Violence in schools hits new high

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Violent incidents at elementary, junior high and high schools nationwide increased for the fourth straight year to hit a record 60,913 in the 2009 academic year, according to an education ministry report released Tuesday.

Incidents at junior high schools accounted for 72 percent of the total, the ministry said.

The number of students who committed suicide stood at 165, up 29 from a year earlier. Two of the suicides were found to be linked with bullying, the report says.

Cases of bullying came to 72,778, down 11,870, reflecting efforts by schools to prevent the problem through interviews with individual students.

Violent incidents between students numbered 34,277, property destruction accounted for 16,604 cases, and teachers were the targets in 8,304 incidents. Elementary schools had 7,115 incidents, up 631, junior high schools had 43,715, an increase of 961, and high schools saw 10,083 cases.