “offense” from the other offenses that may accompany a single incident.

Incident data also includes six “related elements” that capture associated factors of relevancy. These related elements allow SESIR incidents to be described more comprehensively. For example, during a *battery* incident in which a knife was used and the student was also under the *influence of alcohol*, the incident would be reported as *battery*, *weapon-related*, and *alcohol-related*. Effective in the 2006-07 school year, “bullying/harassment” and “bullying/harassment-related” were added as new SESIR incident elements. Special circumstances apply to additional related element types. For example, the *weapons possession* or *weapon-related* incidents require a description of the weapon; therefore, weapon description is also part of the incident file. In addition, beginning in the 2006-07 school year, the *weapon-related incidents* element was modified to capture the number of weapons involved in an incident. It is particularly important that guns and other firearms are accurately coded and reported, as this information is used to substantiate violations of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (Section 4141 of the Improving America’s Schools Act). Weapon-involved incidents described as *firearm other*, *handgun*, *rifle* or *shotgun* are required to be reported under the federal Gun-Free Schools Act, while incidents described as *knife*, *other weapon*, and *unknown weapon* are non-firearm categories required by Florida’s SESIR system, but are not included in federal reporting.

Finally, in accordance with the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, a new data element requires the description of the drug when a drug-related incident occurs. The schools are now required to specify whether Marijuana/Hashish/Other Cannabinoids are involved in drug-related incidents.

Table 2.2.1 shows the additional details about incidents that are collected and reported through the SESIR system. These include the location where the incident occurred (on school grounds, school-related activities off school grounds, and school transportation) the type of offender involved (student, non-student or both), and the time of day at which the incident occurred. Finally, a data element is included to indicate whether or not law enforcement was notified of the incident. According to Florida statutes, incidents involving criminal behaviors *must* be reported to law enforcement. In addition, non-criminal SESIR incidents (tobacco possession/use/sale, sexual harassment, fighting, or bullying) *may* be reported as well. Collectively, these descriptive elements provide an inclusive and comprehensive picture of the various types of serious incidents that occur in schools.

2.2.2 Discipline Data

In Florida’s public schools, codes of conduct and criteria for disciplinary actions are policies based on district-level decision-making and, thus, vary across school districts. However, the Florida DOE has established a standardized reporting format that requires the reporting of serious disciplinary actions recorded by school administrators. In the context of the SESIR system, these discipline data elements are used, primarily, in their association with recorded incidents of crime and violence in the school context. In addition, the Florida DOE reports the total numbers and rates of disciplinary actions, regardless of an association with a reportable incident of SESIR crime or violence. Table 2.2.2 displays these disciplinary actions.

Table 2.2.2: Disciplinary Actions: Discipline Data File, 2006–07

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	
Corporal Punishment	Change in Placement*
In-School Suspension	Expelled w/ Educational Services
Out-of-School Suspension	Expelled w/o Educational Services
Extended Suspension	Other SESIR Defined
Placement in Alternative Educational Setting	

*Used only for students with disabilities who are involved in drug or weapon offenses

The disciplinary actions that schools report to Florida DOE as a result of SESIR requirements include corporal punishment, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, alternative placement, expulsion, and other SESIR-defined. Each recorded action includes the date of the precipitating incident, an incident number (if the incident was one of the 23 SESIR incidents), and the ID number of the student being disciplined. The student ID number enables Florida DOE to link the student being disciplined to his or her demographic information, which is stored in a separate data file. For the annual statewide report, this demographic information is used to calculate race, age, and gender-specific discipline rates. Demographic information such as gender are now included in the discipline file. The incident number enables Florida DOE to link the disciplinary action(s) to the precipitating SESIR incident. This linkage is used in the creation of the “Incidents and Resultant Disciplinary Actions (IRDA)” report, which is used by Florida DOE and the school districts to detect inappropriate applications of disciplinary actions for specific incident types, unusual frequencies of incident types, and/or potential problems in the process by which incidents and actions are recorded in the data systems at the school- and district-levels. Moreover, this data provide a wealth of information on the trends, characteristics and promising practices related to school crime, violence, and related behavior.

2.3 Statewide SESIR Incident and Discipline Rates

In addition to preparing statewide reports and providing data to Florida DOE for federal reporting purposes, the SDFS-QDM Project staff closely examined incident and discipline data to identify possible reporting errors, issues with the interpretation of data definition, and other concerns. This process helped focus technical assistance and training activities, provided guidance for refining the training documents, and facilitated the application of data for prevention and planning purposes. The following analysis provides a summary of statewide SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions. A detailed analysis of weapons possession is reported in the subsequent section.

2.3.1 Incident Rates

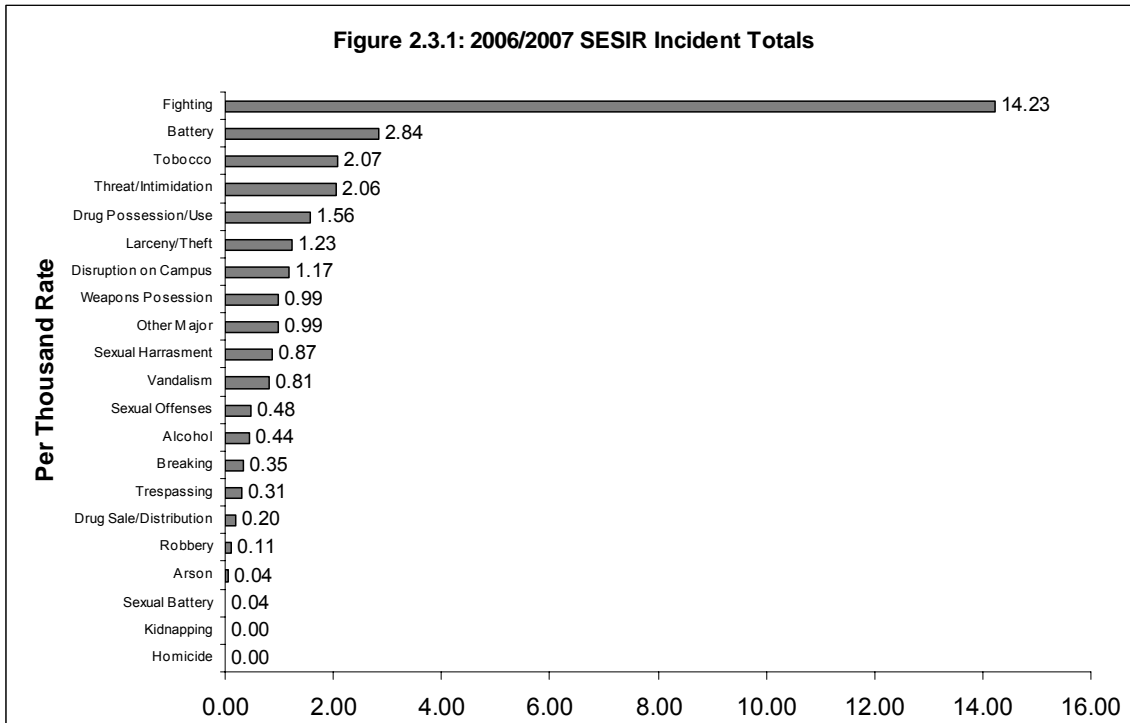
The analysis presented in this subsection provides a summary of SESIR incidents for school districts. A breakdown of state rates by gender and school type is provided where appropriate. Table 2.3.1 presents the summary data for SESIR incidents for the 2006-07 school year.

Table 2.3.1: Statewide SESIR Incident Summaries, 2006–07

Time of Incidents	Number	Percent
During School Hours	83,808	97.37
Not During School Hours	1516	1.76
Unknown	744	0.86
Location of Incidents		
School Grounds	83,638	97.18
School Sponsored Activities	391	0.45
School Transportation	2,039	2.37
Student Involvement		
Student Only	79,387	92.24
Non-student	879	1.02
Both	491	0.57
Unknown	5,311	6.11
Total	86,068	100%

During the 2006–07 school year, a total number of 86,068 SESIR incidents were reported in Florida’s public elementary, middle, high, and combination schools. About 97 percent (83,808) of these incidents occurred during school hours and about three percent (2,260) took place outside school hours. A vast majority of reported SESIR incidents (97 percent) occurred on school grounds and slightly more than two percent occurred on or during school transportation. Ninety-two percent (79,387 incidents out of 86,068) of

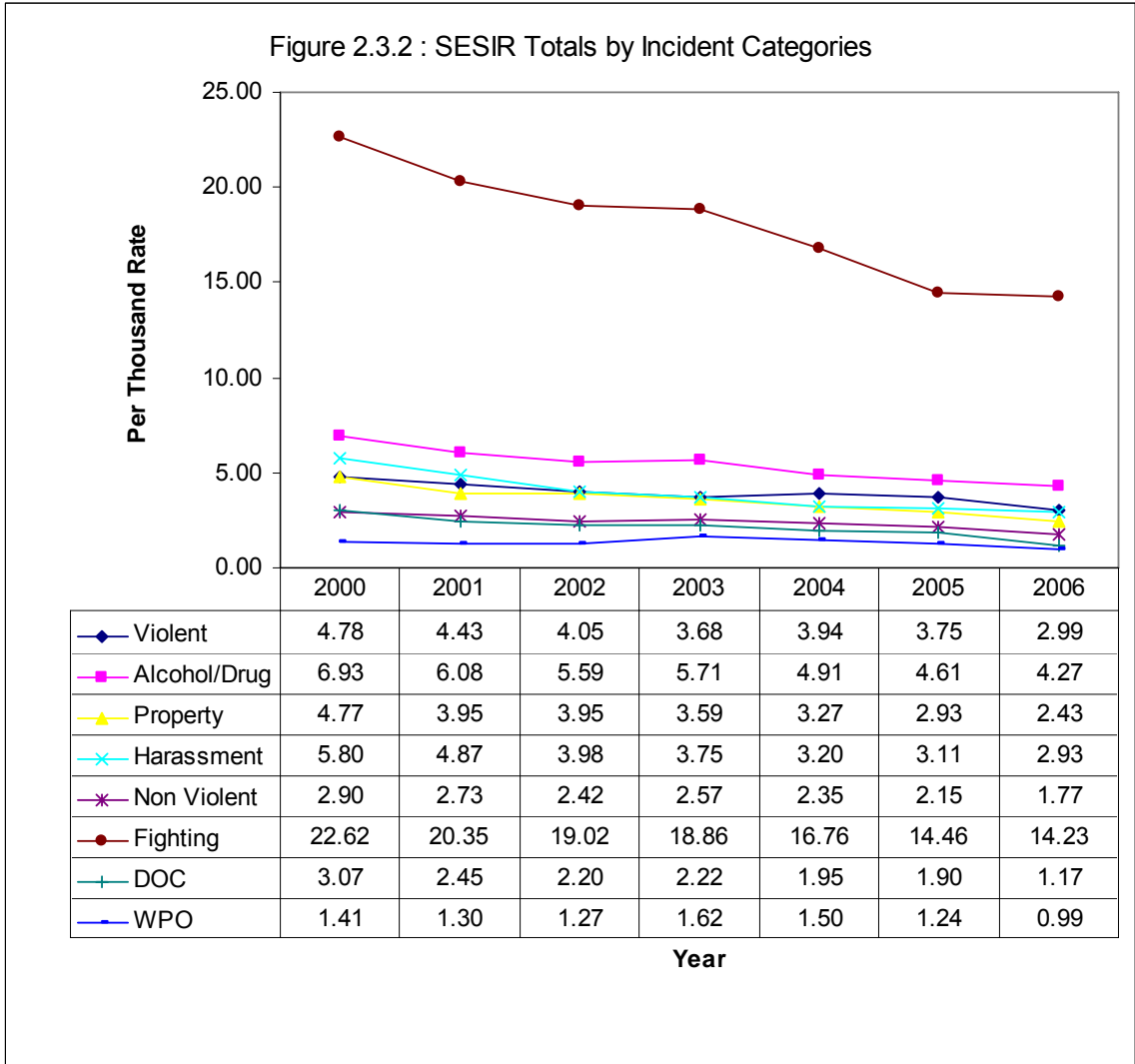
SESIR incidents involved students only, just over one percent of these incidents involved non-students, and less than one percent involved both students and non students. Overall, the majority of SESIR incidents involved only students and they occurred during school hours and on school grounds. A breakdown of these figures by incident type is provided in Figure 2.3.1.



As Figure 2.3.1 demonstrates, fighting has the highest per thousand rate (14.23) followed by battery (2.84), tobacco (2.07) and threat/intimidation (2.06). For 14 incident types, the per thousand rate is reported to be less than one and the rates are particularly small for incident types classified at a higher seriousness level including arson, sexual battery, kidnapping and homicide. The high fighting rate *may* be due to a liberal interpretation or misinterpretation of this incident type. A SESIR-defined fighting incident occurs “when two or more persons mutually participate in use of force or physical violence that requires physical restraint or results in injury.” The SDFS-QDM Project provided districts technical assistance related to this incident type. In the last four years, the per thousand rate of fighting has dropped from 18.86 in the 2003–04 school year to 16.76 in 2004–05, to 14.46 in 2005–06 and finally to 14.23 in 2006–07. The decline may be an indication of a better understanding of the SESIR definition resulting in an improvement in data quality. Targeted training and technical assistance as well as a decline in the behavior may have contributed to this improvement.

An examination of incident trends over a four-year period demonstrates that there is an overall drop in the total SESIR incident rate in Florida schools. Overall, Florida schools reported 42 SESIR incidents for every one thousand students in a given day during the 2003–04 school year. This number dropped to 34.15 per thousand students in the 2005–

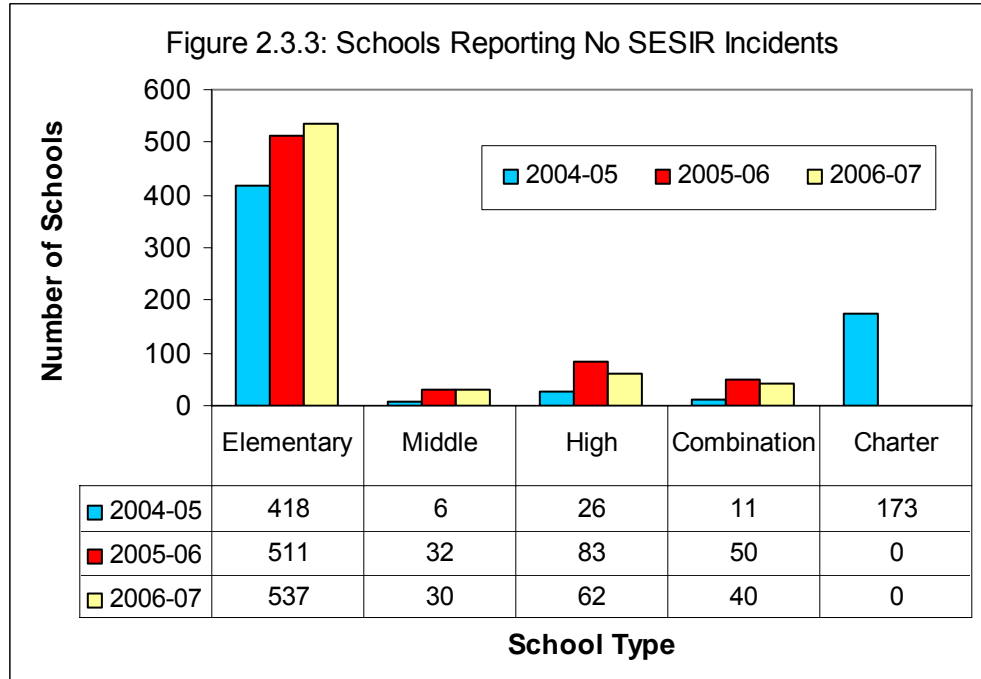
06 school year and to 30 in 2006–07. This decline may be an indication of safer school environments in Florida’s districts, that the districts identify and report SESIR incidents more accurately, or both. Figure 2.3.2 presents the state rates for various groups of incident types over a seven-year period.



*Violent crimes include homicide, sexual battery, robbery, battery, and kidnapping; property crimes include breaking/entering, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and vandalism; Harassment include threat/intimidation and sexual harassment; other non-violent incidents include sexual offenses, trespassing and other major incidents.

As Figure 2.3.2 shows, the fighting category experienced the largest reduction in the last seven years (8.39 decrease in per thousand rate from 1999–00 to 2006–07). Thus, the decline in the overall SESIR rate in the last seven years is largely accounted for by the drop in the rate of fighting. With the exception of random spikes, state rates declined slightly in all major SESIR incident categories.

In addition to the *decline* in the overall SESIR incident rate, the number of schools reporting *no* SESIR incidents has *increased* from 525 to 669 schools in the last seven years. Figure 2.3.3 shows the number of schools with zero SESIR incidents by school type over a three-year period.



Note: Since the 2005-06 school year, charter schools have not been classified as a separate school type. Charter schools with no SESIR incidents are distributed among the remaining school types based on grade level.

As seen in Figure 2.3.3, a large proportion of schools with no SESIR incidents are elementary schools (across all years) followed by charter schools. For instance, in 2004–05, 418 of the 634 schools that did not report any SESIR incidents were elementary and 128 were charter schools. During the same year, only 6 middle, 26 high, and 11 combination schools reported no SESIR incidents. The increase in the number of schools that did not report any SESIR incidents for middle, high, and combination schools in the 2005–06 and 2006–07 school years is, in part, due to the inclusion of charter schools in those categories. This fact, in combination with known SESIR data quality issues, the increase in the number of schools reporting zero SESIR incidents should not be taken as a direct indicator of increased school safety across the state.

2.3.2 Disciplinary Actions

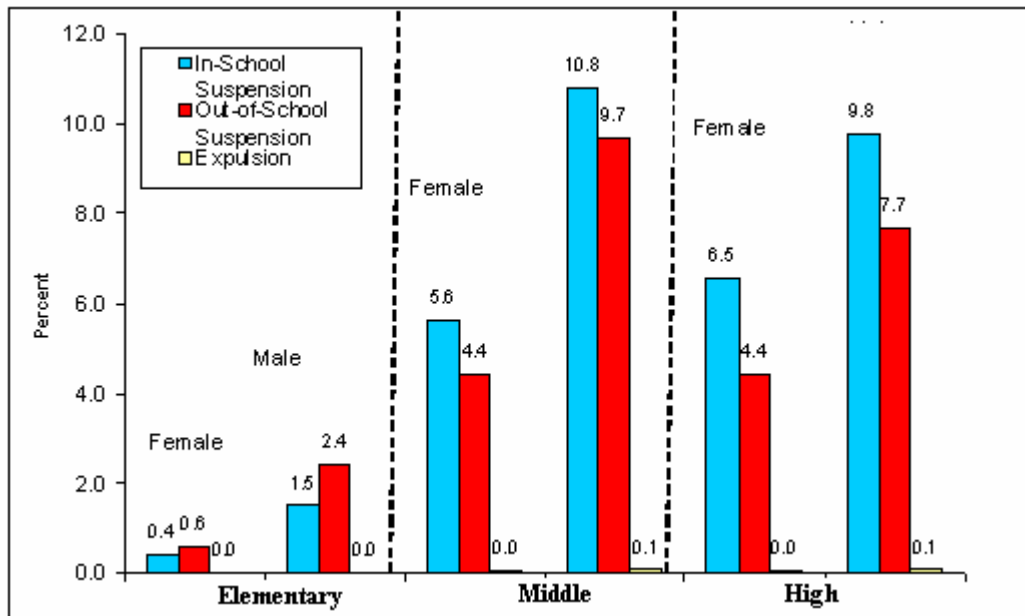
An aggregated report of SESIR incidents provides a summary of school safety, drug use, and delinquent behavior across Florida schools. However, the institutional response to these incidents is reflected in the reporting of the corresponding disciplinary actions. A brief summary of state level disciplinary actions is presented in Table 2.3.2.

Table 2.3.2: Statewide Disciplinary Actions 2006/07*

	All Disciplinary Actions		SESIR Related Disciplinary Actions	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Corporal Punishment	8772	0.76	21	0.02
Expulsion w/o Services	672	0.06	602	0.67
Expulsion w/ Services	349	0.03	562	0.63
Extended Suspension	306	0.03	194	0.22
In-School Suspension	585,260	50.63	10,539	11.76
Out-of-School Suspension	419,060	36.25	66,290	73.94
Alternative Placement	5,174	0.45	2,824	3.15
Other SESIR Defined	136,057	11.77	8,573	9.56
Alternative Placement (ESE)	272	0.02	45	0.05
Total	1,155,922	100%	89,650	100%

*The total number of SESIR-related disciplinary actions reflects the count of actions that are matched with unduplicated SESIR incidents. The percentages reflect the ratio of the total number of each disciplinary action type to the total number of actions. The total number of suspensions and expulsions are slightly different than those reported in Annual SESIR statewide report due to the selection (exclusion) of certain school types.

The majority of SESIR-related disciplinary actions are out-of-school suspensions (about 74 percent). This figure may be contrasted with 36 percent, which is the percentage of out-of-school suspensions out of *all* disciplinary actions (statewide) across all incident types (SESIR and non-SESIR). There were 10,539 in-school suspensions which constitutes about 12 percent of the SESIR-related disciplinary actions compared to 51 percent for all disciplinary actions. Alternative placements account for roughly three percent of SESIR-related disciplinary actions and less than one percent of *all* disciplinary actions (SESIR and non-SESIR). Figure 2.3.4 displays the distribution of *SESIR*-related disciplinary actions by gender.

Figure 2.3.4: Disciplinary Actions by Gender 2006–07

As presented in Figure 2.3.4, a higher percentage of male students were subject to suspension and expulsion in the past year compared to female students for SESIR incidents. While the gap between females and males remained substantial at the middle school level, a smaller gap occurred in high and elementary school. For example, in middle school grades, slightly more than four percent of the females received out-of-school suspension compared to almost 10 percent of the males (a difference of six percent). At the high school level, the rates are just under four and one half percent and nearly eight percent respectively (a difference of four percent). A lower percentage of elementary school students received suspensions and expulsions compared to middle and high school students.

Collecting data for the suspension and expulsion rates is particularly important for meeting the federal UMIRS reporting requirements. Further analysis is required for identifying the number of suspensions and expulsions connected to SESIR incidents. Each year, the SDFS-QDM Project staff prepared an Incident and Resultant Disciplinary Action (IRDA) report which presented this information at the school level. At this time, this report continues to be available on the project's website:

<http://www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu/sdfs/reports-pubs-SESIR.php>.

2.3.3 Weapons Possession

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) mandates that each state receiving federal funds under ESEA must statutorily require local education agencies to expel (for at least one year) any student determined to have brought or possess a firearm on school grounds. Florida DOE reports the expulsions and alternative placements for this offense to the U.S. Department of Education through the Gun-Free Schools Report (data are collected via a

survey). The SESIR incident file contains weapons possession (WPO) as an incident type and a weapon-related field that describes whether a weapon was involved in the incident. In the 2006-07 school year, there were 4,219 weapon-related incidents and 2,762 weapons possession incidents. Table 2.3.3 presents a breakdown of these incidents by involvement type.

Table 2.3.3: Weapons possession and weapon-related incidents by the location of occurrence and involvement type 2006–07

		Students	Both Students and Non-Students	Non-students	Unknown
Weapon Related	School Grounds	2,891	82	58	1071
	School Sponsored Activity (off campus)	15	1	1	0
	School Sponsored Transportation	98	1	1	0
Weapons Possession	School Grounds	2623	5	26	2
	School Sponsored Activity (off campus)	14	0	0	0
	School Sponsored Transportation	90	1	1	0

As Table 2.3.3 shows, the majority of weapon-related and weapons possession incidents involve students and occur on school grounds. Of the 3,004 weapon-related incidents involving only students, 2,891 occurred on school grounds, 15 occurred during school-sponsored activities, and 98 occurred during school transportation. Similarly, for weapons possession incidents involving students, the figures are 2,623 incidents occurring on school grounds, 14 incidents occurring during school-sponsored activities, and 90 incidents occurring on school transportation (total of 3,503 weapons possession incidents). The involvement type was not identified for a portion of the weapon-related incidents (1,071) that occurred on school grounds.

While the breakdown of weapon-related incidents by location and involvement type is informative, the matching of these incidents to corresponding disciplinary actions is also important due to the aforementioned federal reporting requirements. Matching disciplinary actions for weapon-related and weapons possession incidents is presented in Table 2.3.4.

Table 2.3.4: Weapon Related and Weapon Possession Incidents 2006/07

	Weapons Possession		Weapon-Related	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Corporal Punishment	1	0%	1	0%
Expulsion w/o Services	127	4%	132	3%
Expulsion w Services	135	4%	141	3%
Extended Suspension	28	1%	32	1%
In-School Suspension	84	3%	89	2%
Out-of-School Suspension	1931	64%	2376	50%
Alternative Placement	376	13%	415	9%
Other SESIR defined	121	4%	659	14%
Alternative Placement(ESE)	12	0%	12	0%
No Match	192	6%	875	18%
Total	3007	100%	4732	100%

As Table 2.3.4 indicates, the vast majority of weapons possession incidents were matched with out-of-school suspension disciplinary actions (1,931 out of 3007 or 64 percent) followed by alternative placement (13 percent). About eight percent of the weapons possessions were matched with the disciplinary action of expulsion (with and without educational services) and six percent (192 out of 3,007) of these incidents did not have a corresponding disciplinary action reported in the 2006–07 SESIR data. A similar picture emerges for weapon-related incidents where 50 percent of the incidents (2,376 out of 4,732) were matched with out-of-school suspensions and another nine percent were matched to alternative placements. Expulsions correspond with six percent of the weapons-related incidents. The non-match percent for weapon-related incidents is 18 percent, compared to the lower non-match percent for weapons possession (six percent).

Table 2.3.5 presents the resulting disciplinary actions that match to firearms incidents as reported in the SESIR system.

Table 2.3.5: Firearms Incidents and Disciplinary Actions

	Other Firearm	Handgun	Rifle or Shotgun	Total
Corporal Punishment	0	0	0	0
Expulsion w/o Services	3	12	3	18
Expulsion w Services	0	6	1	7
Extended Suspension	2	2	1	5
In-School Suspension	4	0	0	4
Out-of-School Suspension	22	52	7	81
Alternative Placement	16	19	0	35
Other SESIR defined	9	7	0	16
Alternative Placement(ESE)	0	0	0	0
No Match	29	2	0	31
Total	85	100	12	197

A majority of incidents within each firearm category resulted in out-of-school suspensions, as demonstrated in the frequencies for SESIR incidents that resulted in out-of-school suspensions: 22 out of 85 for “other firearm,” 52 out of 100 for “handgun,” and 7 of 25 for “rifle or shotgun.” Three expulsions and 16 alternative placements were reported as a result of “bringing other firearms to school” or “possessing firearms on school grounds.” Similarly, the figures are 18 and 19, respectively, for “handgun” incidents. Across the three weapon types, 31 incidents did not have a resulting disciplinary action reported. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, this match rate indicates the need to more closely examine the process for updating initial disciplinary actions (to expulsion) subsequent to the school board (disciplinary committee) making an official determination. It is possible, that this may be one of the factors affecting the low match rate of firearms incidents to expulsions. Further investigation of this data is required in order to identify possible explanations and solutions that address the lack of resulting disciplinary actions following the occurrence of weapon-related incidents.

2.3.4 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment was introduced as a SESIR incident type effective in the 2006–07 school year. In addition, a related element (bullying-related) was added to the SESIR system to capture bullying activity in more complex incidents. For the purpose of SESIR data collection, bullying is defined as: “unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing acts, by an adult or student that are severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment, to cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation.”

During the first year of reporting these data elements, bullying incidents were not reported by all school districts. In addition, the reliability of this measure is questionable given the large variance across districts which reported this incident type. Table 2.3.6 provides the number of bullying incidents for the 38 school districts (out of 67) that reported bullying incidents for the 2006–07 school year.

Table 2.3.6

District	Population	Total # BHA Incidents	Per Thousand Rate
Okeechobee	7,598	109	14.35
Palm Beach	180,639	1,728	9.57
Leon	33,049	136	4.12
Broward	279,506	924	3.31
Sumter	8,416	25	2.97
Orange	176,702	505	2.86
Volusia	70,817	202	2.85
Washington	3,957	11	2.78
St. Lucie	39,661	103	2.60
Highlands	13,825	24	1.74
Collier	47,219	78	1.65
Hillsborough	204,384	226	1.11
Brevard	77,405	79	1.02
Wakulla	5,027	4	0.80
Duval	2,517	2	0.79
Flagler	12,056	8	0.66
Desoto	5,201	3	0.58
Nassau	10,585	6	0.57
Indian River	18,235	10	0.55
Clay	38,396	19	0.49
Bay	28,240	13	0.46
Pasco	64,929	28	0.43
St. Johns	28,248	12	0.42
Monroe	9,512	3	0.32
Putnam	13,238	3	0.23
Polk	97,715	22	0.23
Marion	44,470	10	0.22

District	Population	Total # BHA Incidents	Per Thousand Rate
Santa Rosa	26,695	6	0.22
Sarasota	41,752	9	0.22
Charlotte	18,846	4	0.21
Escambia	45,284	9	0.20
Citrus	17,091	3	0.18
Hendry	8,509	1	0.12
Martin	18,134	2	0.11
Okaloosa	32,617	3	0.09
Hernando	24,374	2	0.08
Seminole	70,523	3	0.04
Pinellas	112,917	2	0.02
State Totals	1,938,289	4,337	2.24

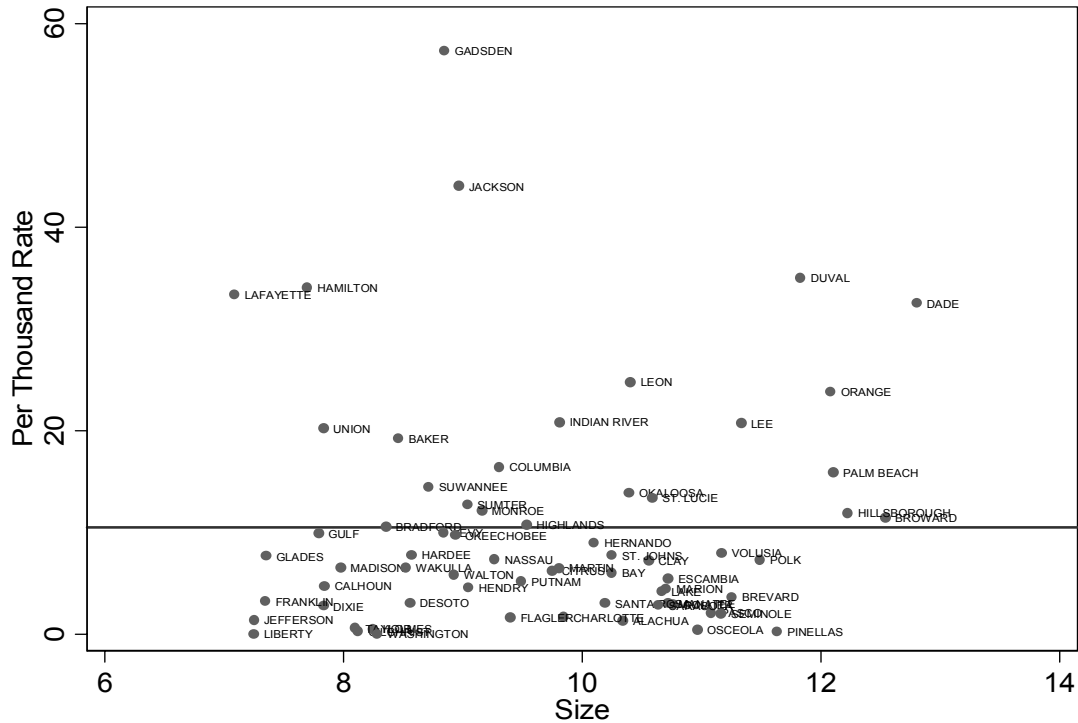
As shown in Table 2.3.6, 38 districts reported 4,337 bullying incidents for the 2006–07 school year. There were 2.24 bullying incidents per one-thousand students in these districts. Okeechobee reported 14.35 incidents per one-thousand students (109 bullying incidents for 7,598 students) followed by Palm Beach with a rate of 9.57 (1728 incidents for 180,639 students). There were seven districts with bullying rates between 2.60 and 4.12 (Leon, Broward, Sumter, Orange, Volusia, Washington, St. Lucie) and another four districts with rates less than two per one-thousand students (Highlands, Collier, Hillsborough, Brevard). The remaining 25 districts reported less than one incident in one thousand students and among these are some relatively large districts, including Pinellas, Polk, Seminole, and Pasco. As previously noted, during the initial year of reporting, only 38 districts reported bullying incidents. In addition, a substantial amount of variance and a disproportionate rate in comparison to the student population is observed among these districts. Additional time needs to be allowed in order for all districts to accurately report bullying incidents.

2.4 SESIR Rates by District

The SESIR Statewide Annual Report provides incident rates and resultant disciplinary actions for the State of Florida as well as each of the 67 school districts. While the information in this report summarizes overall SESIR trends, it does not provide a comparative assessment of school districts. Florida districts differ greatly by population, demographics, economic activities, and the number of schools. A comparative analysis of school district SESIR rates expands the assessment of school safety throughout Florida.

The fighting category is the most frequently reported incident type across Florida's 67 school districts. Figure 2.4.1 presents the distribution of fighting rates for all school districts.

Figure 2.4.1: Rates for Fighting by District



Note: X axis represents the log of districts' student population. The natural logarithm is used to enhance the visual representation.

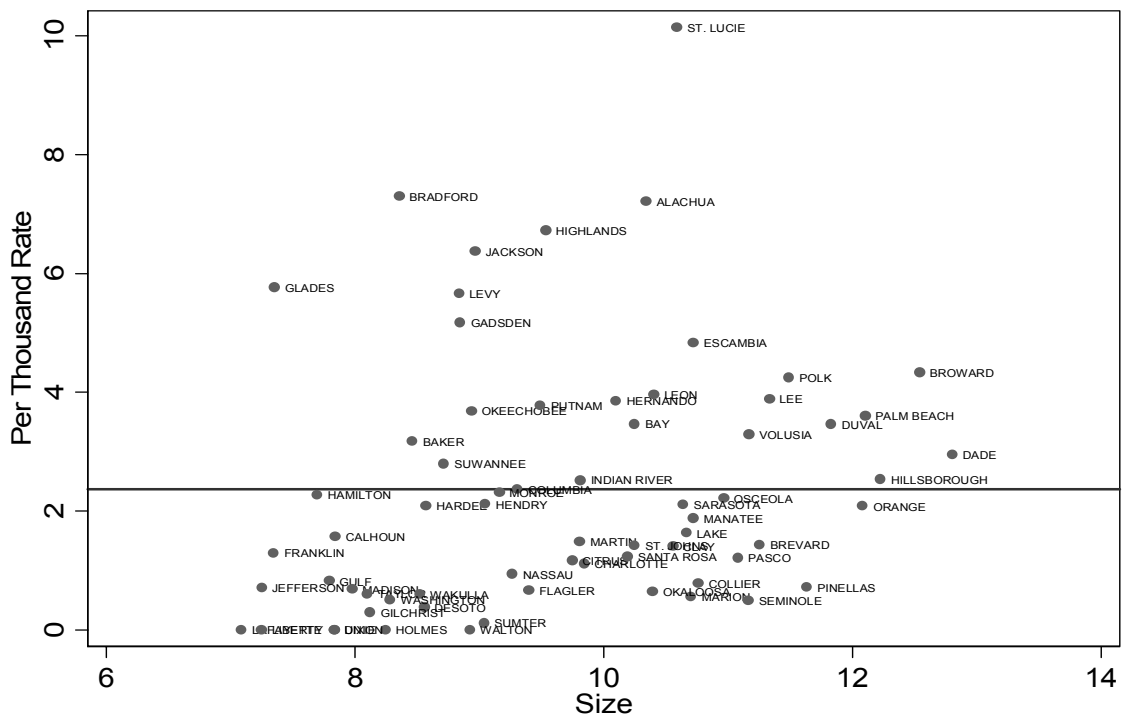
The horizontal line in Figure 2.4.1 represents the state mean fighting rate (10.52). As Figure 3.4.1 shows, some smaller school districts report somewhat higher rates of fighting incidents compared to larger districts. For example, Jackson and Gadsden school districts reported more than 40 fights per one-thousand students. Other smaller districts such as Lafayette, Union, Hamilton, and Baker report fighting rates above the state mean rate as well. Of the larger school districts, Dade, Duval, Orange, Lee, Palm Beach, and Hillsborough reported fighting rates above the mean rate. Pinellas, a large district, reported approximately one incident per thousand students. Among the mid-sized school districts, Leon has the highest fighting rate followed by Indian River. A majority of the school districts reported fighting rates that remain below the mean fighting rate.

Historically, fighting has been an incident type identified with a number of accuracy issues. For instance, some districts did not have a fight classification (local code) that ranked lower (less serious) than a SESIR-level "fight;" therefore, all fighting incidents were reported as SESIR fighting incidents. Additionally, training and technical

assistance efforts have revealed some inconsistencies with interpreting situations as SESIR fights (e.g., altercations where a punch is thrown have been miscoded as SESIR fights somewhat frequently in the past).

Another incident type with relatively higher incident rates is battery. The SESIR system defines battery as the “physical use of force or violence by an individual against another.” This differs from “fighting,” in that an incident qualifies as battery only when the force or violence is carried out against a person who is *not* fighting back. Figure 2.4.2 is a scatter plot illustrating the reported battery rates for all school districts. Again, the horizontal line represents the state mean rate (2.36) for this incident type.

Figure 2.4.2: Rates for Battery by District

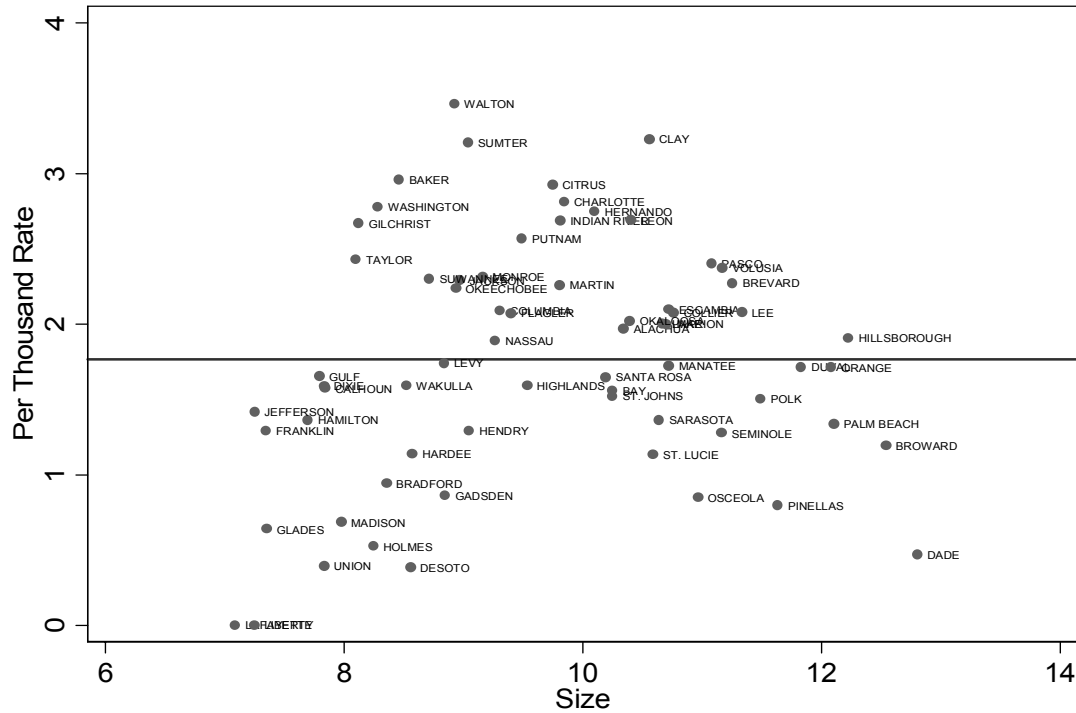


Note: X axis represents the log of districts' student population. The natural logarithm is used to enhance the visual representation.

Five school districts (St. Lucie, Bradford, Alachua, Highlands, and Jackson) reported more than 6 batteries per one-thousand students in their schools. Another group of school districts including Glades, Levy, Glades, Gadsden, Escambia, Broward, and Polk have a battery rate above 4 incidents per one-thousand students, while Hernando, Leon, Lee, Putnam, Palm Beach, and Okeechobee form a third cluster of school districts with about 4 fights per one-thousand students. Overall, 24 school districts reported battery rates above the 2.26 state mean rate. It should be noted that the definition of battery in the SESIR system differs from battery as defined in Florida's criminal code.

districts. Similar caveats should be kept in mind when evaluating the comparative distribution of the school districts for SESIR drug-related use incidents. The reported rates for drug use incidents are displayed below in figure 2.4.4.

Figure 2.4.4: Rates for Drug Use by District



Note: X axis represents the log of districts' student population. The natural logarithm is used to enhance the visual representation.

In Figure 2.4.4, the horizontal line represents the state mean rate for drug use incidents (1.77) across. Similar to the distribution of alcohol incidents (Figure 3.4.3), most of the largest districts are located below the state mean. However, a few larger districts including Volusia, Brevard, and Pasco have more than two students involved in drug use per one-thousand students (above the state mean rate). Walton, Sumter, and Clay school districts reported drug use rates above three per thousand students. Florida's largest school district, Dade, reported that less than one student in one thousand was involved in a SESIR-related drug use incident in the 2006–07 school year. Other school districts with low rates of drug use incidents are Liberty, Lafayette, Desoto, Holmes, Union, Glades, Madison, Union, Pinellas, Gadsden, Osceola, and Bradford.

This section provided a comparative assessment of districts with respect to the SESIR incident rates. Overall, no single pattern emerges to differentiate the districts by SESIR rates. Nonetheless, the scatter plots presented in this section provide a useful tool for identifying districts for technical assistance and training. Similar scatter plots for other SESIR incident elements are presented in Appendix B.

2.5 Summary and Discussion

This chapter presented a detailed description of SESIR data collection system developed by the Florida DOE to measure and report on the incidence of crime, violence, and disruption in Florida's public schools. The chapter also introduced recent changes to the SESIR data collection system, such as the addition of bullying and bullying-related elements. In addition, the chapter provided a descriptive analysis of SESIR incident and discipline rates at the state and district levels.

Three important topics were addressed in this chapter. The first topic discussed was the statewide rates for SESIR incidents for the 2006–07 school year. Fighting was the most frequently reported incident type (14.23 per thousand rate), followed by battery (2.84), tobacco (2.07), and threat/intimidation (2.06). Most incident types were reported to have less than one occurrence per thousand students. Overall, a ten-point drop was observed in the total rates of SESIR incidents in Florida from 2003–04 to 2006–07; however, a significant portion of this drop may be associated with the decline in the reported SESIR fights. Nonetheless, it appears that the three-year trend in the state rate suggests improved data quality and accuracy across schools. The number of schools reporting no SESIR incidents increased from 467 in the 2003–04 school year to 634 in 2004–05, to 676 in 2005–06 and dropped slightly to 669 schools in 2006–07. Improved data quality and accuracy is essential for planning and prevention efforts targeted to create safer schools. Trend data appears to suggest that Florida's schools are providing safer environments

The second area addressed was disciplinary actions that were administered in Florida schools. The analysis presented in this chapter showed that “in-school suspension” was the most frequently administered discipline action among all types of discipline actions (51 percent of all actions). However, when only disciplinary actions for SESIR-related incidents were considered, “out-of-school suspension” accounted for the vast majority of disciplinary actions (74 percent of all SESIR-related disciplinary actions). Similarly, expulsions constituted a higher percentage of SESIR-related disciplinary actions compared to all disciplinary actions administered in 2006–07. Furthermore, since male students have a higher percentage of involvement in SESIR incidents, disciplinary actions are reflective of this fact and more disciplinary actions were administered for males than females. And, when only suspensions and expulsions are considered, the gap between male and female students increases at the high school level compared to elementary and middle schools.

The third area addressed in this chapter was an examination in the variation between districts in the reports SESIR incident rates per one-thousand students. The analysis demonstrated that no single pattern emerged across districts with regards to SESIR incident rates. Small school districts had more outliers for fighting, alcohol, and drug use, while an even distribution of SESIR rates across districts emerged for battery and fighting. Overall, the district rates for various incident categories proved to be a useful tool for assessing the seriousness of incidents, the detection of possible data errors, and the identification of areas for technical assistance or system reviews.

A detailed analysis of weapons possession was also provided. Federal legislation requires that each state that receives federal ESEA funds have a law mandating that local education agencies expel any student found to have brought or possessed firearms on school grounds. The project's analysis showed that not all firearms incidents were disciplined by expulsion. In part, this may be due to the mitigation of circumstances surrounding firearm incidents as well as the process for updating the system with the expulsion disciplinary action code. In addition, the "other firearm" incidents category may be reported at unusually elevated levels given the definition of weapons classified under this category. Additional assessment is necessary to address this issue, but it may suggest the need for additional training with regards to the interpretation of this definition and the federal requirements.

Finally, districts reported bullying as a new SESIR incident type for the first time in the 2006–07 school year. Only 38 districts reported bullying and a large variance was observed across districts in the reported levels of bullying incidents. The results indicate the need for further training and clarification about this element as well as more time for complete implementation by all districts.

CHAPTER 3

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY INCIDENT REPORTING (SESIR) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

3.1 Introduction

The SDFS-QDM Project staff engaged in a number of activities during the three year duration of the project to achieve objectives related to the improvement of SESIR data quality. One of the primary methods for improving data quality was to increase the overall knowledge of SESIR incident and discipline data definitions held by SDFS coordinators, school resource officers, management information system personnel, and district data entry personnel. This chapter provides an overview of the activities performed to achieve this objective in the first two years of the project; describes how these activities continued and expanded in year three of the project; and provides a summary of findings and recommendations for the continuation of SESIR training and technical assistance activities once the monitoring of SESIR data is turned over to the Florida DOE's Office of Safe Schools.

3.2 Year 1 Activities

The major training objectives in year 1 of the project were: (1) to identify the extent to which school districts rely on SESIR data; and (2) to ascertain possible barriers that impede the accurate reporting of SESIR incident and discipline data. Year 1 training activities are described in the following section.

3.2.1 Site Visits and Conferences

Year 1 project activities included district-initiated SESIR training and technical assistance site visits. The purpose of these site visits was to review district SESIR incident and discipline data with district administrators, address possible data reporting inaccuracies, and provide strategies for the improvement of the quality and accuracy of SESIR data reporting. During the first year of the project, four school districts requested training and technical assistance site visits: Escambia, Okeechobee, Indian River, and Monroe counties. In addition to these district site visits, project staff conducted three "Blending Perspectives" conferences during year one. These conferences provided: (1) school resource officers (SROs) information about the value of SESIR reporting for districts, (2) clarification about SROs' role in helping to improve the accuracy of reporting, and (3) strategies for SROs and school administrators to improve reporting accuracy.

3.2.2 Survey of Data Needs

In addition to district site visits and conducting “Blending Perspectives” conferences, a survey of SDFS district coordinators was administered in the spring of 2006. The purposes of the survey were to: (1) assess the data needs of school districts across the state, (2) establish the extent to which school districts rely on SESIR incident and discipline data to evaluate student behavior and assess the effectiveness of programming, and (3) obtain information on the satisfaction with previous DOE delivery methods of training for SESIR incident definitions and discipline data. The findings from the survey guided the training and technical assistance activities of the project for the second and third years, and established a series of objectives for the project. The SDFS coordinators’ needs assessment survey indicated:

- 1) The data that is most useful for assessing student needs and the effectiveness of program evaluation is SESIR data at the school level.
- 2) Barriers to accurate SESIR data reporting include: difficulty with consistently and accurately interpreting whether student behavior meets SESIR definitions, ambiguous or unclear incident definitions on district referral forms, and the absences of regular training of school personnel (including administrators) on SESIR definitions to address personnel turnover.
- 3) Coordinators requested train-the-trainer instruction to deliver district level training on SESIR incident reporting.

3.3 Year 2 Activities

Following the results of the needs assessment survey in the spring of 2006, project staff engaged in a series of activities during 2006-07 to address the needs expressed by SDFS coordinators. Activities included the creation and dissemination of school-level data reports, the development and launch of a web-based SESIR training module, and the hosting of SESIR Train-the-Trainer workshops for SDFS district coordinators and other district staff. Year two activities also included the continuation of district-requested training and technical assistance site reviews. Further, project staff initiated and conducted a number of SESIR software system reviews with districts whose data reporting appeared inconsistent. These activities are described in greater detail in the following section.

3.3.1 School-Level SESIR Data Reports

In response to the request by SDFS coordinators to make school-level SESIR data more accessible, district specific SESIR data quality profiles were developed in the spring of 2007 and disseminated in July 2007. The district profiles included information on district trends for SESIR rates by incident type, matching disciplinary actions, and data reporting anomalies by individual schools within each district. The information in these profiles assisted the appropriate targeting of resources for improving SESIR data quality at the school level. Project staff also continued the generation and dissemination of the SESIR Incidents and Resultant Disciplinary Actions (IRDA) report in year two. This report provided disaggregated school-level SESIR data for each district by incident type. The

IRDA report also provided the corresponding count of disciplinary actions for SESIR incident types.

3.3.2 Web-Based SESIR Training Module

While on-site training activities continued into 2006-07, the primary training focus shifted to the design and development of a comprehensive web-based SESIR training module that would be utilized by all district or school personnel. The training module augments efforts to standardize the interpretation of SESIR incident definitions by providing hypothetical incident scenarios in which users must interpret whether or not the incident qualifies as a SESIR incident and, if so, complete a standardized referral form with information pertinent to the incident. The desired long-term impact of the training module is improvement in the quality of SESIR data to inform needs assessments and prevention programming. The 2006–07 SDFS-QDM Annual Report provides descriptive information about the development and pilot testing of the SESIR web-based training module.

3.3.3 Student Discipline Referral Form

Florida school districts are provided autonomy in developing disciplinary policies and practices. An example of this autonomy is the disciplinary referral form. Districts utilize their own form and, in fact, the form may vary among schools within a district. The absence of a standardized student discipline referral form is another factor that contributes to the possibility of data error. Data entry error results when the form does not include all of the information that a data entry clerk requires for accurate SESIR reporting. Findings from reviews of student discipline referral forms indicated that there is variability in forms and that incomplete discipline referral forms, in and of themselves, may account for a substantial amount of error in data reporting.

To address this critical training need, the SESIR online training module incorporated a one-page “Event and Discipline Referral form” developed by the SDFS-QDM Project which includes all of the required fields for SESIR incident and discipline reporting. Ensuring accuracy when completing this form became an integral part of the coding practice for each scenario within the online training module. Some districts requested an electronic copy of the project’s Student Discipline Referral Form to incorporate into their process. Other districts expressed an interest in combining the features of the form into their referral form currently in use.

3.3.4 Train-the-Trainer Workshops

To provide the desired delivery method of SESIR training as indicated by the SDFS coordinators in the survey, two-day regional training workshops on the use and monitoring of the SESIR web-based training module were hosted by the project. The first workshop was held July 18–19, 2007, in Boca Raton at the Safe Schools Institute with 23 attendees representing 14 districts. The second workshop was held in Tallahassee, September 6–7, 2007 with 25 attendees representing 17 districts. Forty-six percent of the school districts participated in these two workshops. For more information on these Train-the-Trainer workshops, refer to the 2006–07 SDFS-QDM Annual Report.

3.3.5 Print Media Dissemination

As a supplement to on-site training and technical assistance, posters that display SESIR definitions and key reporting guidelines were updated to include revisions for the 2006–07 school year. SESIR posters were disseminated to each district in November 2007. A sufficient number of posters were provided to districts to ensure that each school would receive at least one poster. The poster serves as a job-aid to assist administrators in interpreting student behaviors and determining if whether or not incidents meet SESIR definitions.

3.3.6 District-Requested Training and Technical Assistance

Jefferson County was the only district requesting an on-site training for administrators during 2006–07. To address the district's request, a three-hour training session was conducted by the SDFS-QDM Project in March 2007. The project provided technical assistance to other districts by telephone and electronic mail to address the appropriate coding of incidents and questions pertaining to appropriate disciplinary actions for incidents with mitigating circumstances.

3.3.7 SESIR Software System Reviews

Utilizing data provided in the 2005–06 Annual Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline, several school districts were identified as having potential software system issues due to the presence of: (1) higher than average percentages of non-matching SESIR incidents and disciplinary actions, and/or (2) SESIR incident rates that exceeded state mean incidents rates by more than 200%. To address these possible areas of concern, project staff conducted three additional software review site visits in Polk, Orange, and Dade county school districts. Each review included a discussion of SESIR data with district administrators and MIS personnel, a review of the software system menus used to record SESIR incident information, and recommendations for improving SESIR data reporting. Administrators in each district indicated that the information provided was very useful and agreed that the recommended changes to the software systems and data collection processes were needed. The 2006–07 SDFS-QDM Annual Report provides a detailed description of these software system review site visits.

3.4 Year Three Activities

Training and technical assistance activities continued throughout the third year of the project. These activities included additional SESIR Online Train-the-Trainer workshops, SESIR software system review site visits, and the updating and dissemination of school-level data reports (district profiles). These activities are described in detail in the following section. This chapter concludes with a discussion of findings and recommendations to facilitate the continuation of SESIR training and technical assistance activities when Florida DOE assumes responsibilities for SESIR data reporting.

3.4.1 School-Level SESIR Data Reports

In the project's third year, the Incidents and Resultant Disciplinary Actions (IRDA) report and the district specific SESIR data quality profiles were updated and made more accessible. Specifically, the 2006–07 IRDA report was made available online so that school district personnel could easily access SESIR incident and discipline data by

district and by school. Also, the district specific SESIR data quality reports (district profiles) were updated and disseminated to SDFS coordinators in late July 2008. A CD containing the data quality reports and the methodology used to develop the reports was provided to DOE to facilitate the continued updating and disseminating of the district profiles. A sample district profile report may be viewed in Appendix C.

3.4.2 Train-the-Trainer Workshops

Two additional Train-the-Trainer workshops for the web-based SESIR training module were held during the final year of the project. The first workshop was held January 30–31, 2008 in Boca Raton at the Safe Schools Institute with 21 attendees representing 13 districts. The second workshop was held in Tallahassee, March 25–26, 2008, with 21 attendees representing 13 districts. Between the four regional Train-the-Trainer workshops hosted in years two and three, 56 of the 67 school districts were represented by at least one staff and many districts sent multiple staff to attend the workshops.

3.4.3 Web-Based SESIR Training Module

The SESIR Online web-based training module developed and made available in year two was well received by SDFS coordinators, MIS personnel, and school resource officers. Feedback provided by workshop attendees and users of the training module indicated that it was both useful and informative. Users also indicated that easy access to the module via the Internet made it a preferred tool to former training methods. By July 2008, more than 3,300 school and district personnel were registered to use the training module, and more than 1,500 of these registered users had completed the entire training module. Forty-two of the 67 school districts had at least one district representative complete the training, 17 had more than 10 users complete the training, and several of the larger school districts had more than 200 users complete the training.

3.4.4 SESIR Software System Reviews

The project continued to identify districts with uncharacteristic data reporting and provided software system review site visits in the final year. The project made conducted software system reviews in Leon and Pinellas county schools districts. In addition, the methodology developed by the SDFS-QDM staff to identify districts and conduct the software system reviews was provided to DOE to facilitate the continuation of such reviews in the future. Summaries of site reviews conducted in Leon and Pinellas counties are presented.

System Review: Leon County

A review of Leon County's software system GENESIS was conducted by SDFS-QDM project staff in March 2008, with the Director of Information Services and other district personnel. The process consisted of a review of software system features to identify the presence or absence of features that may inhibit accurate SESIR and discipline reporting or allow incomplete information to be reported. Menus were reviewed for comprehensiveness of reporting requirements and functionality was checked to verify the presence of necessary forced fields that lead to the completion of essential data by users. The district was provided findings that identified areas for improvement that would lead to increased accuracy of SESIR and discipline reporting.

Nineteen percent of the SESIR incidents reported by Leon County for the 2006–07 school year had no matching disciplinary actions. Although several factors may contribute to this problem, one factor that was identified within the GENESIS software system was the ability of the user to put a non-SESIR appropriate disciplinary action, such as detention or parent call, for a SESIR incident. Another finding that may also contribute to the problem of the high number of disciplinary actions that do not match SESIR incidents was that the software program allowed a user to save a report when a disciplinary action was not selected. As such, a user who is interrupted may save a report, go on to the next incident, and miss reporting any disciplinary action.

Two menus within the GENESIS system were found to be incomplete: (1) The disciplinary actions did not include an “S” code “Other SESIR Defined”. This code is important because it allows schools to select a disciplinary action for SESIR incidents that does not require suspension. The “S” code was created to give schools an option for a disciplinary action that does not force the suspension of a student. Such actions may include such activities as attendance in substance prevention or cessation, counseling programs, Saturday School, and community service. The “S” code would be particularly applicable for a tobacco incident, or an incident involving age or developmental-age mitigating circumstances for a disciplinary action. (2) The weapon description menu was incomplete for firearms. The only choice for a firearm incident was “F” “Firearm, Other” which refers to incendiaries, grenades, or bombs. The “R” code for rifle or shotgun, and the “H” code for handgun were not choices. Their software system forced the user to report all types of firearms under the “Firearm, Other” category.

Leon County’s fighting rate per 1,000 students (24.8) is almost two times the state mean rate (14). During the review, it was found that the system did not contain a local code for fighting (a fight that is less serious than a SESIR fight). In the absence of a local code for fighting to allow users to designate an altercation between two students that does not meet the SESIR “fight” definition likely resulted in an over reporting of SESIR fights. Also, it was found that the system did not have local codes for incidents that do not meet the SESIR threshold for vandalism (\$1,000) or theft (\$300); therefore all vandalisms and thefts were coded as SESIR incidents resulting in over reporting in these areas. Additionally, only 4 percent of the SESIR incidents *expected to be reported to law enforcement* in Leon County were reported to law enforcement according to district reporting. This problem may be a training issue, but may also be attributed to the lack of a forced field for this element so users would be prevented from saving the report until that field is completed (to prevent missing data).

System Review: Pinellas County

A review of Pinellas County’s software system was conducted by the SDFS-QDM Project in May 2008. The SDFS Coordinator and other district personnel participated in the review. The main impetus for requesting a review of the Pinellas County School District’s SESIR data reporting system was the lower than average number of SESIR incidents being reported, particularly incidents of fighting, alcohol, and substance use. A step-by-step walk through of the SASI software system being used by the Pinellas County School District indicated a number of potential explanations for the lower than

average reporting rates. Upon reviewing the system, it was found that incidents would be reported to the state (as a SESIR incident) only if the data entry person navigated through a two-step process involving entering incident data into two menus: (1) a form that collects incident data and was retained for internal district reporting purposes, and (2) a second form that was used to report incidents that qualify as SESIR incidents. There are no prompts that alert data entry personnel to proceed to the second menu, the state-reportable menu, to enter data for SESIR incidents, a number of incidents that should have been reported to the state were most likely omitted.

An additional issue raised during the site visit was the percentage of SESIR incidents that had matching SESIR-appropriate disciplinary actions. Specifically, of the 364 student-involved SESIR incidents (2006-07 school year) reported by Pinellas County, 88 did not have a corresponding disciplinary action. It was noted that the menu that listed the possible disciplinary actions was not SESIR-specific. Therefore, disciplinary action codes (such as Saturday school) that do not conform to state SESIR disciplinary action codes may have been reported with SESIR incidents. In such instances, the disciplinary action code would not match the state-defined SESIR disciplinary action codes and, therefore, the SESIR incident would not have a disciplinary action. The lack of SESIR-specific disciplinary codes may account for a portion of Pinellas County's SESIR incidents that do not have matching disciplinary action data.

In reviewing the software system, additional areas for improvement were considered. First, the SASI system utilized in the district did not include a BHA (Bullying/Harassment) incident category. This incident type was added to the SESIR system last year and will be given more importance in the near future due to the recent passage of bullying legislation by the Florida Legislature that will require the reporting of incidents of bullying. This incident category should be added to Pinellas County's software system. District personnel indicated that this change was already underway. Second, the "related elements" fields in the SASI system used by Pinellas County were not "forced fields" which allows data entry personnel to save an incident report without having to address the related elements fields. Amending the software program to require the related elements fields to be "must complete field" would help to increase the accuracy of the SESIR data and provide more detailed information concerning the context in which an incident occurs. Third, the software system did not include a mechanism for users to distinguish whether an act of vandalism or theft resulted in a monetary loss in an amount sufficient to require the incident to be reported to the state (as a SESIR incident). As such, all incidents of theft and vandalism could potentially be reported to the state even though incidents should be reported only if the vandalism resulted in more than \$1000 damage and/or a theft resulted in a loss of more than \$300.

A review of the district's referral forms revealed additional recommendations to increase standardization and improve data accuracy. Specifically, each school within the district is afforded the discretion to design and use their own referral form for incidents. Examination of a sample of the referral forms showed quite a bit of variation between forms. Of greatest concern was the fact that the referral forms reviewed did not have a field or check box indicating that the incident was a SESIR incident and, therefore, was

required to be reported to the state. Data entry personnel may not be aware that the incident information needs to be entered into the state-reportable menu, which may lead to data reporting inaccuracies.

3.5 Indicators of Data Quality Improvement

Although it cannot be determined with certainty that improvements in SESIR data quality over the last three years are entirely attributable to training and technical assistance activities on the part of this project, several observable improvements have been noted. The publication of SESIR data reports for one particular school year are not made available until the middle or late part of the following school year; therefore, training efforts to improve data quality may not be evident until the following academic year. For example, the 2008–09 SESIR data reports will be published in 2010.

- From the 2004–05 to the 2006–07 school year, 32 school districts (48 percent) showed improvement in the percentage of SESIR incidents having matching disciplinary actions. Of these districts, seven had percentage improvements that were greater than 5.0 percent.
- Polk County, which had a software site review conducted in January, 2007, showed an improvement in the percentage of SESIR incidents with matching disciplinary actions from 82.6 percent in 2004–05 to 98.6 percent in 2006–07.
- Monroe County, which requested district training on SESIR data reporting in April, 2006, showed an improvement in the percentage of SESIR incidents with matching disciplinary actions from 85.8 percent in 2004–05 to 93.9 percent in 2006–07.
- In 2004–05, 52 of the 67 school districts had better than 95.0 percent of their SESIR incidents matched to disciplinary actions. For the 2006–07 school year, 55 of the 67 districts had better than 95.0 percent of their SESIR incidents matched to disciplinary actions.
- The total number of SESIR fights reported to the state decreased by 15 percent between 2004–05 and 2006–07. Assuming that aggregate levels of actual student behavior do not change significantly from year to year, the decrease in the number of reported SESIR fights suggests that administrators across the state have either improved their knowledge of SESIR fighting definitions relative to local-level non-SESIR fights, and/or that school districts have built into their software systems the capacity to distinguish between SESIR and local-level non-SESIR fights.
- The total number of SESIR disruption on campus (DOC) incidents decreased by 39 percent between 2004–05 and 2006–07. The DOC incident category has been one of the most misinterpreted SESIR incident categories as a result of the definitional change from disorderly conduct that occurred in 2001–02. Project staff strongly emphasized this definition shift in various trainings and workshops

over the course of the project. The decrease in the number of reported DOC incidents suggests that these efforts resulted in increased accuracy in the interpretation of disruptive student behavior.

3.6 Findings and Recommendations

Although the SESIR system has been nationally recognized as a model for school safety and discipline incident reporting⁵, the accurate interpretation of student behavior and the subsequent reporting of behavior must be continually assessed and refined to maximize the utility of SESIR data (for LEAs). Over the three-year duration of the SDFS-QDM Project, staff members had the opportunity to observe the various processes involved in the interpretation and reporting of SESIR data. These observations included on-site software system reviews; SESIR data training workshops; examination of various SESIR data reports; and extensive discussions with SDFS coordinators, MIS personnel, school resource officers, and other state and local administrators who play a role in reporting SESIR data.

Observations suggest that the overall awareness of the importance of SESIR data quality was raised as a result of project activities. However, barriers to accurate reporting continue to exist. First, although several school districts rely on SESIR data to assess student needs and to make programmatic decisions, discussions with district representatives indicates that many school districts do not fully utilize SESIR data reports. The level of commitment to improving SESIR data may reflect the degree to which districts rely on it for program and funding decisions. Comprehensive and complete reporting across all districts is important because the state mean rates for incidents are impacted by data quality issues. Districts that currently utilize SESIR reports to compare their district SESIR rates to the state mean rates may not be getting the most accurate comparison. The importance of complete and accurate SESIR data reporting by each school district should continue to be emphasized.

Second, the autonomy afforded to school districts, while beneficial in several regards, has resulted in the use of several different software systems for data collection and many versions of discipline referral forms. These two variables may hinder efforts to have standardized and uniform data reporting procedures. Not only do the software systems used by school districts across the state differ, but in many instances individual schools *within* districts have their own customized discipline referral form, further exacerbating the potential for inconsistent reporting within and between school districts. Several school districts indicated that they will adopt or incorporate the standardized event and discipline referral form used in the SESIR online training module. Such transitions are a positive indication of creating greater standardization between districts. However, for the foreseeable future, there will be multiple software systems and multiple versions of reporting forms that will challenge the effort to reduce reporting error.

⁵ US Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *Recommendation of the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Reporting Task Force*, NCE 97-581, prepared by the National Education Statistics Agenda Committee: 1996.

Third, while district SDFS coordinators and other administrators may be aware of the importance of accurate SESIR data reporting, there appears to be few consequences in place for reporting inaccurate or incomplete SESIR data. Legislation passed during the 2008 Legislative Session not only requires bullying data to be reported to the state, it attempts to hold districts accountable for data reporting by tying it to SDFS funding. Increased accountability for accurate data reporting may lead to more reliable aggregate and local-level data to inform decision-making and program evaluation.

Fourth, given the length of time required to generate the Annual Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline, any data reporting issues identified and addressed, in most instances, will not be evident in the data until the end of the following school year. And any observable improvements in data quality may not be apparent until two full years after a problem is identified in the data.⁶ Generating and disseminating the Annual Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline during the early part of the school year (August or September) may create the opportunity to identify and correct problems prior to the end of the school year.

3.7 Summary and Discussion

This chapter provided an overview of SDFS-QDM Project activities related to the improvement of SESIR data quality. It began with a review of activities during years 1 and 2 which included a needs assessment survey, the development of a web-based SESIR training module, the hosting of regional Train-the-Trainer workshops, and a number of SESIR software system reviews. In the final year of the project, staff continued these activities by providing additional Train-the-Trainer workshops for the SESIR online training module, conducting additional SESIR software system review site visits, and updating and expanding school-level SESIR data reports (district profiles). At the conclusion of this project, a number of data quality improvements were observable. A discussion of these data quality improvements was provided as well as summary findings and recommendations related to SESIR data quality.

Effective and informed decision-making related to the monitoring, disciplining, and improvement of student behaviors depends upon the availability of reliable and valid data. The activities undertaken by the SDFS-QDM Project over the last three years have attempted to achieve this objective by making district personnel better informed about SESIR data quality and its importance.

⁶ The Annual Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline is usually made available in January or February. This would mean, for example, that the data for the 2007-08 school year is not made available until the middle of the 2008-09 school year. Any data quality issues identified in the 2007-08 report, then, might not be addressed until the end of 2008-09 data reporting year. As such, any training or data collection system changes would not be made evident in the data until the 2009-10 report is made available in January of 2011.

CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 Introduction

As part of the SDFS-QDM Project, staff worked with the Office of Drug Control (ODC) to develop and expand data reporting protocols to enhance the agency's ability to review and make informed decisions relating to grant funding for community-based organizations (CBOs). Specifically, the project worked with ODC to review grant applications and develop measures for CBOs to report quantitative information relating to program goals, objectives, baseline data, and outcome data. This effort included the development of data reporting fields to be amended into an existing electronic grant application system. Beginning with the 2006-07 grant cycle, CBOs included self-evaluation measures when completing the online grant application for prevention services grants. These changes made it possible for the project to provide ODC with a general statistical analysis of CBOs program data to facilitate their efforts to improve the evaluation of program effectiveness. Quantitative data reporting increases ODC's ability to make informed decisions to allocate limited, public fiscal resources to community entities. The ODC is able to make initial and continuation funding decisions based on performance and an organization's ability to meet desired goals and objectives.

As reported in previous annual reports, Florida's LEAs frequently rely on CBOs to administer in-school prevention programming. However, CBOs do not have a state or federal mandate to collect and report quantitative in-school incident and performance data at the student level. Please refer to the SDFS-QDM Project's two previous annual reports for additional information on data reporting guidelines for CBOs.

It is important to distinguish between collecting data on target populations and activities that are proposed in applications (planned) versus collecting "outcome" data on activities that have been implemented and delivered. The latter is the type of information that is suggested by federal data reporting requirements. The additional "outcome" data collected on CBOs provides increased accountability to funders (state and federal), stakeholders, and clients.

While the preceding introduction provides an overview of the prior years efforts with the ODC and CBOs, the remainder of the chapter focuses on the CBOs data that was reported in the last year of the project, which was also the initial year of the revised data collection system. Section 4.2 summarizes the new data collection system. Section 4.3 presents the comparative analysis of the performance and evaluation measures for the first six months of implementation compared with the end of year reports (12 months of operation). Section 4.4 provides a summary discussion of the increased capabilities of the new data collection system and the policy implications.

4.2 Data Reporting System for CBOs

Annually, the NCLB Act (2001) Title IV funds are distributed by U.S. DOE to the states for Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) programming. A portion of these funds are directed to each state's office of the chief executive.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is responsible for receiving grant proposals from prospective and continuing CBOs. Grant proposals are submitted electronically using FDLE's Subgrant Information Management Online System (SIMON), from which FDLE produces a PDF file of each application and forwards it to ODC for review and funding consideration.

The CBOs also submit a mid-year progress report called a "Self-Monitoring Tool." As a data collection instrument, the Self-Monitoring Tool provides program implementation information and the methods by which CBOs self-evaluate their progress. Specifically, the Self-Monitoring Tool is designed to:

- Ensure that the (1999 No Child Left Behind Act) Principles of Effectiveness are being addressed in the most effective ways,
- Assist Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program staff in providing the most effective technical assistance possible, and
- Assist grantees in continuing to monitor program effectiveness and redirect efforts as necessary to ensure the highest levels of program success.

In prior years, the data was collected in narrative form and there was not a systematic process to code responses for statistical analysis, or to aggregate or summarize performance measures. Moreover, the Self-Monitoring Tool did not require CBOs to report precisely when and where programming was provided, precluding the funding agency from assessing program efficacy by comparing specific CBOs programming to neighborhood- or school-level School Environment Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System data.

The Self-Monitoring Tool component of the SIMON online system is divided into five sections: 1) Program Overview, 2) Implementation, 3) Goals and Objectives, 4) Evaluation, and 5) Collaboration. Within each section are three to six items to which grantees respond in narrative format.

In order to streamline the Self-Monitoring Report process, allow for efficient quantitative coding of responses, and to expand the data elements to be collected, SDFS-QDM Project staff worked with ODC staff to develop performance measures.

As outlined in the 2006–07 SDFS-QDM Project Annual Report, the data elements in the online system include:

Program Overview

- The name of the program or programs being implemented
- A list of activities (past and current) associated with the program
- A list of activities (past and current) that involve parents and families

Implementation Schedule

- Program module/component length (4 weeks, 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 9 weeks, 12 weeks, or more than 12 weeks)
- The number of days per week that a program's services are offered (1 to 7 days)
- The session length (1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, or more than 3 hours)
- The various topic(s) of sessions (list includes alcohol, tobacco, bullying, parenting skills classes, marijuana, violence, and other)
- The presence of "special events"

Program Goals and Objectives

- Goals and objectives (selected from a standardized list of goals and objectives associated with exemplary and promising programs)
- Obstacles that have impeded a program's ability to meet stated goals and objectives (options include no obstacles, insufficient funding, lack of resources, lack of community support, and other)

Evaluation

- Evaluation methodology (program level evaluation using program-specific data and measures, community level evaluation using community-impact data and measures, or both program and community levels)
- Data sources used for evaluation
- Current status of implementation (developing, progressing, in transition, in revision, established, or successfully completed)
- Changes or improvements experienced by programs

Demographic Information

- Total number of youth served
- Distribution of youth across race/ethnicity categories
- Distribution of youth across gender categories
- Distribution of youth across age-group categories
- School enrollment status of the school-age youth served
- Additional individuals served by the program

4.3 Performance Assessment Results

In the final year of the project, the SDFS-QDM project staff analyzed the performance and evaluation measures of 44 programs from the mid-year and the end-of-year final report. Table 4.3.1 presents a list of the programs that submitted mid-year and final progress reports. Table 4.3.2 presents the distribution of the 44 CBOs across counties.

Table 4.3.1 CBOs Submitting Mid-Year and Final Progress Reports (Update)

• Beth Foundation, Inc.**	• Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance
• Boys and Girls Club of Indian River County	• Hiway Park Black Businessmen Association*
• Boys and Girls Club of Manatee	• Housing Authority of Key West
• Boys and Girls Club of Perry/Taylor County	• Informed Families/ The Florida Family Partnership
• Boys and Girls Clubs of Volusia/Flagler Counties	• Lake County Board of Commissioners
• Bridgeway Center Inc.**	• Lakeview Center, Incorporated
• Brownsville Community Development Corporation	• Manatee County Girls Club
• C.E. Mendez Foundation	• Operation PAR, Incorporated
• Center for Drug-Free Living, Inc.	• Open Theatre Inc.
• Center for Prevention Research	• Orange County Coalition for a Drug-Free Community
• Charlotte Alliance for a Safe and Drug-Free Community	• PACE Center for Girls – Broward
• Community Crusade Against Drugs	• Pace Center for Girls, Inc.
• Community Drug and Alcohol Council, Inc.**	• Putnam County Sheriff's Office
• COPE Center, Inc.*	• Redeemed, Inc.
• Council of Church Based Health Programs*	• Rivendell Academy
• Drug-Free Youth in Town	• Safe Climate Coalition
• Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating Office	• Shands Healthcare-Vista
• Drug Abuse Treatment Association, Inc.	• Starting Place, Inc.-Youth Opportunities
• EPIC Community Services, Inc.	• Sutton Place Behavioral Health Inc.
• EPIC Community Services, Inc.	• The Miami Coalition
• Family Resources, Inc.	• The School District of Manatee County
• Fellowship of Christian Athletes	• Turn About, Inc.
• Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention*	• Unity Family Center**
• Florida State University/Project Kick	• Youth Crime Watch of Florida
• Hernando County School Board	•

*Mid-year Report Only **Final Performance Report Only

Table 4.3.2 Programs by County

County	Mid-year Reports	Final Performance Reports
Alachua	1	1
Broward	2	2
Charlotte	1	1
Dade	7	7
Duval	1	2
Escambia	1	2
Gadsden	1	1
Hernando	1	1
Highlands	1	NA
Hillsborough	3	3
Indian River	1	1
Lake	3	3
Leon	5	3
Levy	NA	1
Manatee	3	3
Monroe	1	1
Nassau	1	1
Okaloosa	NA	1
Orange	1	1
Palm Beach	1	1
Pinellas	2	2
Putnam	1	1
Seminole	1	1
St. Johns	2	2
Taylor	1	1
Volusia	1	1
Walton	1	NA
Total	44	44

As Tables 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 indicate, 44 programs in 25 counties submitted six-month reports and final updates for quantitative performance measures. The CBOs in Highlands and Walton counties (two programs) did not submit a final performance report and CBOs in Levy, Okaloosa, Duval, and Escambia counties (four programs) submitted final reports without six-month reports. Of the five programs submitting a mid-year report in Leon County, only three reported final performance measures. Dade County had the highest frequency of CBOs with seven programs. The CBOs are diverse in the type of prevention services offered. Table 4.3.3 provides a summary of the program types.

Table 4.3.3 Program Characteristics

Program Type	6-month Report		Final Report	
	# of Programs	%	# of Programs	%
After-school	6	14	4	9
Day Treatment	1	2	1	2
Multiple*	10	23	21	48
School	13	30	12	27
Not Available	10	23	4	9
Other	4	9	2	4
Total	44	100	44	100

*Includes combinations of school/afterschool, faith-based and other types

Generally, the sub-grantees defined their program type as a school program, afterschool program, or as a combination. The distribution of programs by type changed slightly from the mid-year reporting period to the final reporting period. Most notable is the shift in programs classified as “multiple program type” between mid-year and the final reporting period (from 23 percent to 48 percent). This may be an indicator that some programs expanded activities over the course of the funding cycle. Table 4.3.4 reports the program status of the CBO programs.

Table 4.3.4 Program Status

	Mid-year Reports		Final Reports	
	#	%	#	%
Developing	1	2	1	2
Progressing	18	42	3	7
In-transition	1	2	4	9
In-revision	2	5	NA	NA
Established	21	49	15	35
Successfully completed	NA	NA	20	47
Total	43	100	43	100

Note: One program reported no information

Programs reported significant improvement in the status of their activities mid-year to the end of the year. Based on the mid-year reports, 42 percent (18 out of 43) programs were “progressing;” this number decreased to 7 percent (3 programs) by the end of the reporting year. About half of the programs indicated their status to be “successfully completed” (47 percent) in the final reports. Overall, the majority of the programs were either “established” or “successfully completed” by the end of the reporting cycle.

Performance Measures

The analysis of the performance measures are presented in four categories: **implementation activities, program and module implementation, target groups, and demographics**. The tables on the following pages present the results of the data analysis for each of these four categories.

Implementation and Activities

The sub-grantees reported impediments related to their programs’ implementation. More specifically, the funded programs reported the greatest single obstacle, if any, in meeting the goals and objectives specified in their grant applications. Table 4.3.5 reports the most significant obstacles faced by programs during the initial six month reporting period as well as the final reporting cycle.

Table 4.3.5 Obstacles to Program Implementation

Obstacles	Mid-year Reports		Final Reports	
	# of Programs	%	# of Programs	%
Insufficient funds	3	7	7	16
Lack of resources	5	11	4	9
Lack of community support	4	9	3	7
Difficulty coordinating with schools	15	34	12	27
None	17	39	18	41
Total	44	100	44	100

As Table 4.3.5 indicates, during the mid-year reporting period, 39 percent (17 out of 44) reported no obstacles and this number increased slightly by the end of the reporting period (41 percent). Thirty-four percent of the programs reported difficulty in coordinating with schools as the main implementation obstacle at the mid-year point and this number decreased by the end of the funding cycle (27 percent). Lack of resources was the main obstacle for five programs (11 percent) at mid-year and this number declined to four programs (9 percent) by the end of the cycle.

CBOs reported the type of service and the number of hours per week that services were offered. The type of prevention services offered included underage drinking, bullying, tobacco, violence, suicide, and illegal drugs. Table 4.3.6 presents the number of weekly program hours provided for each type of prevention strategy. The cell entries are the number of programs offering a specified amount of time (hours per week) for each type of prevention strategy. The median hours spent in a week by a program for each activity is also presented.

**Table 4.3.6 Program Implementation:
Weekly Hours Spent in Prevention Activities**

Mid-year Reports						
	Underage Drinking	Bullying	Tobacco	Violence	Suicide	Illegal Drugs
None	4	13	6	16	22	5
1–10 hours	27	22	30	22	19	27
11–40 hours	11	8	8	6	2	10
Over 40 hours	2	1	0	0	1	2
Total	44	44	44	44	44	44
Median	3	1.25	2	2	0.125	3
Final Reports						
	Underage Drinking	Bullying	Tobacco	Violence	Suicide	Illegal Drugs
None	4	12	5	8	18	14
1–10 hours	28	29	34	28	23	28
11–40 hours	11	2	5	6	2	10
Over 40 hours	1	1	0	2	1	1
Total	44	44	44	44	44	53
Median	2	2	2	2	1	2

At the mid-point of the funding cycle, the median hours spent in each prevention strategy ranged from 0.125 hours per week (suicide prevention) to 3 hours per week (underage drinking and illegal drugs). At the end of the funding cycle, the median scores range from 1 to 2. This may indicate that the CBOs allocated program services in a more balanced way. Overall, Table 4.3.6 indicates that underage drinking, illegal drugs, tobacco, and violence prevention strategies appear to be areas on which most programs focused service delivery. For example, during the mid-year reporting period, 27 programs allocated between 1 and 10 hours per week on underage drinking prevention

and 11 programs allocated between 11 and 40 hours per week on underage drinking prevention. In the final reports, 28 programs allocated between 1 and 10 hours and 11 programs allocated between 11 and 40 hours on preventing underage drinking.

In addition to prevention services, CBOs also provide training and education services for parents and peers. Table 4.3.7 reports the weekly service hours allocated on improving parenting, and mentoring and peer education activities.

**Table 4.3.7 Program Implementation:
Training and Mentoring**

Hours Spent	Mid-year Reports		Final Reports	
	Improving Parenting	Mentoring & Peer Education	Improving Parenting	Mentoring & Peer Education
None	16	16	14	14
1-10 Hours	26	18	28	21
11-40 Hours	2	9	2	8
Over 40 Hours	0	1	0	1
Total	44	44	44	44
Median	1	2	1,5	2

As shown in Table 4.3.7, the CBOs devote a moderate amount of time on improving parenting skills, mentoring, and peer training. Most programs offering these services allocated ten hours or less on these activities. Sixteen programs at the mid-year point and 14 programs at the end of the cycle reported no activities related to these services.

Program and Model Implementation

The quantitative performance measures include information about program implementation and the amount of time spent in applying the program module. Specifically, CBOs are asked to provide the number of months that the program was operational during the reporting period. Table 4.3.8 summarizes this data at the final reporting period.

Table 4.3.8 Number of Months a Program was Operational

Number of Months	# of Programs	%
Less than 6 months	4	9
6 months	7	16
7–11 Months	15	34
One year or more	18	41
Total	44	1
Median	10	

As reported in Table 4.3.8, the median number of months that programs were operational was 10 months. Eighteen out of the 44 programs (41 percent) reported that their program remained operational during the entire reporting period. Fifteen programs reported being operational between 7 and 11 months and seven programs were operational for six months. Four programs reported an operating period of less than six months. The addition of new programs funded during the cycle may explain why some programs were operational for a period of less than six months during the final reporting period (lack of accurate data reporting may be another reason). While the time a program remains operational is an important indicator of program implementation, a more direct performance measure is the implementation of program module/component (length of time program module offered). Table 4.3.9 provides an overview of the number of weeks that the program module or component was implemented during the funding cycle.

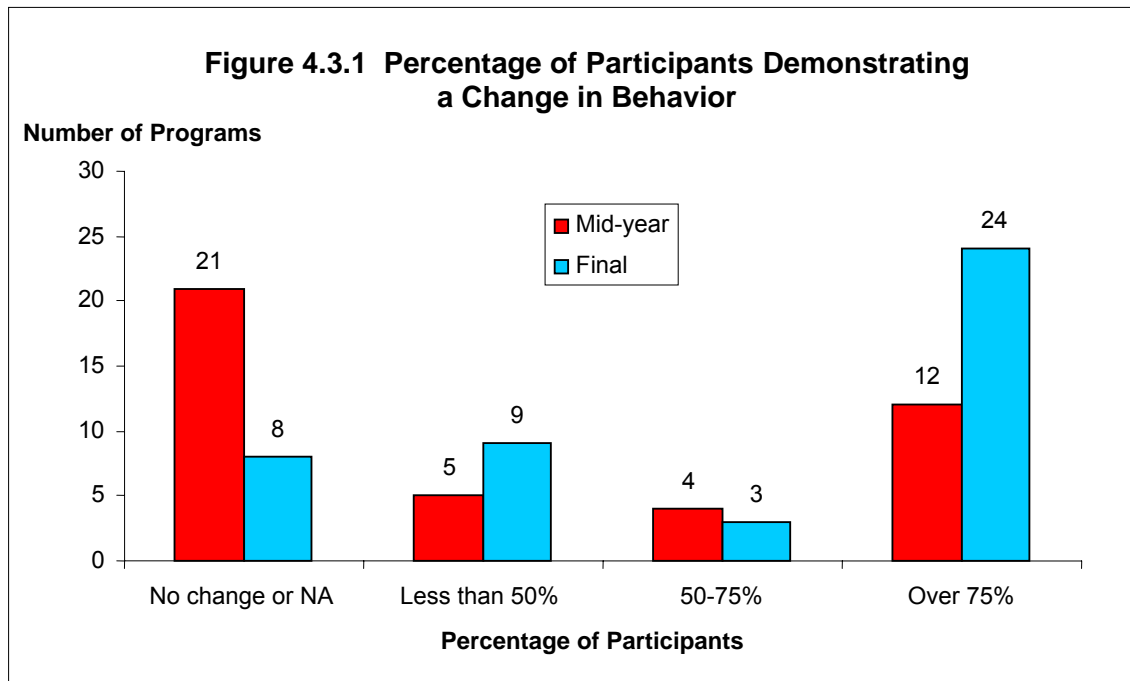
Table 4.3.9 Number of Weeks a Program Module/component was Implemented

Weeks Spent	Final Reports	
	#	%
0 weeks	1	2
1 week to 7.99 weeks	9	20
8 weeks to 16 weeks	11	25
More than 16 weeks	23	52
Total	44	100
Median	3	

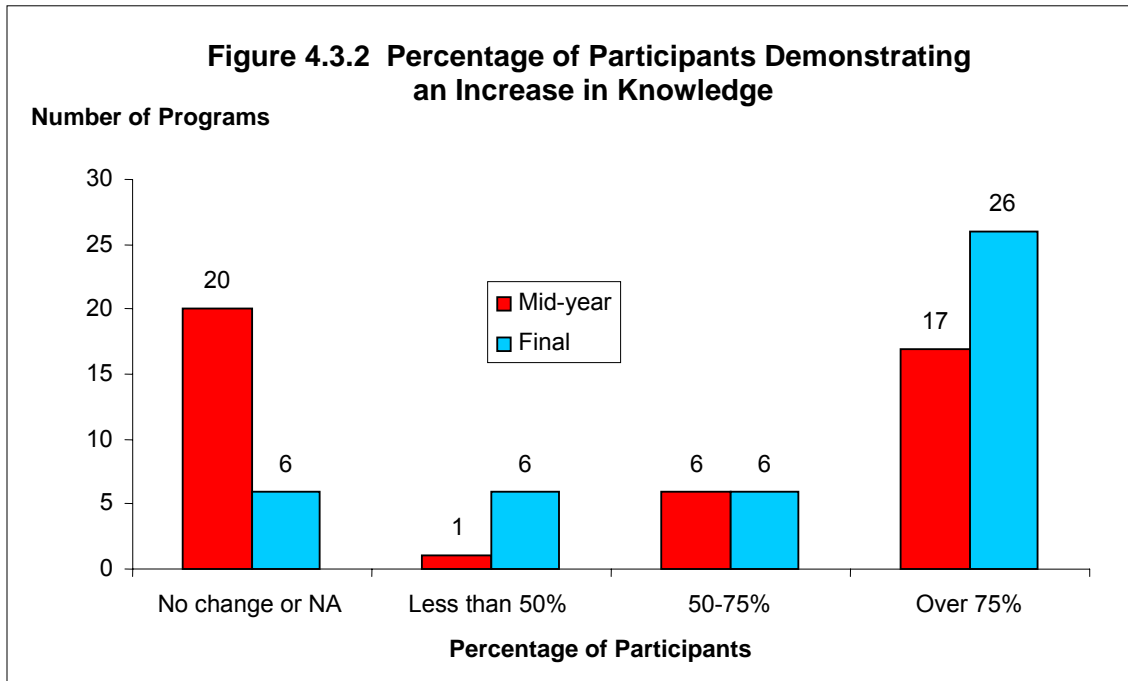
As shown in Table 4.3.9, 52 percent of the programs (23 of 44) reported that the program module was offered for more than sixteen weeks during the funding cycle. Eleven programs (25 percent) had an implementation time ranging between eight and 16 weeks, while nine programs implemented the program module between one and eight weeks.

Program Evaluation and Target Groups

CBOs report quantitative objectives related to the evaluation of their performance in serving the specified target populations. During the reporting period, some of the programs reported the impact of the services on participants based on pre- and post-test assessments. However, many programs did not implement an assessment or did not report on an assessment at the mid-point of the cycle. Figure 4.3.1 provides the summary of the programs' responses regarding their assessment results relating to a change in behavior.



As previously mentioned and reported in Figure 4.3.1, many programs (21 out of 44) did not report the results of the assessment in the mid-year report due to the fact that an assessment (pre and post) was not administered during that time period. However, over the next six months, only 8 programs reported no change in the behavior of the participants who were served by their programs. The number of programs reporting a change in the behavior for more than 75 percent of the participants (based on the results of an assessment) increased from 12 to 24 programs. A similar picture emerges when examining the program responses reporting an increase in the knowledge of the participants. These findings are presented in Figure 4.3.2.



Almost half of the programs did not report an assessment result in the mid-year report, and this number dropped to six by the end of reporting year. In addition, 17 out of 44 programs reported an increase in knowledge for more than 75 percent of the participants at the mid-year point. Twenty-six programs reported an increase in the knowledge of more than 75 percent of the participants at the end of the reporting period. At the mid-year point and the end of the cycle, six programs reported an increase in knowledge for 50 to 75 percent of participants.

The assessment of program impact based on a formal or informal pre-and post-test is a direct and quantifiable measure of program effectiveness. The number of participants and the target population served by the program are also important factors to consider. During the reporting period, the median number of participants served was 207 individuals. The range in the number of participants served by the CBO programs ranged from a few participants (25 participants by the Brownsville Community Development Center) to over 150,000 (Safe Climate Coalition). It is important to note that there was no uniform way of defining participants and services across these programs. Therefore, the interpretation of this specific data should be considered with caution. The range for the number of groups served by the CBOs started at zero (Orange County Coalition) and increased to 201 (Pace Center for Girls). Data indicates that for some programs, all of the participants did not complete the program. During the reporting period, the range of participants who completed the program was between four (Bridgeway center) and over 70,000 (The Miami Coalition). To reiterate, this particular data should be interpreted with caution due to the lack of standardized definitions of “participant” and the reliability of the data.

Demographics and Target Population

The recipients (CBOs) of grants are required to report information about the characteristics of the target client groups as well participant demographic information. Target participants include groups such as school-aged youth attending or not attending school, parents, law enforcement officers, teachers, and community members. The summary statistics for the mid-year performances was reported in the SDFS-QDM Project 2006–07 Annual Report. Table 4.3.10 presents the descriptive statistics reflected in the final performance reports.

Table Table 4.3.10 Participant Descriptive Information

	Total # of Programs	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
School-aged youth served: attending public school	44	2869.82	109.50	0	75804
School-aged youth served: attending private school	43	112.30	0.00	0	3566
School-aged youth not attending to school	43	3.37	0.00	0	40
Parents or guardians	44	584.95	37.50	0	14515
Law enforcement officials	43	15.53	2.00	0	225
Teachers or school personnel	44	170.16	12.00	0	5075
Community members	43	3188.42	10.00	0	134367

Table 4.3.10 reports the mean, median, and the range for the number of participants and the types of participants served by the programs. While the mean value for each group represents the average number of participants for each group, the median is useful to indicate which group has a concentrated population. As Table 4.3.1 presents, the average number of school-aged youths attending public schools that were served by the programs is almost 2870 for the 44 programs. The median value is 110, indicating that 50 percent of the programs served 110 or fewer of this participant type (students attending public schools). During the reporting period, the funded programs served an average of 112 students attending private schools, and three school-aged youths who did not attend school. Reviewing the reports from individual programs provides insight into some of the larger numbers. For example, the Miami Coalition served 75,804 school-aged youth who attended public schools and Safe Climate Coalition served 950 school-aged youth who attended private schools. Overall, the programs served an average of 585 parents. These programs administered large-scale activities. The Safe Climate Coalition reported serving 14,515 parents. An average of 170 teachers and/or school personnel participated in the activities of the 44 funded programs; however, half of the programs reported serving ten or less teachers/school personnel. The Beth Foundation, Inc. reported that

5075 teachers and school personnel were served while the Safe Climate Convention served 504 teachers and school personnel.

“Community members” was another group that participated in the services offered by CBOs. An average of 3188 community members participated in the activities of the 44 programs. The Safe Climate Convention had the highest number of community member participants (134,367).

In addition to program participant information, the grant recipients reported demographic data related to the race and gender of the participants served. Table 4.3.11 provides a summary of the racial breakdown of the participants.

Table 4.3.11 Number of Participants Served by Race

	White	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Other
0 or NA	6	2	21	7	29	17
Less than 50	15	20	15	23	13	20
50–100	6	4	4	5	1	3
100–500	10	11	3	4	0	4
Over 500	7	7	1	5	1	0
Total	44	44	44	44	44	44

In Table 4.3.11, the entries represent the number of programs that reported a particular number of youth served (categories in the left column). For example, “Less than 50” means that between 0 and 50 youths were served in the programs. Most programs served more white and African-American participants than Asian, Hispanic, or Native American. This table also illustrates that most programs served less than 50 participants as a whole. For example, 15 programs reported serving less than 50 white participants, 20 programs served less than 50 African-American participants, and 23 served less than 50 Hispanic participants. Twenty three programs served more than 50 white participants, 22 programs served more than 50 African-American participants, and 14 programs served more than 50 Hispanic participants.

Table 4.3.12 summarizes the information reported on the gender of participants.

Table 4.3.12 Number of Youth Served by Gender

	Male	Female
0 or NA	5	4
Less than 50	14	14
50–100	6	5
100–500	9	13
Over 500	10	8
Total	44	44

Table 4.3.12 indicates that five programs either did not serve any male participants or they did not report the relevant data. Four programs reported no female participants (or neglected to report the data). Fourteen of the 44 programs reported serving less than 50 male and female participants. Six programs served between 50 and 100 male participants and five programs served between 50 and 100 female participants. Finally, a total of 19 programs reported serving over 100 male participants and 21 programs reported serving more than 100 female participants. Overall, the CBOs served approximately equal numbers of males and females.

In this section, a summary analysis of self-reported performance measures was provided for the 44 CBOs who received grants through the ODC. A comparative analysis between the mid-year reports and final reports was presented for many of the performance measures. The summary statistics for the performance measures identify the target participants, the characteristics of participants served, and the obstacles experienced by the programs. The new data elements also included a substantial amount of narrative information about these programs. Therefore, the information provided in this chapter offers a more comprehensive analysis of the funded programs and should complement the qualitative information provided to the ODC.

4.4 Summary Discussion

CBOs play an important role in providing drug, alcohol, and violence prevention programming throughout Florida's communities. The infrastructure for monitoring and evaluating these programs was improved over the course of this project through collaboration with the ODC. In prior years, the data was collected in narrative form and there was not a systematic process to code responses for statistical analysis, or to aggregate or summarize performance measures. Moreover, the Self-Monitoring Tool did not require CBOs to report precisely when and where programming was provided, precluding the funding agency from assessing program efficacy by comparing specific

CBO programming to neighborhood- or school-level School Environment Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System data.

In its first year, the SDFS–QDM Project examined the processes involved in grant proposal submission and in CBO grantee reporting of program implementation and efficacy. In the second year, the project assisted ODC in identifying and developing performance measures to be incorporated into the online grant application process developed by and housed under FDLE. ODC incorporated these performance measures in the online grant application system (SIMON). In the third year, the project provided assistance to ODC in the aggregation and analysis of these measures and indicators. The project presented a report to the ODC summarizing the program performance measures from the mid-year and final reports. The analysis of goals, objectives, and performance measures for grant-funded CBOs provided the ODC with additional data to inform their decision-making processes. This information will assist the ODC to (1) inform new funding decisions, (2) inform continuation funding decisions, and (3) identify the extent to which CBOs address school and community needs relating to violence, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, and other high risk behaviors.

The comparative analysis of the performance measures reported in the mid-year and final performance reports demonstrated that the funded CBOs serve a variety of groups ranging from school-aged youth to parents and community members. In addition, many programs reported a gain in knowledge or a change in behavior of the participants as a result of the services or activities. However, the summary analysis of the reported data also indicated that the current reporting system is not completely standardized. It is recommended that further improvements be made to provide detailed definitions for concepts (e.g., participants, services) which should lead to a further increase in data accuracy and reliability

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

As the SDFS-QDM Project concludes, the Florida DOE will assume the responsibilities and activities conducted by FSU. The SDFS-QDM Project will transition all activities to DOE and provide oversight and assistance during this period. During the past three years, the SDFS-QDM Project addressed the major activities delineated in the scope of work. In addition, the project expanded the scope of work in the three major components, namely the SESIR data analysis, training and technical assistance, and the self-report survey component. This chapter highlights the major accomplishments in these areas and briefly describes the additional activities (outside the scope of work) that were conducted.

SESIR Training

Web-based Training Module

Historically, training on knowledge of SESIR incident definitions and guidelines had been provided on CD-ROM. However, the SESIR system experienced major revisions over the past five to eight years and the delivery method for training needed to be reexamined. Under this project, training and technical assistance was provided using the telephone, electronic mail, district site visits, regional trainings, and statewide meetings. To maximize the accessibility and efficiency of SESIR training, a web-based, online training module was developed, pilot tested, and administered. The module takes users through many distinct scenarios and requires users to complete an incident referral form for each scenario and incident. The SESIR Train-the-Trainer workshops brought together district-level administrators from around the state to provide materials and instruction on training using the online module. The participants were trained how to use the online database which allows administrators to: (1) sign up school-level personnel for training, (2) track participants' progress in the training module, and (3) send e-mail reminders to ensure that individuals complete the training in a timely manner.

Software System Quality Reviews

Improving SESIR data quality requires a multi-pronged approach. In addition to timely training for school administrators, principals, and school resource officers, the various software systems used to record SESIR data need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to verify the presence of appropriate codes and fields. Currently, there are several different systems utilized by school districts. The 2005–06 SDFS-QDM Project Annual Report provides a discussion of the different systems, each of which has strengths and weaknesses. A major project activity was conducting site visits to districts for the purpose of reviewing SESIR software systems.

SESIR Data Analysis

Annual Statewide SESIR Report and Web Interface System

The SESIR Annual Statewide Report includes trends for incident and disciplinary actions at the state and district levels. The report provides per thousand rates for all incident types for the past three years, descriptive information regarding the location and timing of the incidents, a summary of total number and rates of disciplinary actions, and the breakdown of disciplinary actions by school type, gender, and race. The programming requires the matching of SESIR-related files (incident and discipline files) to the master school identification file and the demographic file. Once matched, the data are cleaned and prepared for additional analysis. The SESIR annual report and the Incident and Resultant Disciplinary Action (IRDA) report have been available on the project's website.

Self-Report Survey Data

Florida School Environment Survey (FSES)

The FSES is a self-report school-level survey designed by the SDFS-QDM Project that improves the quality of state self-report data quality in five ways. First, the FSES provides school-level (rather than district-level) self-report data that is currently unavailable in most of Florida's LEAs. Second, the FSES was designed to support the SESIR data by providing self-report information on incidents that conform to the Uniform Management Information Reporting System (UMIRS) requirements and SESIR incident definitions. Third, the FSES provides self-report data on bullying prevalence and victimization. Fourth, the FSES provides a low-cost, self-administered survey to schools. Fifth, the FSES has been informed by district administrators and will provide schools with cross-sectional and longitudinal data at the school level regarding substance use and other forms of delinquency.

Additional Activities that Broadened the Scope of Work

Other Statewide Reports, District Profiles, and Federal Reporting

In addition to the Annual Statewide SESIR Report generated by SDFS-QDM, several other reports relating to SESIR data are generated on an annual basis. Each of these reports provides information beyond the Annual Statewide SESIR Report.

The SESIR IRDA Report provides a school-by-school breakdown of SESIR incidents reported by category and indicates the number of incidents with appropriate disciplinary actions. The SESIR Match Report (matches disciplinary acts with SESIR incidents) takes the information provided in the IRDA Report and aggregates the data to the district level. The report provides a comparison of the total number of SESIR incidents reported in each district with the number of appropriately coded disciplinary actions associated with each SESIR incident.

The district profiles were a recent addition to the work of the SDFS-QDM Project in 2007. The reports were an attempt to synthesize key data and information from several other reports previously discussed, including the Annual Statewide SESIR Report, the IRDA Report, the SESIR Match Report, and other data reports generated. District profiles provided a detailed trend analysis to detect major shifts in SESIR data reporting and, if a shift was detected, school-level data was presented and analyzed to ascertain whether data reporting issues were occurring across several schools within a district or were limited to one or two schools. Each district was provided two individualized profiles (2007 and 2008).

Other ad hoc reports were prepared and additional analyses were conducted as requested by the Florida DOE. Examples include reports generated to assist the agency’s compliance with federal reporting requirements such as the U.S. DOE’s Educational Data Exchange Network (EDEN), the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR), Gun-Free Schools Report, Weapon Incidents report, and data analysis on districts being monitored by the department as required by NCLB. In some instances, Florida DOE requested the project to respond to external requests from the media, external researchers, students, and other school personnel.

Florida School Environment Survey (FSES)

The project developed and pilot-tested two versions of the FSES as well as an online version. Parent consent forms, teacher instructions, and other materials are available for transfer to the department. Schools that participated in the survey received individualized school reports with charts, tables, and a narrative explanation of the survey results.

Special Reports

In addition to the Annual Statewide Report, the annual project report, and other statewide reports, the SDFS-QDM Project completed two special reports in 2007–08 on key topics of concern to the department: (1) *Bullying*, (2) *From School Discipline to Juvenile Justice* (a response to a brief on the prison to school pipeline issue relying on Florida’s Zero Tolerance policy and DJJ data).

User-friendly Web Interface for the SESIR Annual Report

An improvement to the development and dissemination of the SESIR Annual Statewide Report was pursued during the last two years of the project. Previously, the project made this report (as well as others) available for downloading and viewing on the web. In the last year of the project, report dissemination enhanced by the development of a user-friendly web interface. The web interface uses a series of menus that allows users to generate the entire report or a report with specific data elements (by school type, district, etc.).

Other Activities

The project participated in meetings and conferences as requested by the department, or to inform the work of the grant. Examples include: presentations to the SDFS coordinators, providing support for the Statewide Bullying Conference, attending the Zero Tolerance Conference, a presentation at the State Epidemiological workgroup,

presentations at the American Society of Criminology meetings, participating as a FYS workgroup member, presentations at the Juvenile Justice Education Institute/Southern Conference on Corrections, and attending the Florida Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Council meetings.

Conclusion

It is critical that improving SESIR data quality through monitoring data reporting and providing timely and appropriate training and technical assistance be continuous activities for two key reasons. First, employee turnover among school and district staff creates a knowledge gap resulting in a constant need for additional training. School principals, assistant principals, deans of discipline, school resource officers, data entry clerks, MIS data managers, SDFS coordinators, superintendents, and assistant superintendents all contribute to the accurate reporting of school incidents and disciplinary actions. These positions have regular and predictable turnover through advancements, changes in positions, retirements, and occupational changes. This continuous change in school and district administration and staff requires an ongoing training effort to maintain and improve the accuracy and reliability of SESIR data.

Second, legislative and administrative changes in SESIR codes and definitions occur on a regular basis and are communicated to districts and schools primarily through training and technical assistance. For example, Chapter 2 of this report provided evidence that past changes in the definition of bullying and harassment have had an impact on the accuracy of SESIR data. Indeed, Table 2.3.6 of Chapter 2 indicates that rates of bullying and harassment varied widely among districts after the changes in the coding of bullying and harassment were enacted. Several changes to SESIR definitions and related elements impacted the 2008–09 school year, and continued data improvement efforts should address these changes and increase future compliance with legislative and administrative data requirements. Moreover, many prevention and intervention efforts are predicated on the accurate collection of school incident and discipline data. Increasing knowledge of risk and protective factors is both shaped by data and shapes the type of data collected. For example, the UMIRS requirement of the NCLB Act recently required all states to collect data on injury that occurs as the result of a school incident. Changes in SESIR definitions and related elements are communicated to districts through regional and statewide SESIR trainings. Technical assistance provides support to districts when changes to data collection procedures are implemented. Assessments of district- and school-level SESIR data are conducted to ensure compliance with SESIR changes.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are several self-report surveys administered in Florida's public schools. Each of these surveys collect data for a specific purpose and have unique functions; however for efficiency and parsimony, the Florida DOE should examine all current survey efforts to minimize duplication of data collection efforts and the collection of conflicting measures. Moreover, surveying in public schools is not only complicated and costly; but also it can be disruptive to the learning environment. Thus, the information gathered from surveys should be systematically reviewed to maximize the utility of surveys in prevention efforts. Finally, modifications to surveying efforts should

be made in accordance with survey findings and best practices. Data collection and research staff at the Florida DOE should continue to work closely with the Office of Drug Control, the Department of Health, and the Department of Children and Families to modify surveys to ensure that they are informative, efficient, and beneficial to all agencies.