



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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November 30, 2010

To: Members, Senate Early Learning and K–12 Education Committee
Members, House Education Committee

From: Randy I. Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Subject: Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

Introduction

In the 2010 legislative session, the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 2801 (SHB 2801), which related to anti-harassment strategies in public schools. The act amended RCW 28A.300.285 by calling for the following actions:

- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in consultation with the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), the Office of Education Ombudsman (OEO), and other interested parties, shall provide to the Education Committees of the Legislature a revised and updated model harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) policy and procedure.
- Each school district shall adopt a HIB policy and procedure by August 1, 2011.
- Each school district shall designate a person as a primary HIB contact.
- OSPI shall adopt rules regarding school districts' communication of the policy and procedure to parents, students, employees, and volunteers.
- Annually, each district shall provide OSPI with a summary of their HIB prevention and intervention activities. OSPI shall post this information on the OSPI Web site.
- OEO will be the lead agency to provide parents and families with tools to address HIB in public schools.

Stakeholder Contributions

Over the past four months OSPI, WSSDA, OEO, and other interested parties have engaged in a collaborative process to revise and update the model HIB policy and procedure. A few of the highlights include:

- A forum on May 25 brought together families who had been aggrieved by bullying with a cross-section of professionals who would be working on HIB policy and procedures.
- A workgroup made up of stakeholders convened on June 16 to begin drafting a new policy and procedure. The group determined that the current WSSDA policy needed minor revisions to be considered model policy, but the WSSDA procedure needed a complete rewrite to be deemed a model procedure.
- A small writing group from OSPI, WSSDA, and OEO met multiple times to rewrite the procedure. Drafts were shared with a larger stakeholder group between sessions.

Major contributors included Jeff Soder, OSPI; Marilee Scarbrough, WSSDA; Adie Simmons, OEO; Steve Zuber, OEO; Beth Reis, Seattle King County Public Health; Linda Mangel, ACLU; Tom Hutton, Buchanan, Fobes, Leitch & Kalzer Law Firm; Mary Sue Linville, Washington Schools Risk Management Pool; and Jerry Bender and Bob McMullen, Association of Washington School Principals.

- Other stakeholders who participated in one or more session included Mike Donlin, Seattle Public Schools, Cyberbullying and Internet Safety; John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas and Calandra Sechrist, OSPI, Equity and Civil Rights Office; Tyson Vogeler, OSPI Program Supervisor, School Safety; Kim Howard, PTA Governmental Relations; Charles Leitch, Buchanan, Fobes, Leitch & Kalzer Law Firm, School Law Attorneys of Patterson; Bruce Zahradnik, Tahoma School District, Deputy Superintendent; Mary Jane Glaser, Tahoma School District, Board Member; Marilee Hill-Anderson, Sumner School Director; and the Achievement Gap Committee.
- OSPI also shared drafts of the procedure with assistant principals in the field.
- The workgroup looked at other states' policies and curriculums.

Revised Documents

The new model HIB policy and model procedure differ in several major ways from the original sample policy and procedure. The policy changes are both organizational and substantive. Organizationally, headings were added to provide the reader with reference points for the text. The definitions were also reordered to sequentially follow the statutory definition. Provisions regarding remedies, training, and retaliation were rewritten, and language regarding a school district single point of contact was added.

The recommended procedure clarifies the responsibility of school staff for responding to bullying, adds provisions for prevention and intervention, creates detailed processes for filing a bullying incident report, and outlines an investigative and an appeals process for students who have been the target of bullying. The role of the district single point of contact is described in detail. Every effort was made to create a document that supports immediate and effective intervention when a student is being harassed, intimidated, or bullied.

Recommendations

Several recommendations were made by the workgroup:

1. A continuing, state-level anti-bullying workgroup is needed to advise the Legislature on the next steps in addressing bullying in our state. Bullying is a continually evolving problem that needs repeated attention.
2. In depth, annual training is needed for the entire school staff and should be required where resources permit.
3. The workgroup recommends the district periodically analyze the data they have available on harassment, intimidation, and bullying in their schools and remediate classrooms, public areas, and schools that have high incidents of bullying.

4. The workgroup recommends providing funding to assist districts with training, enhanced data collection, best practice anti-bullying programs, and additional personnel to monitor playgrounds, bathrooms, hallways, and other areas that have little staff supervision.

Next Steps

OSPI will send a bulletin in December 2010 to all 295 school districts that includes the model anti-bullying policy and procedure and, as required in SHB 2801, districts will be asked to adopt a revised HIB model policy and procedure by August 1, 2011.

Further Information

If you or your staff would like further formation or have questions, please contact Jeff Soder at (360) 725-6044 or jeff.soder@k12.wa.us.

Attachments:

Model Policy: Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
Model Procedure: Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying