



## **NJDOE News**

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### **New Regulations Set Procedures, Penalties for Falsifying Annual Violence and Vandalism Report**

Beginning this fall, local school officials who falsify information in their annual reports of violence, vandalism and substance abuse in the public schools will be subject to disciplinary action that could result in the loss of their jobs. The State Board of Education today adopted regulations that establish procedures for dealing with school employees who knowingly falsify the reports.

"Our annual report to the Legislature on the incidents of violence, vandalism and substance abuse has become an increasingly important document with each passing year," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "The report contains numerical data that gives the Department of Education valuable trend information and helps the department and local districts determine the need for specific types of training and programs to promote safe schools throughout the state."

"And now, as the result of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, data gathered in these reports will be used to identify persistently dangerous schools," said Commissioner Librera. "I firmly believe that the overwhelming majority of schools each year make honest efforts to provide the Department of Education with accurate data. However, in those few instances where employees choose to falsify their reports, there will be consequences."

The regulations adopted today require local school districts to adopt procedures for disciplining all school employees who knowingly falsify a school district's violence and vandalism report. Each district board of education will be required to adopt and implement procedures to be followed. Depending on the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct, the circumstances under which it occurred and the employee's prior employment record, the employee could be subjected to penalties ranging from minor discipline to termination of employment for at-will and non-tenured employees.

"These new regulations ensure and increase the accuracy of the violence and vandalism reports and will give local school administrators the tools they need to address identified concerns," Dr. Librera said.

The regulations take effect next month upon publication in the *New Jersey Register*.