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**Report Shows Bullying Remains Despite Required Policies**

Michigan law requires school districts to develop policies to combat bullying, but those policies appear to be having little effect, a report released Monday by Wayne State University said.

More than half of students say bullying is still a problem in their schools and have seen someone bullied, the report said.

"These findings are unacceptable," State Board of Education President John Austin (D-Ann Arbor) said in a statement. "There can be no tolerance for bullying. We can and must create an environment in every school in which all kids learn, all are equally valued, and all have equal opportunity to realize their full potential."

The study included a survey of students who attended a youth rally drawing from around the state. Among those students, 50.5 percent said bullying was a problem in their school and 59.7 percent had seen someone bullied.

The report also cited a WalletHub study that showed Michigan in the top five for percentage of high school students reporting they had been bullied.

"For schools, the financial burden caused by bullying is a serious problem. Public schools can lose more than \$2.3 million on federal funding due to students' misbehavior (e.g., suspensions, etc.)," Jun Sung Hong, an assistant professor at WSU, said in a statement on the report. "Despite the implementation of bullying programs and policies, these findings suggest that they are not doing enough in the state of Michigan."

The report said a key failing in Michigan has been leaving the process to local school districts. While the report said districts needed flexibility to find the right system for their students, they needed more money to implement those programs than they can pull from their own budgets.

"Where communities are seeing real progress is when they include starting early to build social and emotional skills in children, youth and their families; addressing trauma at all ages and through systems; and focusing on building positive behaviors, rather than punishing negative ones," Matt Gilliard, president and CEO of Michigan's Children, one of a number of education and health groups that joined in the announcement, said. "If Michigan is going to become a top ten education state, these local efforts need to be better supported through state and federal policy and investment."