

P.A. 14-172: An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities Through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates

(Background Information for Policy Review Committee)

This Act (1) makes several changes with regard to the responsibilities of school districts to address bullying, (2) allows educational courses to qualify as a Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) work activity, and (3) establishes a competitive early childhood grant program. The portion of this legislation impacting policy is the section pertaining to safe school climates.

Concerning bullying, the Act requires separate meetings with the parents or guardians of a bullying victim and those of his or her assailants, rather than a combined meeting and makes related minor and conforming changes.

Changes to the Bullying Legislation - Safe School Climate Plans

Previous legislation requires boards of education to develop and implement a safe school climate plan to address bullying in its schools. Under current law, the plan must require a school to invite the parents or guardians of (1) a student who commits a verified act of bullying and (2) the bully's victim to a meeting to discuss the measures the school is taking to ensure the victim's safety and prevent further bullying. This Act instead requires that the bully's parents or guardians be invited to a meeting, separate from the one held with the victim's parents or guardians, to discuss specific interventions the school has undertaken to prevent further bullying. By law, the plan must require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly. The legislation additionally requires that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has begun.

The Act requires that the annual notice that must be provided under the plan to students and their parents on how students can anonymously report bullying be provided at the beginning of each school year.

Bullying Intervention and School Climate Improvement Strategy

Under current law, the plan must include a "prevention and intervention strategy." The Act allows the strategy to include, in addition to the already authorized components, culturally competent school-based curricula on social-emotional learning, self-awareness, and self-regulation. By law, the strategy can include interventions for the bullied child. The bill defines these to include (1) referrals to a school counselor, psychologist, or other appropriate social or mental health services and (2) periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the child. The legislation allows funding for the strategy to come from public, private, federal, or philanthropic sources.

The effective date of this legislation is July 1, 2014.

Policy Implications

The only policy impacted by this Act is policy #5131.911, "Bullying," and its accompanying administrative regulation which contains the mandated "safe school climate plan." This recommended policy and the mandated school climate plans have been updated and follow.

The revisions which follow also include revisions as the result of new legislation pertaining to teen dating violence and school safety.

Revisions to existing legislation, rechristens the required policy as “safe school climate plans.” A policy is still recommended to accompany the “safe school climate plan.”

Students

Hazing

Bullying

The Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Definitions

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Definitions (continued)

“**Cyberbullying**” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“**Teen dating violence**” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

“**Mobile electronic device**” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“**Electronic communication**” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

“**Hostile environment**” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

“**Outside of the school setting**” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“**School employee**” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

“**School climate**” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. (and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. physical violence and attacks
2. verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. threats and intimidation
4. extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the schools and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school wide, classroom and individual.

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

The District's program: *(Also outlined in the section pertaining to the "Safe School Climate Plan.")*

1. Requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan by the Board of Education to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
2. Permits anonymous reports of bullying or teen dating violence by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence by parents or guardians and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
4. Requires the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report, and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
5. Requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying or teen dating violence, including language about bullying and teen dating violence in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
7. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

8. Requires each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying or teen dating violence not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying or school dating violence;
9. Requires each school to invite the parents/guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act of bullying was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
10. Requires each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting of the parents/guardians of the student against whom the act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
11. Establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and make such list publicly available; and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
12. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
13. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
14. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

15. Requires the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;
16. Prohibits bullying and teen dating violence (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
17. Requires, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
18. Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide;

Note: *Certified employees are required to complete annual training on the prevention and identification of bullying and response to bullying and the prevention and response to youth suicide.*

The State Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required to provide annual training to non-certified school employees.

19. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of the school year of the process by which they may make reports of bullying or teen dating violence;
20. As required, the Board of Education shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, cooperative assistance and approval not later than July 1, 2014; and

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

21. Requires that not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the State Department of Education, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and each individual school in the District's Internet website and such plan is to be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying and teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist of each school is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying and teen dating violence. The safe climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and teen dating violence promptly.

In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of bullying and teen dating violence. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.
2. School rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
4. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school.
5. Individual interventions with the bully or student who commits teen dating violence, parents and school employees and interventions with the students against whom the acts of bullying and teen dating violence are directed, parents, and school employees.
6. School wide training related to safe school climate.

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Prevention and Intervention Strategy (continued)

7. Student peer training, education and support.
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.
9. Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

Note: Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement may originate from public, private, or philanthropic sources. For purposes of this section, “interventions with the bullied child” includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District’s safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in the schools of the district.
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent to the Department of Education;
4. Respond to bullying and teen dating violence in District schools;
5. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying and teen dating violence issues in the District and make recommended changes to the District’s safe school climate plan.
6. Successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training only required once.)

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and teen dating violence reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each District school shall establish a new committee or designate at least one existing committee that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school. The committee must include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying and teen dating violence;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying and teen dating violence among students in the school;
3. Implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, (developed pursuant to Section 87 of PA 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying or teen dating violence (defined in Connecticut General Statutes 10-222d) and report such information, as necessary, to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the school's security and safety committee;
4. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence;

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Committee (continued)

5. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
6. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and
8. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3 or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student.

Safe School Climate Plan

The Board of Education shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools. Such plan shall:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying and teen dating violence to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make such reports;
2. Enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying and teen dating violence;
3. Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist, or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;
4. Require the Safe School Climate Specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section;
5. Require the Safe School Climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Plan (continued)

6. Include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
8. Require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The required notification and invitation shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
9. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
10. Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
11. Direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
13. Direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such student against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
14. Require the Principal of a school, or the Principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal, or the Principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Assessment (continued)

15. Prohibit bullying and teen dating violence (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
16. Require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's Safe School Climate Plan; and
17. Require that all school employees annually complete the training described in C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended.

Or Shorter Version: *(for the section of this policy pertaining to the "Safe School Climate Plan.)*

As part of this policy, the Board of Education shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools. Such plan shall establish deadlines for reporting investigating, and notifying parents and guardians about bullying and teen dating violence incidents; prohibit retaliation against those who report bullying and/or teen dating violence; and require school officials to notify law enforcement officials when it is believed that bullying or teen dating violence conduct constitutes a crime.

The Board requires each school in the District, on and after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, to complete an assessment using school climate assessment instruments, including uniform surveys that collect information about students' perspectives and opinions about school climate at the school and allow students to complete and submit such surveys anonymously, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-222h, as amended by PA 11-232. The Board will collect the school climate assessments of each District school and submit them to the Department of Education.

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Assessment (continued)

Note: *The Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required by the amended C.G.S. 10-222h, to approve in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), and disseminate to all public schools grade-level appropriate school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, to be used by Boards of Education for the purpose of collecting information pertaining to a district's "prevention and intervention strategy" in order to enable the Department to monitor bullying efforts over time and to compare each district's progress to state trends.*

A safe school climate resource network is to be established by the Department of Education, in consultation with the State Education Resource Center, the Governor's Prevention Partnership and the Commission on Children, within available appropriations, for the identification, prevention, and education of school bullying in the state. This network will make available to all schools information, training opportunities and resource materials to improve school climate to diminish bullying.

Optional language:

A bullying prevention program shall be implemented which strives to develop a school and home environment:

- * characterized by warmth, positive interest and involvement by adults;
- * firm limits to unacceptable behavior;
- * where non-hostile, non-physical negative consequences are consistently applied in cases of violations of rules and other unacceptable behaviors;
- * where adults act as authorities and positive role models; and
- * where students are included in efforts to improve school climate.

The Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures, which carry out the provisions of this policy. *[In designing administrative regulations, the Superintendent should consult with the greater school community, including students.]* In addition, the Superintendent shall provide that students and parents of students are notified of this prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks. ***[Alternate language: this policy shall be included in all student and faculty handbooks and shall be disseminated to the public in a manner to be determined by the Superintendent.]***

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

- (cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
- (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
- (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.21 – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.8 – Out-of-School Misconduct)
- (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
- (cf. 5131.91 – Hazing)
- (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

- Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student’s records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.
 - 10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, P.A. 11-232 and P.A. 14-172.
 - P.A. 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.
 - P.A. 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.
 - P.A. 13-3 An Act Concerning Gun Violence Protection and Safety
 - P.A. 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates.
 - P.A. 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

Policy adopted:

- rev 7/08
- rev 11/10
- rev 7/11
- rev 7/13
- rev 6/14

P.A. 11-232 requires boards of education to develop and

implement a safe school climate plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools.

*This administrative regulation fulfills that requirement. It **MUST** be approved by the Board.*

Students

Bullying

Model Safe School Climate Plan

Purpose/Priority Statement

(Purpose/priority statements can be used to communicate within the Plan the District's vision in creating and implementing its bullying prevention and intervention strategies. The following are examples of such statements that may be included in local Plans.)

(Option 1) The _____ District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and teen dating violence. The goal is the establishment of a positive school climate in which norms, values, and expectations make students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and teen dating violence and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

OR

(Option 2) The _____ Public Schools is committed to trying to provide all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence, within a positive school climate, where all school community members treat one another with respect and appreciate the rich diversity in our schools. This commitment is an integral part of the _____ Public Schools' comprehensive efforts to promote learning, eliminate all forms of violent, harmful, and disruptive behavior and enable students to achieve their personal and academic potential and become successful members our increasingly diverse society.

OR

(Option 3) The _____ Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, teen dating violence or retaliation, in our schools or in school related activities. In addition, the District will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, teen dating violence and retaliation, and take appropriate, effective action to end that behavior. Most important, the District will support this commitment in all aspects of its activities, including in its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement. The Board of Education (Board) fully understands that it is only through a comprehensive approach with a focus on the development of a positive school climate and the support of students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community that issues of violence will be prevented and a safe school climate achieved. Lastly, in consultation with these constituencies, the Board has established this District Safe School Climate Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, teen dating violence and retaliation.

Students

Bullying

Purpose/Priority Statement (continued)

OR

(Option 4) The Safe School Climate Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence. The _____ Public Schools is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to establish the norms, values and expectations that make students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe. The goal is the establishment of an environment free of harassment, intimidation, bullying and teen dating violence. In consultation with these constituencies, this Plan has been established for preventing and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, teen dating violence, retaliation and discrimination. This commitment is an integral part of the District's comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying, teen dating violence and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process through an overall focus on school climate.

OR

(Option 5) The purpose of the Safe School Climate Plan is to promote consistency of approach and to create a climate in which all types of bullying and teen dating violence are regarded as unacceptable. Attitudes and practices can contribute to bullying, to lower levels of confidence, self-esteem and lack of achievement.

The following plan, "The _____ Public Schools Safe School Climate Plan (Plan)," addresses the mandated areas of compliance which are required under C.G.S.10-222d as amended. In addition to the following current efforts, the administration, faculty and staff of this District commit to continue to improve, enhance, and update both the Plan and its implementation biennially in order to best serve the students, parents, guardians and the community.

The Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying

The Board of Education (Board) prohibits bullying and teen dating violence (a) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, (ii) infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

Students

Bullying

II. Definitions

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

“Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“Teen dating violence” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

“Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“Electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

Students

Bullying

II. Definitions (continued)

“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

“Outside of the school setting” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“School employee” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school Superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional Board of Education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional Board of Education.

“School climate” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. *(It is based on people’s experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)*

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process)

A. Publication of the Prohibition against Bullying and Related Procedures

The prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence shall be publicized by including the following statement in the student handbook of each of the district schools:

“Bullying behavior and teen dating violence by any student in the _____ Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,

Students

Bullying

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process)

(continued)

A. Publication of the Prohibition against Bullying and Related Procedures

(continued)

- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, gender identity, or physical mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- 1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- 2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- 3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation (Plan) #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

Students

Bullying

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process) (continued)

B. Appropriate School Personnel

All school employees are charged with the responsibility of taking reports of bullying or teen dating violence or if witnessing acts of bullying or teen dating violence to notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available. Reports shall be appropriately investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist or another administrator when the Safe School Climate Specialist is not available.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District's safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying in District schools;
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education; and
4. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying issues in the district and make recommended changes to the District's safe school climate plan.
5. Successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training only required once.)

Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

Students

Bullying

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process) (continued)

B. Appropriate School Personnel (continued)

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and teen dating violence reports in the school.

C. Annual Notification of the Complaint Process

The process by which students may make formal, informal, and anonymous complaints as set forth below shall be publicized annually, at the beginning of the school year, in the student handbook of each of the District schools. In addition, this Safe School Climate Plan shall be placed on the District website and the website of each school.

D. Formal Written Complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying or teen dating violence. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying or teen dating violence, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying or teen dating violence, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school employee, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator, if the Safe School specialist is unavailable, for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

Students

Bullying

III. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation (Complaint Process)

(continued)

E. Informal/Verbal Complaints by Students

Students may make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying or teen dating violence by verbal report to the Safe School Climate Specialist, or to any school employee, as defined, or administrator. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying or teen dating violence, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying or teen dating violence, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school employee, or administrator or the Safe School Climate Specialist who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school employee, administrator, if not the Safe School Climate Specialist, shall be promptly forwarded to the Building Principal for review and action in accordance with Section IV below.

F. Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school employee who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the Safe School Climate Specialist, if not the Principal or his/her designee, shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint.

Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Students

Bullying (continued)

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

A. Teachers and Other School Staff

School employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence, as defined above, or who receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence. A written report must be filed not later than two school days after making such an oral report concerning the events witnessed or reported.

School employees who receive student or parent reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence shall promptly notify the Safe School Climate Specialist of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a school employee, this employee shall verbally report the matter to the Safe School Climate Specialist not later than the next school day. In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school employees and other are encouraged to address the issue of bullying or teen dating violence in other interactions with students. Teachers and other professionals may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and teen dating violence and help eliminate bullying behavior and teen dating violence through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. All school employees including teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist

1. Investigation

The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected bullying or teen dating violence received by any school employee. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan. All such complaints shall be investigated promptly. Prompt notice must be provided to the parents/guardians of the person bullied or the victim of teen dating violence and the student alleged to have committed the act of bullying or teen dating violence that such investigation has begun. The investigation must be completed promptly after the receipt by the Safe School Climate Specialist of any written report. In order to allow the District to adequately investigate all formal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied or teen dating violence must complete a consent form that allows their District to release that student's name to those third parties who the District contacts as part of its investigation of that complaint with regard to the investigation of informal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied or teen dating violence must complete the above-referenced consent form so long as that student has not requested anonymity.

A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

The school shall notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying or teen dating violence not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and in the case of a divorced/split situation, to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response, measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act was directed, and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying or teen dating violence.

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

1. Investigation (continued)

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complainant. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial Actions

Verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence shall result in intervention by the Building Principal or his/her designee that is intended to address the acts of the perpetrator and the needs of the victim and to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior or teen dating violence is enforced, with the goal that any such bullying behavior or teen dating violence will end as a result.

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in-school suspension; suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Building Principal (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee.) The following sets forth possible interventions for building principals to enforce the Board’s prohibition against bullying. No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

The following sets forth permissible interventions for building principals (or other responsible program administrators) to enforce the Board’s prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence.

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

2. Remedial Actions (continued)

a. Non-disciplinary Interventions

When verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying or teen dating violence, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying or teen dating violence.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

In any instance in which bullying or teen dating violence is verified, the building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, and the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence. The meeting of parents/guardians of the bullied student or the victim of teen dating violence and the student committing the bullying or teen dating violence shall be separate and distinct from each other.

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

2. Remedial Actions (continued)

b. Disciplinary Interventions

When acts of bullying and teen dating violence are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and teen dating violence and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying or teen dating violence behavior.

c. Interventions for Bullied Students

The Safe School Climate Specialist/Building Principal (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student or student against whom teen dating violence was directed may include the following:

- Counseling;
- Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying or teen dating violence situations;
- Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- Peer mediation where appropriate.

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and teen dating violence and direct intervention when acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, other District actions may ameliorate any potential problem with bullying or teen dating violence in school or at school-sponsored activities. A focus will be placed on district and school efforts to improve school climate based upon the National School Climate Standards.

While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional staff members in each school:

- a. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying or teen dating violence, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- b. A safe school climate assessment on or after July 1, 2012 and biennially thereafter to determine the prevalence of bullying or teen dating violence. Such assessments may include, in addition to those approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education, in collaboration with CAS, the National School Climate Standards Self-Assessment Tool' and the Connecticut State Department of Education's "Improving School Climate Team Rubric;"
- c. Establishment by the school Principal of a Safe School Climate Committee in each District school or the designation of an existing committee that is responsible for fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying and teen dating violence in the school.

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each District school shall establish a new committee or designate at least one existing committee that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying and teen dating violence in the school. The committee must include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies (continued)

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies (continued)

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying and teen dating violence;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying and teen dating violence among students in the school;
3. Implement the provisions of the school security plan and safety plan, (developed pursuant to Section 87 of PA 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying (defined in Connecticut General Statutes 10-222d) and report such information, as necessary, to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the school's security and safety committee.
4. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
5. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
6. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and
8. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3 or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student.

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies (continued)

- d. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur;
- e. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school;
- f. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, or student who commits teen dating violence, parents and school employees. Such interventions with the bullied child or victim of teen dating violence may include referrals to a school counselor, psychologist, or other appropriate social or mental health services, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child;
- g. School-wide training related to safe school climate;
- h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- i. Respectful responses to bullying and teen dating violence concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
- j. Planned professional development programs addressing bully/victim and teen dating perpetrator/victim problems;
- k. Student peer training, education and support. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
- l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);
- m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
- n. Modeling by all school employees of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;

Students

Bullying

IV. Staff Responsibilities and Intervention Strategies

B. Responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Specialist (continued)

3. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies (continued)

- o. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
- p. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.
- q. Utilizing a culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

V. Reporting Obligations

A. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator

If after investigation, acts of bullying or teen dating violence by a specific student are verified, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation, the Building Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator in writing of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification. In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence (after the completion of the investigation) to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety and measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence. Records will be maintained by the School Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying and teen dating violence reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

Students

Bullying

V. Reporting Obligations (continued)

B. Reports to the Targeted Student and his/her Parent or Guardian

If after investigation, acts of bullying or teen dating violence against a specific student are verified, the Building Principal/Safe Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such bullying or teen dating violence. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, as reflected in the student's educational records, shall not be disclosed to the parents or guardian of the victim, except as provided by law (e.g., court order/subpoena). In addition, the school shall invite the parent/guardian of the student against whom the verified act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed, after the completion of the investigation, to a meeting to communicate to the parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety and measures being taken by the school to ensure the targeted student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence. Records will be maintained by the School Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of the bullying and teen dating violence reports, subsequent investigations and parental/guardian meetings.

Notices shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and the other parent/guardian if requested. This mailing requirement shall be in effect for as long as the student attends the school in which the original request is made.

C. List of Verified Acts of Bullying/Teen Dating Violence

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist of each school shall establish a procedure to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence in the school, and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. The list shall be reported annually to the Department of Education in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Given that any determination of bullying or teen dating violence involves repeated acts over time, each report prepared in accordance with Section III (1) above that includes verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying or teen dating violence unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying or teen dating violence. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

Students

Bullying (continued)

VI. Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation

A. Safety

Discrimination and/or retaliation against any person who reports bullying or teen dating violence, provides information during an investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or teen dating violence is prohibited.

The continuation and perpetuation of bullying or teen dating violence of a student through the dissemination of hurtful or demeaning material by any other student is prohibited.

The District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying or teen dating violence, cyberbullying, discrimination or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school related activities. All reports and complaints of bullying, teen dating violence, cyberbullying, discrimination and retaliation will be investigated promptly and prompt action will be taken to end that behavior and restore the student's against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed (target's) sense of safety. This commitment is to be supported in all aspects of the school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent/guardian involvement.

Before formally investigating the allegations of bullying, teen dating violence, discrimination or retaliation, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed (target) and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the alleged victim (target) and/or the alleged perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the alleged student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed (target); and altering the alleged perpetrator's schedule and access to the alleged target. The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Students

Bullying

VI. Prohibition against Discrimination and Retaliation

A. Safety (continued)

Alternate language to previous paragraph: The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider what adjustments, if any are needed in the school environment to enhance the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed a sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the Principal/Safe School climate specialist or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying or teen dating violence is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

The Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation a student who has reported bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying, teen dating violence or retaliation.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will contact the victim to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If determined necessary, the Principal/Safe School Climate Specialist will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

B. Law Enforcement Notification

The School Principal or his/her designee shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal or the Principal's designee believes any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct.

VII. Training Requirements for School Staff

- A. Certified staff of the District shall be provided in-service training on the prevention, identification and response to school bullying, and teen dating violence and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. (*The Board, subject to the approval of the State Department of Education, is not required to offer an in-service program regarding bullying or youth suicide prevention and intervention if it instead implements an evidence-based model approach to this issue.*)

Students

Bullying

VII. Training Requirements for School Staff (continued)

- B. Beginning teachers shall satisfactorily complete instructional modules as required by C.G.S. 10-145a which shall include a module in classroom management and climate, which shall include training regarding the prevention, identification, and response to school bullying, teen dating violence and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.
- C. Non-certified staff of the District will participate in annual training to be provided, within available appropriations, by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The training may be presented in person by mentors, offered in state-wide workshops, or through on-line courses. Such training may include, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying and teen dating violence among students in school and outside the school setting,
 - 2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate and effective interventions to stop bullying and teen dating violence,
 - 3. Information regarding the interaction and relationship between students committing acts of bullying and teen dating violence, students against whom such acts of bullying and teen dating violence are directed and witnesses of such acts of bullying and teen dating violence,
 - 4. Research findings on bullying, such as information about the types of students who have been shown to be at-risk for bullying and teen dating violence in the school setting,
 - 5. Information about the incidence and nature of cyberbullying as defined in C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, or
 - 6. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

VIII. Notification Requirements

- A. A copy of this District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in written or electronic format to all District employees annually at the beginning of each school year.
- B. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be made available on the Board's website and on the website of each individual school with the District. Such posting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the approval of such plan by the State Department of Education. *(Note: The Safe School Climate Plan must be approved by the Board of Education not later than January 1, 2012 and submitted to the State Department of Education.)*

Students

Bullying

VIII. Notification Requirements (continued)

- C. The District's Safe School Climate Plan shall be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

IX. School Climate Assessments

- A. On or after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the Board requires each school within the District to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including uniform surveys that collect information about students' perspectives and opinions about the school climate at the school and allow students to complete and submit such surveys anonymously, approved and disseminated by the State Department of Education.
- B. Completed assessments shall be shared with the Board and then submitted by the Board to the State Department of Education.

X. Bullying Through the Use of Technology (Cyberbullying)

An emerging form of bullying is the use of technology to threaten, intimidate, ridicule, humiliate, insult, or harass. Technology enables aggressive expression toward others and does not rely on physical strength or physical contact. By using a cell phone or the Internet, a student can quickly and aggressively spread rumors, threats, hate mail, or embarrassing photos through text messages, e-mails, or instant messages.

There are a number of social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) available to our students that can be misused and/or abused for bullying purposes. Any alleged misuse or abuse must be reported to any staff member or the Safe School Climate Specialist.

The District's discipline policy states that misuse, on or off campus, of electronic devices, for threatening/bullying/hazing or harassment is a violation and can be the basis for discipline on or off campus. When information is received that a student or students are involved in bullying through the use of technology either as the actor or a member of a group, or the victim, the following will be considered:

- If it takes place on campus or at a school sponsored event, disciplinary action will be taken.
- If it takes place off campus a school may take disciplinary action if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

Students

Bullying (continued)

XI. Relationship to Other Laws

- A. Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the district and school rules, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color gender, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the “Plan” prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person’s membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or district policies.
- B. In addition, nothing in the “Plan” is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action under applicable laws, or local school or District policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the “Plan” covers the behavior.

XII. Immunity for Board of Education, School Employees, Others

Members of the Board of Education and school employees are protected by statute against damage claims in the implementation of a safe school climate plan and, in accordance with a school district safe school climate plan, report, investigate, or respond to bullying. PA 11-232 also extends this immunity to reports of bullying incidents by parents, students, and others to a school employee according to a safe school climate plan.

To be immune, these parties must act in good faith and, in the case of a school employee or Board of Education, within the scope of their duties. The immunity does not cover gross, wanton, reckless, or willful misconduct.

Regulation approved:

cps 6/11
rev 7/13
rev 6/14

Bullying Interventions

Action Steps for School Administrators

- Immediately intervene in all bullying and teen dating violence incidents.
- Involve parents of bullies and victims of bullying and teen dating violence where appropriate.
- Form “friendship groups” or other supports for students who are victims of bullying.
- Involve school counselors or mental health professionals, where appropriate.
- Assess the awareness and the scope of the bullying and teen dating violence problems at your school through student and staff surveys.
- Closely supervise students on the playing fields and in classrooms, hallways, rest rooms, cafeterias and other areas where bullying occurs in your school.
- Conduct school wide assemblies and teacher/staff in-service training to raise awareness regarding the problem of bullying and teen dating violence and to communicate a zero tolerance for such behavior.
- Post and publicize clear behavior standards, including rules against bullying, for all students. Consistently and fairly enforce such standards.
- Encourage parent participation by establishing on-campus parent’s centers that recruit, coordinate and encourage parents to take part in the educational process and in volunteering to assist in school activities and projects.
- Establish a confidential reporting system that allows children to report victimization and that records the details of bullying and teen dating violence incidents.
- Ensure that your school has all legally required policies and grievance procedures for sexual discrimination. Make these procedures known to parents and students.
- Receive and listen receptively to parents who report bullying and teen dating violence. Establish procedures whereby such reports are investigated and resolved expeditiously at the school level in order to avoid perpetuating bullying and teen dating violence.
- Develop strategies to reward students for positive, inclusive behavior.
- Provide school wide and classroom activities that are designed to build self-esteem by spotlighting special talents, hobbies, interests and abilities of all students and that foster mutual understanding of and appreciation for differences in others.

Strategies for Classroom Teachers

- Provide students with opportunities to talk about bullying and teen dating violence and enlist their support in defining bullying and teen dating violence as unacceptable behavior.
- Involve students in establishing classroom rules against bullying. Such rules may include a commitment from the teacher to not look the other way when incidents involving bullying occur.

Bullying Interventions

Strategies for Classroom Teachers (continued)

- Provide classroom activities and discussions related to bullying and teen dating violence, including the harm that they cause and strategies to reduce them.
- Develop a classroom action plan to ensure that students know what to do when they observe a bully/victim confrontation or teen dating violence.
- Teach cooperation by assigning projects that require collaboration. Such cooperation teaches students how to compromise and how to assert without demanding. Take care to vary grouping of participants and to monitor the treatment of participants in each group.
- Take immediate action when bullying or teen dating violence is observed. All teachers and school staff must let children know that they care and will not allow anyone to be mistreated. By taking immediate action and dealing directly with the bully or perpetrator of teen dating violence, adults support both the victim and the witnesses.
- Confront bullies in private. Challenging a bully in front of his/her peers may actually enhance his/her status and lead to further aggression.
- Notify the parents of both victims and bullies and perpetrator of teen dating violence when a confrontation occurs, and seek to resolve the problem expeditiously at school.
- Refer both victims and aggressors to counseling whenever appropriate.
- Provide protection for bullying victims and victims of teen dating violence, whenever necessary. Such protection may include creating a buddy system whereby students have a particular friend or older buddy on whom they can depend and with whom they share class schedule information and plans for the school day.
- Listen receptively to parents who report bullying and teen dating violence and investigate reported circumstances so that immediate and appropriate school action may be taken.
- Avoid attempts to mediate a bullying situation. The difference in power between victims and bullies may cause victims to feel further victimized by the process or believe that they are somehow at fault.

Strategies for Students

Students may not know what to do when they observe a classmate being bullied or the victim of teen dating violence or experience such victimization themselves. Classroom discussions and activities may help students develop a variety of appropriate actions that they can take when they witness or experience such victimization. For instance, depending on the situation and their own level of comfort, students can:

- seek immediate help from an adult;
- report bullying/teen dating violence victimization incidents to school personnel;

Bullying Interventions

Strategies for Students (continued)

- speak up and/or offer support to the victim when they see him/her being bullied or victimized, for example, picking up the victims books and handing them to him or her;
- privately support those being hurt with words of kindness or condolence;
- express disapproval of bullying behavior by not joining in the laughter, teasing or spreading of rumors or gossip; and
- attempt to defuse problem situations either single handedly or in a group - for example, by taking the bully aside and asking him/her to “cool it.”

Strategies for Parents

The best protection parents can offer their children who are involved in a bully/teen dating victim conflict is to foster their child’s confidence and independence and to be willing to take action when needed. The following suggestions are offered to help parents identify appropriate responses to conflict experienced by their children at school:

- Be careful not to convey to a child who is being victimized that something is wrong with him/her or that he/she deserves such treatment. When a child is subjected to abuse from his or her peers, it is not fair to fault the child’s social skills. Respect is a basic right. All children are entitled to courteous and respectful treatment. Convince your child that he or she is not at fault and that the perpetrator’s behavior is the source of the problem.
- It is appropriate to call the school if your child is involved in a conflict as either a victim or a perpetrator. Work collaboratively with school personnel to address the problem. Keep records of incidents so that you can be specific in your discussion with school personnel about your child’s experiences at school.
- You may wish to arrange a conference with a teacher, principal or counselor. School personnel may be able to offer some practical advice to help you and your child. They may also be able to intervene directly with each of the participants. School personnel may have observed the conflict firsthand and may be able to corroborate your child’s version of the incident, making it harder for the perpetrator or the perpetrator’s parents to deny its authenticity.
- While it is often important to talk with the perpetrator or his/her parents, be careful in your approach. Speaking directly to the perpetrator may signal to the individual that your child is a weakling. Speaking with the parents of a perpetrator of bullying or teen dating violence may not accomplish anything since lack of parental involvement in the child’s life is a typical characteristic of parents of bullies. Parents of bullies may also fail to see anything wrong with bullying, equating it to “standing up for oneself.”

Bullying Interventions

Strategies for Parents (continued)

- Offer support to your child but do not encourage dependence on you. Rescuing your child from challenges or assuming responsibility yourself when things are not going well does not teach your child independence. The more choices a child has to make, the more he or she develops independence, and independence can contribute to self-confidence.
- Do not encourage your child to be aggressive or to strike back. Chances are that it is not his or her nature to do so. Rather, teach your child to be assertive. A bully often is looking for an indication that his/her threats and intimidation are working. Tears or passive acceptance only reinforces the bully's behavior. A child who does not respond as the bully desires is not likely to be chosen as a victim. For example, children can be taught to respond to aggression with humor and assertions rather than acquiescence.
- Be patient. Conflict between children more than likely will not be resolved overnight. Be prepared to spend time with your child, encouraging your child to develop new interests or strengthen existing talents and skills that will help develop and improve his/her self-esteem. Also help your child to develop new or bolster existing friendships. Friends often serve as buffers to bullying and teen dating violence.
- If the problem persists or escalates, you may need to seek an attorney's help or contact local law enforcement officials. Bullying, acts of bullying or teen dating violence should not be tolerated in the school or the community. Students should not have to tolerate bullying or teen dating violence at school any more than adults would tolerate such situations at work.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

The following has been adapted from the Policy on Bullying.

Disciplinary Policy Regarding Civil Rights Issues

The District prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment, as defined below, based on the following protected categories: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.

The District also prohibits bullying and teen dating violence, as defined below.

The District will not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this disciplinary policy.

The prohibition against bullying, teen dating violence, discrimination, harassment and retaliation applies to all students on all sites and activities the District supervises, controls, or where it has jurisdiction under the law, including on school premises and school-sponsored functions, events or activities, including field trips, athletic activities, school-related transportation and in production and work-based learning sites.

The District may also take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action for misuse of electronic devices or technology where it occurs on campus or if it takes place off campus if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

Reports or complaints of bullying, teen dating violence, discrimination, harassment or retaliation will be investigated.

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation

Disciplinary sanctions and corrective actions may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

1. a written warning;
2. classroom or school transfer;
3. short-term or long-term suspension;
4. exclusion or expulsion;
5. exclusion from participation in school-sponsored functions, after school programs and/or extracurricular activities;
6. limiting or denying student access to a part or area of a school;
7. parent conferences;
8. adult supervision on school premises;

Disciplinary Sanctions for Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation (continued)

9. a voluntary apology to the victim;
10. awareness training (to help student perpetrators understand the impact of their behavior);
11. participation in empathy development, cultural diversity, anti-harassment, anti-bullying or intergroup relations programs;
12. mandatory counseling; and/or
13. any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or school disciplinary code.

Protection Against Retaliation

The District will take appropriate steps to protect students from retaliation when they report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of the bullying policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action, including long-term suspension, exclusion or expulsion.

False Charges

Any student who knowingly makes false charges or brings a malicious complaint may be subject to any of the disciplinary and/or corrective action(s) detailed above.

Student Responsibilities

Each student is responsible for:

1. complying with the Policy on bullying and teen dating violence;
2. ensuring that (s)he does not discriminate against another or harass another person because of that person's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws;
3. ensuring that (s)he does not bully another person; and
4. ensuring that (s)he does not retaliate against any other person.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation (continued)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BULLYING means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

DISCRIMINATION: Treating a student or group of students less favorably, or interfering with or preventing a student from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study of a school, including in a production or work-based learning site, because of that student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws;

HARASSMENT: Unwelcome comments or conduct (oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religious creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status), that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to unreasonably interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's programs or activities or by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment.

5131.911
Appendix B
(continued)

HARASSMENT: Also means any unwelcome comment or conduct (oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical) relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religious creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability that does not involve severe, persistent or pervasive behavior, but if it persists, will likely create a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational environment.

RETALIATION: Threatening to or retaliating against any other person for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, or for cooperating in an investigation of harassment or discrimination. Retaliation includes threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties. It also includes overt or covert acts of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination or harassment against an individual or group for exercising rights under the District Policy on Bullying or the Student Grievance Procedures for Alleged Discrimination and Harassment.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE: means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

MODEL ANNUAL BULLYING NOTICE

[State Law requires that boards of education notify students annually of the process by which they may anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. We suggest that this notice be included in a student handbook.]

Bullying behavior by any student in the _____ Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Teen dating violence means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

Students who engage in any act of bullying or teen dating violence, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying or teen dating violence behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying or teen dating violence behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

An alternate version of this form.

_____ **Public Schools**
BULLYING/TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INVESTIGATION
REPORT FORM

Date: _____

1. Name(s) of person(s) investigating alleged incident(s): _____
Name(s) of alleged bully(ies)/perpetrator of teen dating violence: _____
Name(s) of alleged victim(s): _____

2. Date(s) of alleged incident(s): _____

3. Duration of bullying/teen dating violence: _____

4. Name(s) of person(s) reporting alleged incident(s): (Note: Student reports may be anonymous, specify if anonymity is requested.) _____

5. Did the alleged incident(s) occur on school property or at a school-sponsored activity?

6. Location(s) of incident(s): _____

7. Is the alleged incident(s) recurring or first time incident(s)? _____

8. Describe alleged incident(s):

9. Did the alleged incident(s) occur in the presence of witness(es)? Yes No

10. Interview witness(es) and document findings: _____

11. Does the alleged incident(s) meet the definition of bullying/teen dating violence? Yes No
Please explain: _____

_____ **Public Schools**

BULLYING/TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INVESTIGATION
REPORT FORM
(continued)

12. Have the parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved been notified of the results of the investigation? Yes No

12a. If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Report Sent to Parents of Students?

Parents' Names: _____
Parents' Names: _____
Parents' Names: _____
Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____
Date Sent: _____
Date Sent: _____
Date Sent: _____

(Attach bullying/teen dating violence complaint, witness statements, and notification to parents of students involved if bullying or teen dating violence is verified)

13. Remedial Action(s) Taken: _____

(Notification should include a description of the bullying or teen dating violence act and consequences if any further acts of bullying or teen dating violence continue. Student's identifiable information must remain confidential to ensure the student's due process rights. Do not disclose the perpetrator's name or parents/guardians of the perpetrator to the victim. Do not disclose the disciplinary consequences of the perpetrator to the victim. The notification can include a description of measures to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence.)

_____ Public Schools
**Report of Bullying/Teen Dating Violence/Consent to Release Student
Information**

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian:

A complaint of bullying or teen dating violence has been filed on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying or teen dating violence. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, the _____ Public Schools may need to disclose the name of your child and/or other information which may otherwise disclose your child's identity.

(Please check one):

_____ I hereby give permission for the _____ Public Schools to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

_____ I do NOT give permission for the _____ Public Schools to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Name (Please print)

Sample Student Statement

School _____

Student Acknowledgement of Anti-Bullying/Anti-Teen Dating Violence Policy

I understand the policy against Bullying and Teen Dating Violence at _____ Public Schools as explained to me by _____ (school personnel).

I am aware that if I engage in any of the actions or behavior that constitute bullying or teen dating violence in school, before or after school on school grounds, on the bus, or at school sponsored events, I can be subjected to school discipline for bullying or teen dating violence. This could include: after school detention, Saturday detention, pass restriction, loss of field trip opportunities, social probation, suspension in or out of school, and/or possible expulsion.

I promise that I will not engage in any actions or behaviors that could be considered bullying or teen dating violence. I promise to respect the rights of other students and to act appropriately towards other students.

Name (Please print): _____

Signature: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

School: _____

Parent/Guardian (if present): _____ Date: _____

School Official (administrator, pupil personnel, SRO, other)

Name: _____ Position _____

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REPORT OF SUSPECTED BULLYING/TEEN DATING VIOLENCE BEHAVIORS

Name of Person Completing Report: _____

Date: _____

Target(s) of Behaviors:

Relationship of Reporter to Target (self, parent, teacher, peer, etc.):

Complaint Filed Against: _____

Date of Incident(s): _____

Location(s): _____ Time: _____

Specify your complaint by stating the problem as you see it. Describe the incident, participants, background to the incident, and any attempts you have made to resolve the problem. Please note relevant dates, times and places.

Indicate if there are witnesses who can provide more information regarding your complaint. If the witnesses are not school district staff or students, please provide contact information.

Name	Address	Telephone Number
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5131.911
Form 1
(alternate form continued)

Have there been previous incidents (check one)? Yes No

If "yes", please describe the behavior of concern, the approximate dates and the location:

Were these incidents reported to school employees (check one) Yes No

If "Yes", to whom was it reported and when?

Was the report verbal or written?

Proposed Solution:

Indicate your opinion on how this problem might be resolved in the school setting. Be as specific as possible.

I certify that the above information and events are accurately depicted to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Complainant

Date Submitted

Received By

Date Received

For Staff Use Only:

Has reporter requested anonymity? Yes No

Does the school have parent/guardian consent to disclose the student's name in connection with the investigation? Yes No

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes No
Teen Dating Violence Verified? Yes No

Remedial Actions(s) Taken: _____

If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Has Notification Been Made to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names: _____ Date Notified: _____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Notified: _____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Notified: _____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Notified: _____

If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Has Invitation to Meetings Been Held with Parents of Students?

Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____

Date of Meetings: _____

If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Has School Developed Student Safety Support/Intervention Plan? Yes No

(Attach bullying or teen dating violence complaint, witness statements, and notification to parents of students involved if bullying or teen dating violence is verified, Invitations to Parent Meetings, Records of Parent Meetings)

_____ PUBLIC SCHOOLS
**REPORT OF BULLYING/TEEN DATING VIOLENCE FORM/INVESTIGATION
SUMMARY**

School _____ Date _____

Location(s) _____

Reporter Information:

- Anonymous student report
- Staff Member report Name _____
- Parent/Guardian report Name _____
- Student report Name _____

Student Reported as Committing Act: _____

Student Reported as Victim: _____

Description of Alleged Act(s): _____

Time and Place: _____

Names of Potential Witnesses: _____

For Staff Use Only:

Action of Reporter: _____

Administrative Investigation Notes (see separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes No

Teen Dating Violence Verified? Yes No

Remedial Action(s) Taken: _____

If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Has Notification Been Made to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names: _____ Date Notified: _____

If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Has Invitation to Meetings Been Held with Parents of Students?

Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____

Date of Meetings:

If Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Verified, Has School Developed Student Safety Support/Intervention Plan? Yes No

(Attach bullying or teen dating violence complaint, witness statements, and notification to parents of students involved if bullying or teen dating violence is verified, Invitations to Parent Meetings, Records of Parent Meetings)