



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

September 3, 2021

To: School Committee
Re: Bullying Prevention and Intervention – Annual Report

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy adopted in December 2010 indicates that *the superintendent or a designee shall report annually to the School Committee regarding the frequency of bullying behaviors during the prior school year and to update the Committee regarding steps being taken in the schools to minimize such behaviors while promoting the continuous improvement of learning environments.* This report satisfies this policy requirement.

Frequency of bullying behaviors

It is important to note that, in order for behavior to be deemed “bullying,” it must involve *repeated* behaviors that cause physical and/or emotional harm. Therefore, only situations that meet this standard are reported as “bullying.” There are, of course, many times where students do not treat each other according to our school communities’ expectations, but these are usually not scenarios where the same aggressor repeatedly acts inappropriately towards the same target, thereby qualifying as “bullying.”

There were no incidences of defined bullying at the preschool and elementary levels, one at the middle level, and none at the high school level. The following tables provide statistics for grades K-12 for the 2020-2021 school year and, for comparison, the statistics for the previous year. You will see that the statistics - except for *Allegations of Bullying* - are lower than the prior year, and they continue to show very low rates of bullying overall. It is important to note that with some cohorts of students attending school either remotely or as part of the hybrid learning model due to the pandemic, there were fewer opportunities for in-school bullying behavior.

2020-2021	Allegations of Bullying	Qualifying as Bullying	Aggressors	Targets
Elementary Level	2	0	0	0
Middle Level	5	1	1	1
High School Level	3	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>

2019-2020	Allegations of Bullying	Qualifying as Bullying	Aggressors	Targets
Elementary Level	1	0	0	0
Middle Level	4	3	2	3
High School Level	4	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>

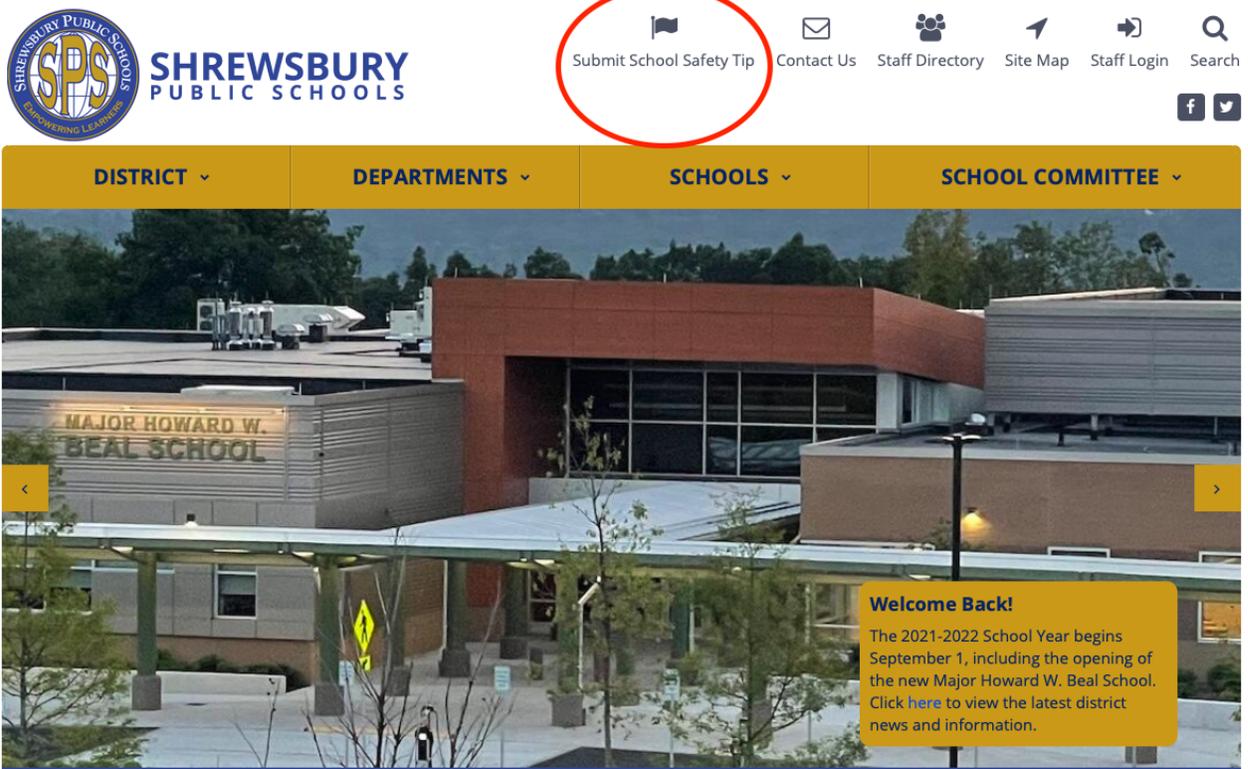
The following table shows the type of incidents and locations that were documented as bullying in the past year (some incidents were included in more than one category).

2020-2021	Verbal	Physical	Cyber	At School	Outside School
Elementary Level	0	0	0	0	0
Middle Level	1	0	0	1	0
High School Level	0	0	0	0	0

Ongoing work to minimize bullying

The very small number of situations that qualified as “bullying” (one) can be viewed as very positive data regarding our schools’ cultures and climates and how students treat one another. That said, we are always looking to minimize behaviors that are hurtful or harmful, even if they don’t technically constitute bullying. This year, we will continue our focus on the themes of inclusion and belonging and providing various social emotional learning experiences to students, such as through advisories at Oak Middle School and Shrewsbury High School that will use the *CharacterStrong* program while using the companion *Purposeful People* materials with our elementary students.

As a reminder, we added an anonymous incident reporting feature three years ago that appears with a flag symbol at the top center of each of our website's pages (see image below) where students can report a "school safety tip." We have advertised this through email messages in the past and will do so again during this opening phase of the school year. While it has not been used frequently, we have received 32 reports total with 11 submitted since my report last year. A few were related to bullying in a general sense, and all were investigated and resolved to the extent possible based on the information provided.



We continue to seek ways as a school district to provide support to students to address their social and emotional needs while promoting school cultures of belonging that are safe, positive, and productive places of learning for our students and staff.