

# Wayne

## Township Public Schools

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Dear Residents,

Recently, an article by *Patch* Writer Tom Davis listed the Wayne Township Public Schools among school districts with the most violence, vandalism, weapons, drug use, and bullying. The numbers used in the article were drawn from an annual New Jersey Department of Education report known as the **EVVRS** (Electronic Violence and Vandalism Report System). I understand how deeply disturbing an article like this might be to many of our parents and our residents. If you examine the article in greater detail, you will realize that this is simply a case of irresponsible reporting designed to trigger a response that would lead residents to click on the *Patch* website.

I can assure you that the Wayne Township Public Schools are safe places for your children. If you read the article, you will notice that we did not make the first list, which includes the 100 school districts with the most incidents **per 1,000 students**. If you look at the second list where the total number of incidents are reported, Wayne is listed at #77 with a total of 64 incidents reported to the NJDOE during the 2014/2015 school year.

While the first list is adjusted for enrollment, the second list is not. Wayne appears on the second list primarily based on the fact that we are a very large district with an enrollment in excess of 8,000 students. Naturally, when you have a very large enrollment you can expect an increased number of incidents, especially when compared with much smaller districts. It is senseless to compare Wayne to much smaller school districts and draw comparisons based on the total number of incidents.

Another important point to understand is that for the Wayne Township Public Schools, the number one type of reported incident was HIB (Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying). While HIB cases are very serious matters, they typically do not rise to the level of other kinds of incidents documented with the EVVRS such as weapon possession, extortion, assault, arson, or bomb threats. This is another instance where some readers may be misled by this article.

Also ignored in the *Patch* article is the fact that the Wayne Township Public Schools have experienced a dramatic decrease in incidents in recent years. According to NJDOE statistics, Wayne had 173 EVVRS incidents during the 2011/2012 school year, 78 incidents during the 2012/2013 school year, 104 incidents during the 2013/2014 school year, and 64 incidents on the most recent report. There is no doubt that our EVVRS statistics are moving in a good direction.

Wayne is not alone in showing a reduction of EVVRS incidents. Unfortunately, *Patch* Writer Tom Davis also ignored Commissioner of Education David Hespe, who indicated there is a positive three-year trend showing a significant reduction in serious incidents of misconduct in New Jersey public schools. That's good news for everyone. New Jersey may be leading the nation in addressing some of the most serious school safety issues.

Should you have any questions about the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) as it relates to the Wayne Township Public Schools, please call or e-mail.

Sincerely,

Mark Toback  
Superintendent of Schools