



PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Citations to be issued for school fighting

RPD and RUSD collaborative program should reduce fights on campus

Riverside, CA -- The Riverside Police Department and the Riverside Unified School District are together announcing a new plan to discourage student fights at schools.

RPD School Resource Officers will begin citing "mutual combatants" with citations, or tickets, for section 415 (1) of the California Penal Code (fighting in a public place), which will require the fight participants and their parents to appear in court to address to consequences of their actions.

Cases will either be heard in Riverside Youth Court or the Juvenile Traffic Court. Jurisdictions currently using this strategy, including the San Bernardino, Fontana and Rialto police departments, report a significant drop in fights on campus.

"The citation program shows we will not tolerate fighting in schools, and that there are real consequences for this behavior," said Riverside Police Chief Russ Leach.

"We are very encouraged and supportive of the RPD's citation program, which should reduce the numbers of student fights and make schools safer," said Dr. Kirk Lewis, RUSD Assistant Superintendent of Operations. "This should serve as a deterrent to kids who choose fighting as their primary means of dealing with a disagreement."

Serious or one-sided attacks (assault and battery) will still be filed traditionally through the District Attorney's office to the Riverside County Juvenile Court.

This new program will be implemented throughout the Riverside Unified School District. The fight citations are not related to the District Attorney's gang injunction.

Parents will be notified about the program by the school district; students are being advised by officers of the new policy through classroom visits and assemblies.



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