

# Education

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Happy New Year!  
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## Discipline increases in local schools

■ BOE report shows more punishments meted out by schools last year

By Dee Ann Campbell  
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – It has been deemed the most vital issue to be addressed in America's schools. For most of the past 22 years, the Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools has shown that the lack of discipline is perceived as the most serious problem facing the nation's educational system.

In Choctaw County, the numbers of students receiving disciplinary actions in public schools are climbing. Whether the numbers reveal an increase in incidents requiring discipline or simply an effort by some schools to crack down on problems, the fact is that local public school students were disciplined more often last year than they were in years past.

The Choctaw County Board of Education, as required by law, recently released its report on disciplinary actions taken in the schools during the 2005-06 school year. The report shows an increase in the overall numbers of incidents requiring discipline as reported by the schools.

According to the report, there were a total of 1,689 incidents requiring disciplinary actions in local public schools during the last school year, a number that is some 429 incidents higher than the 1,260 that was reported for the previous year.

(It should be noted that the report did not denote numbers of students who received punishment but rather numbers of incidents. A single student may have been the recipient of multiple disciplinary actions over the course of the year, and more than one student may have been involved with each incident reported.)

The most disciplinary actions took place at Southern Choctaw High School, with 706 incidents that were brought to the attention of the office. The incidents resulted in 90 suspensions, 202 In-School Suspensions (ISS), and 414 uses of corporal punishment.

Choctaw County High reported 377 total incidents that resulted in disciplinary actions by the school. Disciplinary actions included 454 suspensions, 110 ISS, and 251 uses of corporal punishment.

At the elementary school level, Choctaw County Elementary reported only 223 incidents, with most of the students involved (132) receiving corporal punishment or ISS (115).

Southern Choctaw Elementary reported a larger number of incidents that resulted in disciplinary actions, 383. Of that number, 284 students were given corporal punishment, 40 were suspended, and 59 students received ISS.

The most prevalent forms of discipline problems reported did not include serious, criminal offense like assault or weapons and drug possession. The most often cited offenses, rather,

	CCHS				SCHS				CCES			SCES				
	Total #	Suspended	ISS	Corporal	Total #	Suspended	ISS	Corporal	Total #	Suspended	ISS	Corporal	Total #	Suspended	ISS	Corporal
Threats/Intimidation	4	2	2	0	3	2	1	0								
Alcohol Use	1	1	0	0												
Other Incidents resulting in a State defined Disciplinary Action	114	169	42	12	1	0	1	0					1	1	0	0
Other Weapon Use	1	1	0	0												
Tobacco Use	1	2	0	0	3	0	3	0								
Sexual Offences - Other	1	1	0	0									1	0	0	1
Profanity or Vulgarity	68	91	2	2	29	2	14	13					23	1	4	16
Inciting other students to create a disturbance	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1								
Defiance of Authority	57	80	52	0	33	5	10	19					37	1	1	35
Fighting	22	33	1	0	29	20	7	2	35	0	39	7	45	4	29	12
Drugs, Possession	1	1	0	0												
Disruptive Demonstrations	43	18	7	60	46	4	7	35	175	3	70	115	33	2	1	30
Assault	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	1					1	0	0	0
Disorderly Conduct - Other	20	14	1	18	83	9	34	40	12	0	5	10	76	13	6	58
Disobedience - Persistent, Willful	39	5	3	161	459	41	116	301					152	17	12	123
Gambling	2	3	0	0	7	1	5	1					1	0	1	0
Trespassing	1	2	0	0												
Tobacco Possession					5	3	2	0								
Harassment					1	0	0	1					8	0	5	3
Fire Alarm Tampering with/setting off					1	1	0	0								
Electronic pagers/unauthorized Communication device					4	2	2	0					1	0	0	1
Robbery									1	0	1	0				
Other/Unknown Weapon Possession													1	0	0	1
Other Weapon possession													1	1	0	0
Sexual Harassment													2	0	0	2

None Reported

Data provided by the Choctaw County Board of Education for school year 2005-06, according to a report dated July 21, 2006. NOTE: The numbers in column 1 do not necessarily reflect the numbers of students who were disciplined, but rather the number of incidents. Numbers also do not reflect discipline problems that were not brought to the attention of the office or those that did not receive disciplinary actions.

Choctaw Sun graphics by Mickey Bryant

### More than 1,600 incidents resulted in disciplinary actions at local schools last year.

included what is termed 'persistent, willful disobedience'. A total of 650 of such incidents were reported countywide during the 2005-06 school year.

Of the 706 total incidents reported at SCHS, for example, 459 were reported as 'persistent, willful disobedience'. Choctaw County High School listed 39.

In a similar category, there were 127 reports of disciplinary actions taken for 'defiance of authority' in the school system. Thirty-three of those were reported at SCHS.

"The most common problem we have is lack of respect for authority," SCHS principal Betty McBride told the Sun in an interview last year. "It's not just a problem at school. It's a problem in general."

But the problem is not limited to SCHS. In fact, CCHS reported 57 incidents of 'defiance of authority' last year, and there were 37 at Southern Choctaw Elementary. None were listed for Choctaw County Elementary, which only reported actions taken in four categories (robbery, fighting, disorderly conduct, and disruptive demonstrations), in contrast to the 15 or more categories listed for the other three schools.

Following those incidents, the next most often cited offenses included 'disorderly conduct' or 'disruptive demonstration'. The two categories were listed as the reason for 488 disciplinary actions in the school system last year.

Of the more serious infractions such as drug or weapon possession, assault, and fighting, overall the Choctaw County school system reported 3 incidences of assault (1 at CCHS, 1 at

SCHS, and 1 at SCES), 2 weapons possessions (1 at CCHS and 1 at SCES), and only 1 drug possession.

In regard to weapons and drugs possession, the report does not specify the types of weapons or drugs involved in the incidents. All of the offenders in these incidents were suspended.

Incidents of fighting on local schools campuses were named in 131 infractions during the reported time period, making it the 3rd most often-cited reason for discipline. Most of the students involved in fighting were either suspended or given ISS. A few others (21) were disciplined by corporal punishment.

Because all schools used their own judgment to categorize incidents requiring discipline, some reported violations in different ways. For example, CCHS categorized a total of 114 incidents that were termed 'other incidents resulting in state-defined disciplinary actions'. No explanations of such terms were given.

During 2005-06, corporal punishment was the most often used form of punishment in local schools. It was the action of choice for incidents involving 1,081 students. The BOE report shows that ISS was selected in 486 cases.

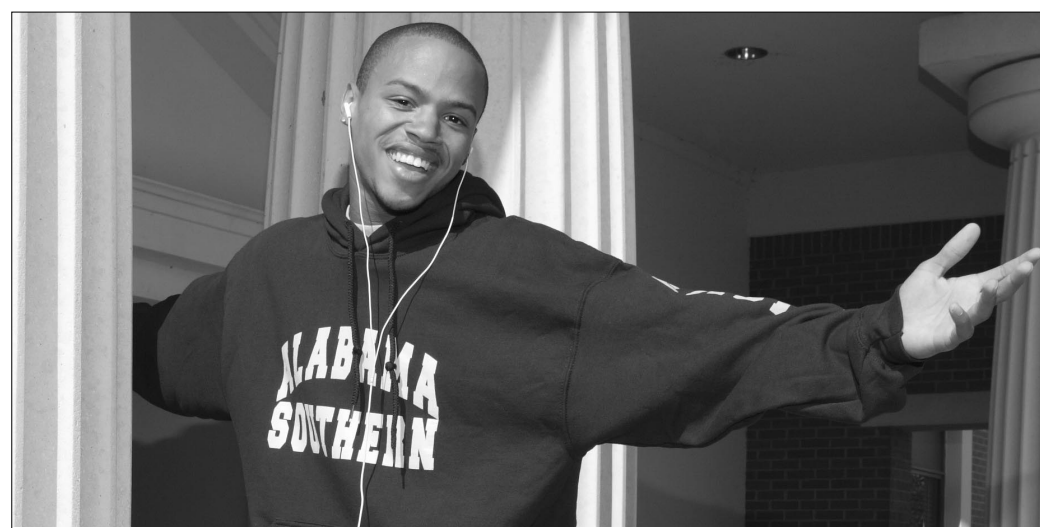
For some of the more serious infractions, suspension is the required form of discipline. The BOE report shows that 587 suspensions were handed down by schools during 2005-06. But a more grave form of punishment for extreme cases – expulsion – was only handed down for 1 student last year. The student was expelled from CCHS for what was reported as 'persistent, willful disobedience'.

One student from CCHS was also removed to an alternate setting for 'defiance of authority'.

The following is a breakdown of the total numbers of most of the incidents reported by the BOE for 2005-06. (NOTE: Some very low-number incidents are not listed, and some categories are

combined).  
Disobedience, persistent, willful – 650  
Gambling – 10  
Tobacco – 8  
Threats/intimidation or harassment – 16  
Profanity, vulgarity – 120  
Fighting – 131  
Disorderly conduct/Disruptive demonstrations – 488

Defiance of Authority – 127  
Assault – 3  
Weapons – 2  
Drug possession – 1  
Alcohol use – 1  
Sexual offenses – 4  
Robbery – 1  
Others defined as state disciplinary actions – 116. (See chart for school by school reports.)



# HAPPY NEW YEAR

from Alabama Southern

#### Registration for Spring Semester 2007

- Wednesday, January 3, 2007  
All pre-registered tuition and fees must be paid by 2 p.m. or cleared in the Business Office
- Thursday, January 4, 2007 • 8 a.m.-6 p.m. – On-Campus Registration – all campuses
- Friday, January 5, 2007 • 8 a.m.-noon – On-Campus Registration – all campuses  
All tuition and fees must be paid by 2 p.m. or cleared in the Business Office
- Friday, January 5, 2007 • 1-3 p.m. – New Student Orientation
- Monday, January 8, 2007 – Classes begin
- Monday, January 8 – Friday, January 12, 2007  
Schedule Change Period: Students may change their schedules.  
All new registrations must be approved by the Academic Dean.

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