ANALYZING HATE CRIMES STATISTICS

In November 2013, the FBI released the *Hate Crime Statistics, 2012,* a report that has been compiled every year since the early 1990s. This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn more about hate crimes, the annual report and background on the 2009 Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA). Students will also explore possible actions they can take to prevent hate crimes.

For more information, see ADL's webpage on Hate Crimes Law and the No Place for Hate education initiative.

Grade Level: grades 9–12

Common Core Anchor Standards: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language Arts, Statistics and Probability

Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand the distinction between criminal activity motivated by bias (hate crimes) and other criminal conduct
- Students will learn more about the FBI's Hate Crimes Statistics annual report
- Students will analyze the way hate crimes are reported and under-reported
- Students will learn more about the HCPA
- Students will identify what young people can do to prevent hate crimes

Material: FBI Releases 2012 Hate Crime Statistics; "Hate-crime allegations: Four white students at San Jose State charged" (*The Christian Science Monitor*, November 22, 2013); FBI's 2012 Hate Crime Statistics website; *(optional)* Action Plan

Vocabulary:

Review the following vocabulary words and make sure students know their meanings. (See also ADL's Glossary of Education Terms.)

- Bias
- Bullying
- Gender Identity
- Hate Crime

- Jurisdiction
- Offenses
- Offender
- Perpetrator

- Under-reported
- Victim

WARM UP: HATE

Have students close their eyes for a minute and think of all the words, phrases and images that come to mind when they hear the word "hate." After a minute, have students open their eyes and either write all their words on a piece of paper, create a poem and/or use pictures to illustrate their thoughts and feelings. Share some aloud. Ask: *What do you notice about the word hate? What thoughts and feelings does it bring up for you?*

INFORMATION SHARING

1. Ask students: *What is a hate crime?* Tell students that a hate crime, also known as a "bias-motivated crime," occurs when the perpetrator intentionally selects the victim for violence or vandalism because of a bias or prejudice. Ask: *Can you think of any examples of a hate crime?* Record their responses on the board. If they bring up bullying as an example, discuss the fact that there are some similarities (as well as differences) between hate crimes and bullying, which will be discussed later.

2. Tell students: State hate crime laws impose tougher penalties on criminals who target their victims **because** of characteristics like the victim's race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. So, if a criminal assaults a person because that person is black or Jewish or gay, the crime would likely be a hate crime. State hate crime laws increase the penalty for an offense if the victim or target is intentionally selected because of his/her identity or perceived identity.

3. Explain to students that "perceived identity" means that the perpetrator believes their target is a particular identity, which may or may not be true. For example, there could be an attack on someone because of their "perceived identity" as Jewish. It is considered a hate crime regardless of whether the person is actually Jewish or not, because they were perceived to be.

   Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have hate crime laws, but only 30 states and DC include sexual orientation in their law and only 15 states and DC include gender identity.

   Ask: *Why do you think that is the case?*

4. Share with students the following: The Federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) allows the federal government to provide assistance in the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes or (more rarely) to investigate and prosecute hate crime cases when a local department is unable or unwilling to prosecute. Second, it ensures that those criminals who target their victims because of real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability are all subject to prosecution.

5. Ask students: *Why do you think it is important to have hate crime laws?*

6. Remind students that the federal hate crime law is called The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Ask: *Has anyone heard of Matthew Shepard or James Byrd, Jr.?*

7. Explain that the law was named for the victims of two high-profile crimes. In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a twenty-one-year-old gay man, met Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson in the Fireside Lounge in Laramie, Wyoming. McKinney and Henderson apparently pretended to be gay in order to gain Shepard's trust. They offered him a ride, and took him to an isolated area, where they robbed him, beat him, tied him to a fence in freezing weather and left him to die. He died five days later in the hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado. Just four months earlier, James Byrd Jr., a black man, was walking home along a road in Jasper, Texas. Three white men in a pickup truck—John William King, Lawrence Brewer, and Shawn Allen Berry—offered him a ride. The three men beat Byrd, chained him to the truck, and dragged him to his death.

NOTE: For more in depth information about James Byrd, Jr. and Matthew Shepard, see ADL's *Imagine a World Without Hate® Video Educator's Guide* at www.adl.org/imagine.

8. Explain that the FBI is required to issue an annual report that details the total number of hate crimes reported by law enforcement authorities nationwide. Distribute the *FBI Releases 2012 Hate Crime Statistics* handout and review with your students. Discuss by asking the following questions:

   - What new information did you learn?

   - Did anything surprise you?

   - Do you think all the hate crimes are reported? Why or why not?

   - What other questions do you have?

9. Tell students that one criticism of the statistics is under-reporting. There seems to be a 7% decrease in hate crimes from 2011 to 2012 and the 2012 statistics are the lowest number of reported hate crimes since the program's inception in 1991. This comparison is misleading because of extreme under-reporting by law enforcement agencies or when individuals do not report to law enforcement. Reporting has been voluntary since 1991 and only 13,022 law enforcement agencies out of approximately 18,000 provided data to the FBI in 2012, and a dozen of the largest cities in the US did not report. By comparison, approximately 14,500 agencies reported in 2011. (See ADL's statement "2012 Hate Crime Statistics Report "Seriously Flawed"")

10. Ask: *Are there any statistics collected in your school that can be misleading for similar reasons?* Point out that in schools, there is sometimes under-reporting when it comes to bullying and suspensions.

11. Ask: *Why do you think those statistics can be under-reported?*

12. Explain that principals may define the terms and report this information differently and it can lead to misleading information about the number and nature of school suspensions and incidences of bullying. Also, students often do not tell school staff that they are being bullied, which also leads to under-reporting.

13. Ask: *What is the possible impact of under-reporting?*

READING ACTIVITY

1. Have students read the article "Hate-crime allegations: Four white students at San Jose State charged". After reading, discuss by asking the following questions:

   - What is the main message of the article?

   - Why were the students charged with a hate crime?

   - Were you surprised by this incident?

   - According to the article, is this unusual for college campuses? How do you know?

   - How does the President of the college feel about the incident?

   - What other questions do you have?

2. At this point, discuss with students the similarities and differences of hate crimes and bullying. Similarities include: (1) targeting someone because of their identity or perceived identity and (2) using violence or a threat of violence or damaging property. Differences include: (1) hate crimes can and often occur once whereas bullying involves repeated actions over time; (2) bullying can be more

personal and not always about identity whereas hate crimes always involve targeting someone because of their identity or perceived identity; and (3) hate crimes require a crime to be committed whereas bullying does not require a crime to occur. Make the point that bullying can be a hate crime.

WRITING ACTIVITY: DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE NUMBERS

There are many opportunities for students to dig deeper into the numbers to learn more about several components of the report. Have students explore the recent report on the FBI website to decide in which areas they are interested. Different options include:

- Analyze the data by state.

- Analyze the data by Incidents, Offenses, Victims and Known Offenders.

- Analyze the data on the number and race of the offenders of hate crimes.

- Analyze the data over the past 11 years from 2000-2011.

For homework or in class (time permitting), have students read the data, analyze it and write an essay summarizing their findings. To illustrate their findings further, have students create a graph or chart that goes along with their essay.

ACTION: WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT HATE CRIMES?

1. Now that they know more about hate crimes, explain to students that they will explore what can be done about it either in their school (if they think there is a problem) or in their community. Have students brainstorm different ideas and come up with a list of 5–7 possible actions. They may come up with a list that looks something like this:

   - Create a positive school climate that appreciates diversity and teaches about stereotyping and bias (see ADL's Anti-Bias Education programs)

   - Develop a public awareness campaign (social media, artwork, video, etc.)

   - Write a letter to the Editor (school or community paper)

   - Research the number of hate crimes reported to the FBI from your city or county police agency. If they failed to participate in the HCSA program, find out why.

   - Work with school administration to develop school policy on harassment and hate crimes

   - Hold a speak out or rally in support of victims of hate crimes

   - Conduct an anti-bullying campaign at school

2. Have students choose where they would like to focus their attention and get into small groups.

3. Instruct students to create a preliminary plan to: (1) identify the action step, (2) brainstorm activities needed, (3) discuss what people and resources are needed and (4) develop a timeline. Allow each group 15–20 minutes to work through one of the ideas.

   Optional: Distribute the *Action Plan* handout to each student to use in creating their preliminary plan.

   These projects will take several weeks or months to bring to fruition. Students will need to do some work on their own or for homework, but also allow some time each week for students to meet and work on their projects.

CLOSING

Have each student state out loud one thing they can personally do to prevent hate crimes.

ADDITIONAL READING

- *A Guide to State-Level Advocacy Following Enactment of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act*

- ADL's An Introduction to Hate Crime Laws

- "Hate Crimes Law: Punishment to Fit the Crime" (*Dissent Magazine,* Summer 2010)

- *Hate Crimes Prevention Guide and Toolkit*

- 2012 Hate Crimes Statistics

- Matthew Shepard James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) (in section "Division E" of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010)

- *Preventing Students from Harassment and Hate Crimes: A Guide for Schools*

- *Preventing Youth Hate Crime*

COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS

Content Area/Standard
Reading
Standard 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
Standard 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
Writing
Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
Speaking and Listening
Standard 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Language Arts
Standard 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
Statistics and Probability
Standard 1: Understand that statistics can be used to gain information about a population by examining a sample of the population; generalizations about a population from a sample are valid only if the sample is representative of that population. Understand that random sampling tends to produce representative samples and support valid inferences. (Math: 7th grade)

FBI RELEASES 2012 HATE CRIMES STATISTICS

According to statistics released today by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 5,796 criminal incidents involving 6,718 offenses were reported in 2012 as being motivated by a bias toward a particular race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity/national origin, or physical or mental disability. The statistics, published by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program in *Hate Crime Statistics, 2012,* provide data about the offenses, victims, offenders, and locations of the bias-motivated incidents reported by law enforcement agencies throughout the nation. Due to the unique nature of hate crime, however, the UCR Program does not estimate offenses for the jurisdictions of agencies that do not submit reports.

Hate Crime Statistics, 2012, includes the following information:

- There were 5,790 single-bias incidents and 6 multiple-bias incidents. Of these, 48.3 percent were motivated by racial bias, 19.6 percent were motivated by sexual-orientation bias, 19.0 percent were motivated by religious bias, and 11.5 percent were motivated by ethnicity/national origin bias. Bias against disabilities accounted for 1.6 percent of single-bias incidents. There were 6 multiple-bias hate crime incidents reported in 2012.

- Of the 3,968 hate crime offenses classified as crimes against persons in 2012, simple assaults accounted for 39.6 percent, intimidation accounted for 37.5 percent, and aggravated assault for 21.5 percent. Ten murders and 15 forcible rapes were reported as hate crimes.

- There were 2,547 hate crime offenses classified as crimes against property. The majority of these (74.8 percent) were acts of destruction/damage/vandalism. Robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and other offenses accounted for the remaining 25.2 percent of crimes against property.

- Of the 5,331 known offenders, 54.6 percent were white and 23.3 percent were black. The race was unknown for 11.5 percent, and other races accounted for the remaining known offenders.

- Most hate crime incidents (32.6 percent) occurred in or near homes. Over 18 percent (18.3) occurred on highways, roads, alleys, or streets; 8.3 percent occurred at schools or colleges; 5.7 percent happened at parking or drop lots or garages; and 4.1 percent took place in churches, synagogues, temples or mosques. The location was considered other or unknown for 12.8 percent of hate crime incidents. The remainder of hate crime incidents took place at other specified or multiple locations.

Downloadable FBI document: http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2012/resource-pages/summary/summary_final.pdf.

ACTION PLAN

Brainstorm different ideas on what you can do about hate crimes in your school or community. Create an action plan for implementing your idea using the grid below.

IDEA:		
ACTIVITIES	**PEOPLE AND RESOURCES NEEDED**	**TIMELINE**