

**The Prevalence, Characteristics, and Typology  
of Washington State School District Policies on  
Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination**

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by

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### **Abstract**

This project examines a specific aspect of school safety; it explores the prevalence, characteristics, and types of Washington state school district policies regarding bullying, harassment, and discrimination. It examines the relevant background and context of this subject, including a review of the research. It includes an analysis of data from the policies related to bullying, harassment, and discrimination provided by 182 of 296 districts contacted, districts which cover nearly two-thirds of Washington state's student population. Tables provide detailed data from the policies, including the types of behaviors prohibited (such as sexual harassment, discrimination, name-calling, and bullying) and whether the policy outlines types of unacceptable, bias-based behaviors (such as those based upon race, religion, disability, gender, national origin, color, sexual orientation, age, marital status, ethnicity, and the like). Finally, it provides an executive summary report to share research findings and best practices with Washington state school administrators.

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## Chapter One: Statement of the Question

While it may not be possible to fully express the role of public schools in our society, there is widespread consensus that the public school is critical to our democracy and our future. They are an expression of community values, they serve as preparation for students' eventual full citizenship, they shape students' minds through the academic curriculum, and they socialize students by providing a myriad of experiences, role models, peer encounters, and social groups. Fundamentally, they assist students in achieving their potential as human beings. As such, the public school is an institution that should reflect our society's highest aspirations for the next generation.

In a time when legislatures are demanding more accountability and, as a byproduct, are demanding that schools place more and more emphasis on meeting academic performance standards, schools must provide a safe and positive learning climate where students can achieve academic excellence. One key dimension of the learning climate is school safety. This project examines a particular aspect of school safety. Specifically, the central question of this project; what can we learn about Washington state school district policies regarding bullying, harassment, and discrimination? This project will also answer these questions:

- How prevalent are Washington state school district policies prohibiting discrimination?
- How prevalent are policies prohibiting bullying and harassment?
- How many students are covered by these policies?
- Where are these issues dealt with?

- What are the characteristics of these policies; what types of behavior is specifically addressed?
- What unacceptable, bias-based prohibited behaviors are listed in these policies?
- How prevalent are policies that include a mandate for training of students or staff beyond inclusion in the student or staff/employee manual?
- What are the different types of policies?
- What best practices are reflected in the policies?

It will also examine the relevant background and context of this subject, including a review of the research on harassment, discrimination and bullying. It also includes data analyzed from the policies related to these behaviors from 182 Washington state school districts. Finally, it provides an executive summary report to share research findings and best practices with Washington state school administrators.

## Chapter Two: Review of the Literature and Similar Projects

Research shows that nationwide many students experience coercion, hazing, intimidation, bullying, harassment, and discrimination with alarming regularity at school, and that it touches their lives in a profoundly negative way.

Being a target of verbal or physical aggression while at school affects students at a deeply personal level; students who have been targeted report social and emotional problems, including feelings of isolation and giving up on life (Hazler, 1996). The link between being a person being bullied and suicide ideation has been documented (Juvonen & Graham, 2001). It also taints the educational environment. In the words of Susan Limber and Maury Nation, “these kinds of behaviors can have a grave impact on learning” (Limber & Nation, 1998). It undermines parents’ confidence in the educational system. An April 2000 Gallup poll found that 43% of parents fear for their children’s safety while they are at school (Kingery & Coggeshall, 2001). “Bullying deprives children of their rightful entitlement to go to school in a safe, just, and caring environment,” according to Nan Stein and Lisa Sjostrom (Stein & Sjostrom, 1996). Arnette and Walseben state that these behaviors are inextricably linked to other forms of violence, such as bullying’s organized form, gangs (Arnette & Walseben, 1998).

Given that these behaviors make a lasting imprint on America’s students, it is important to examine just how prevalent these acts are. A recent national survey of 477 teens show that intimidation and physical abuse are nearly every day occurrences at schools; more than two-thirds of the age 14-17 respondents reported that there is a group of students at their school that sometimes or frequently intimidate others. In the same

survey, only a third of the student respondents said they believe that schools discipline those who engage in intimidation (National Center for Student Aspirations, 2001). Nearly one third of U.S. students report that they experienced bullying, whether as a witness, a target or a perpetrator, according to a survey of 15,686 public and private schools (Arnette & Walseben, 1998). In another web-based study of over 7,000 students, one-third of them agreed with the statement “students say things to hurt or insult me” (Nansel et al., 2001). In a national study of 1,500 high school juniors and seniors, 48% of students belonging to school groups reported being subjected to hazing, including 43% who stated that they were subjected to humiliating activities, and 30% who reported performing potentially illegal acts. The study also reported that student often felt that adults condone hazing (Hoover & Pollard, 2000). The widespread reporting of bullying in schools by students is in direct contrast to reports of bullying that make it into school safety and crime reports collected at the federal level. The discrepancy between the figures reported in other research and those cited in the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* is explained by the fact that very few bullying incidents in schools are reported as crimes. *The Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, derived in part from the National Crime Victimization survey, reflect that only five percent of students ages 12 through 18 say that they have been bullied at school in the previous 12 months, and students in lower grades were more likely to be bullied than students in higher grades, with about 10 percent of middleschoolers reporting being bullied (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Hispanic children lead those who report fearing being attacked or harmed at school during the previous 6 six months, with 16% indicating their fear, followed by 13% of black students, and 9% for white students (National Center for

Education Statistics, 2002).

For use in this paper, the definition of bullying is "...direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing by one or more students against a [student]" (Banks, p. 1). According to Sullivan, it includes these elements as well: 1) harm is intended; 2) there is an imbalance of power; 3) it is often organized and systematic. It may also consist of tactics to isolate or exclude the student (Sullivan, 2000).

Acts that single out a person because of his or her identity or perceived identity have come to be well-documented, particularly those that target a student's race or gender. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that

In 1999, about 13 percent of students ages 12 through 18 reported that someone at school had used hate-related words against them. That is, in the prior six months someone at school called them a derogatory word having to do with race/ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. In addition, about 36 percent of students saw hate-related graffiti at school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

In Washington state, the Safe Schools Coalition (SSC) collected qualitative data on anti-gay harassment and violence in schools over five years, and reported on 111 incidents. These incidents occurred in 73 different schools, and 148 students reported having anti-gay harassment aimed at them. In one-third of the reported cases, adults did nothing. The results of these acts are impossible to measure, yet the SSC reported that twelve students changed schools to avoid the abuse, ten attempted suicide, and two did kill themselves (Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State, 1999).

For this paper, sexual harassment will be defined as follows:

*Quid pro quo* harassment occurs when a school district employee explicitly or implicitly conditions a student's participation in an education program or activity or bases an educational decision on the student's submission to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether or not the student submits to the conduct. Hostile environment harassment occurs when unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature by another student, a school employee, or a third party are sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or to create a hostile or abusive educational environment. Sexual harassment includes conduct that is also criminal in nature such as rape, sexual assault, stalking, and similar offenses (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights & National Association of Attorneys General, 1999).

Sexual harassment among child peers also includes "use of sexist terms, comments about body parts, sexual advances, unwanted touching, gestures, taunting, sexual graffiti, and rumor mongering about a classmate's sexual identity or activity" (Schwartz, 2000). Research suggests that it pervades the school environment; 79% of boys report having experienced sexual harassment, "...with one in four students experiencing it often." Seventy-six percent of students say that they have been sexually harassed in a non-physical way, while 58% percent state that they have been victims of physical sexual harassment. Girls in particular report being negatively affected by sexual harassment, with 83% of them report having experienced harassment. These girls are more likely to feel embarrassed and less confident (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 2001, 2002).

Exploring the context of this problem includes the specific examining of the State of Washington and how many of its students are affected by policies related to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. In 1992, Washington voters passed Initiatives 601 and 602 to limit state expenditures and revenues. This has resulted in fiscal trends in which spending on education as a percentage of the state budget has decreased, whereas spending on programs such as corrections has grown to be a larger percentage of the overall budgetary pie, which cannot itself grow (Washington Research Council, 1993). Subsequently, in 1999, the electorate passed Initiative 695, which replaced Washington state motor-vehicle license taxes with a flat \$30 annual fee. When this became law, it created an instant \$750 million shortfall in the state's budget, dire in a state which does not collect an income tax. With fewer revenue sources and a shrinking tax base as companies such as Boeing move elsewhere, adding new programs to state schools is not a priority.

Washington's 1,010,167 students learn in 296 public school districts. Over 91% of the amount needed for maintenance and operations for K-12 public education, \$6.7 billion, comes from state and local sources. Approximately 61,000 personnel work in these schools, including over 58,000 teachers, as well as principals and administrators. Nearly a quarter of the state's students are enrolled in the 19 districts located in King County. Approximately half of all the students in the state learn in the 53 districts that form the greater Seattle metropolitan area (King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties) (Bergeson, 2002). The state is challenged with meeting the needs of students in both rural and urban settings, and from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. While the number of white students is currently approximately 75% of the total, this number

continues a downward trend as Hispanic and Asian student enrollments are on the rise.

In short, Washington state faces tightening budgets, increasing enrollments, and an upswing in racial diversity in its public schools.

Washington Governor Gary Locke signed into law SHB1444, the “School Bullying” bill, on March 27, 2002. This bill requires each school district to adopt a policy by August 1, 2003, that prohibits the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to produce a model policy for school districts to use by August 1, 2002 (“Bullying Bill,” 2002). In April 2002, the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) sent a model policy (number 3207 and its accompanying procedure, number 3207P) to those districts who subscribe to their policy development service. This is shown in Safe

Schools Coalition Report

*The Prevalence, Characteristics, and Typology of  
Washington State School District Policies on Bullying, Harassment, and  
Discrimination*

**Introduction.**

This report examines a specific aspect of school safety: it explores the comprehensiveness and clarity of Washington state school district policies regarding bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The report examines the relevant background and context of this project, including a review of the research. It includes data analyzed from the policies related to these behaviors covering nearly two-thirds of Washington state’s school districts; 182 of 296 districts provided copies of their policies related to bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

In March of 2002, the Safe Schools/Bullying Act (SHB1444) was signed into law. This law requires that school districts develop or modify an existing policy to address bullying by August 1, 2003. Copies of any existing policies related to “bullying, harassment, and discrimination” were requested from all of Washington’s 296 school districts. Nearly two-thirds of them responded; 106 districts had policies addressing one or more of these issues.

**Method.**

In April 2002, the school districts were sent a letter requesting a copy of their existing policies related to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The letter enclosed a postcard which the districts could return to indicate that they did not have current policies in place on these issues. A copy of the letter was also sent to the school board president of each district, for his or her information. One-hundred eighty-two districts responded; of those, 137 sent policies, and 45 sent postcards. The districts that did not respond numbered 114.

In consultation with members of the Safe Schools Coalition, a data collection analysis form was developed in order to compile the same type of comparable information from each school district. Each policy was reviewed and analyzed. Results



were entered into a Microsoft Access database in order to produce reports. The data entry was checked for accuracy by a second person.

### **Key Research Findings.**

Number responding. Sixty-two percent (182) of the 296 districts responded. Of the 182 respondents, 45 stated that they did not currently have a policy on bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The remaining 137 sent copies of their policies; 19 stated that they had received the Washington State School Directors Association sample bullying policy and would be using it as a model for their district.

Bullying and harassment policies. Of the responding districts, eight or (less than a fraction of 1% of all Washington state districts) have policies that prohibit “bullying” specifically: Chimacum, Dayton, Northport, Prescott, Pullman, Riverview, Shoreline, and Vancouver. These districts serve 40,023 students. This finding is in sharp contrast to the districts known to have harassment policies. More than one in three districts does. Of the responding districts, 106 or (36% of all Washington state districts) address “harassment.” The number of students served by these policies total 643,384 or 84% of the students in the total responding districts.

Prohibited behaviors. In responding districts, the following behaviors were prohibited:

- sexual harassment (85%)
- discrimination (72%)
- harassment (52%)
- violence (31%)
- name-calling (19%)
- bullying (8%)

Forms of bias. In responding districts with bullying and harassment policies, the following examples of bias-based discrimination were specified (Figure 1 below shows them in the context of examples shown in the legislature’s and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (OSPI) policies):

- race (70%)
- religion (63%) \*\*
- physical disability (61%) \*\*
- gender (58%) \*\*
- national origin (56%) \*\*
- color (50%) \*\*
- mental disability (47%) \*\*
- sensory disability (45%)
- marital status (31%)
- sexual orientation (20%) \*\*
- previous arrest and/or incarceration (18%)
- age (15%)
- socio-economic status (9%) \*\*\*
- ethnicity (8%)
- pregnancy (8%)

- illness (3%)
- gender identity (1%) \*\*\*

### **Conclusions.**

As Washington school districts work to address the mandate of the bullying law, they can turn to their peer districts for best practices in several areas.

A few districts had particularly clear and succinct definitions, such as those policies provided by Arlington, Chimacum, and Dayton. Others, such as Elma, provided helpful details in their policy and procedure for training. The employee in-service education and training program outlined in the Renton policy seem especially inclusive and complete. Both Ephrata and Riverview submitted report/complaint forms that were brief yet comprehensive.

Bainbridge, Seattle, and Issaquah's anti-harassment policies are particularly inclusive, in that they include well-written definitions, outline a clearly-defined complaint process, and address false accusations, remedies, retaliation, and dissemination of the policy. Bainbridge's is more wide-ranging than most, and includes graffiti, hazing, pranks, offensive jokes, deliberate and unwelcome touching, cornering, pinching, pulling on clothing as prohibited behaviors. Vancouver and Shoreline's policies could serve as a models regarding bullying prevention.

The policies sent by Burlington-Edison, Chewelah, Marysville and Mukilteo were framed by philosophical statements that grounded the policies in meaning and a community context. The policies from Anacortes and Pullman featured clear, well written, and easy-to-understand disciplinary sanctions. The Prosser policy states that students' procedural due process rights will be guaranteed in the implementation of discipline procedures. Procedures that were complete and simple to follow were sent by East Valley (Spokane), Elma, and Grandview.

Several districts listed a mandate for training, beyond posting of the requirements, in the policy. Twenty-seven districts covering 29% of the student enrollment in the responding districts make provision for training. Finally, a best practice that can encourage policies to be widely-read and adhered to is posting them on the world-wide web, such as Federal Way and Lake Washington do. Others can be found at the OSPI website ([www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)) by looking at individual district links. The Safe Schools Coalition's website also has sample policies ([www.safeschoolscoalition.org](http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org)). Click on "law & policy" and then on "model school and district policies and procedures."

### **Suggested references.**

ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project and Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (2002). Adding Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity to Discrimination and Harassment Policies in School, ACLU.

Q&A geared toward school officials regarding adding sexual orientation to a non-discrimination or harassment policy. Available on-line:  
<http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/GLSEN.html>

American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network (2002). Model Anti-Harassment Policy, American Civil Liberties Union.

Model Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policies suggested by ACLU.  
Available on-line: <http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/schoolpolicy.html>

Banks, R. (1997). Bullying in Schools. ERIC Digest. Champaign, IL, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

Excellent reference on background and fairly recent research. ERIC Identifier: ED407154.

Cole, K. (2002). Letter Urging Adoption of Safe Schools Policies, American Civil Liberties Union.

Addressed to principals, administrators, and school board members, this letter uses federal court cases and statistics about the experiences of LGBT students to explain to schools why they have a legal responsibility to keep their schools safe. It makes the case for the adoption of nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies as one way of combating anti-gay harassment. Available on-line: [http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/ssp\\_letter.html](http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/ssp_letter.html)

Dwyer, K., D. Osher, et al. (1998). Early Warning, Timely Response: a Guide to Safe Schools. Washington D.C., U.S. Department Of Education, Special Education and Rehabilitative Service and U.S. Department of Justice.

This guide presents a brief summary of the research on violence prevention and intervention and crisis response and schools. It is designed to provide school communities with reliable and practical information about what they can do to be prepared and to reduce the likelihood of violence. Creating a safe school requires having in place many preventive measures for children's mental and emotional problems -- as well as a comprehensive approach to early identification of all warning signs that might lead to violence toward self or others. Available online: [www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html).

Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network and National Center for Lesbian Rights (2002). Frequently Asked Questions on Safe School Policies. Washington, DC, Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network.

Question and answer document. Available online: [http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN\\_ARTICLES/pdf\\_file/1333.pdf](http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ARTICLES/pdf_file/1333.pdf)

Human Rights Watch (2001). *Hatred in the Hallways: Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Students in U.S. Schools.*

In this report, Human Rights Watch documents attacks on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who are subjected to abuse on a daily basis by their peers and in some cases by teachers and school administrators. It makes suggestions regarding addressing these attacks, including key suggestions addressed specifically to school districts. Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslgbt/toc.htm>

Jones, R. (1999). "'I Don't Feel Safe Here Anymore:' Your legal duty to protect gay kids from harassment." *American School Board Journal.*

The article explores recent court cases that have been brought against school districts on behalf of gay students who said that their complaints about harassment have been ignored. The OCR has clarified that Title IX prohibits sex discrimination against gay students.

Kulich, W. A. W., Elizabeth R. Koller (1998). "Creating harassment free schools." *Thrust for Educational Leadership* 28(1): 36-38.

A succinct article detailing what steps districts must take to address harassment in schools.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (2001). *Creating Safer Rural Schools: Involving the Community*, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Although addressed to rural schools, the report provides guidelines and checklists that focus on how any school can design a comprehensive violence-prevention and preparedness program that draws on community strength. Available online: <http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/pdf/ruralsch.pdf>

Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State (2002). "Balancing Students' Rights: A Child's Right to Free Speech and Another Child's Right to a Harassment-Free Learning Environment." Seattle, American Civil Liberties Union.

This brief paper explores how reasonable rules against harassment do not violate free speech. Examines both student and teacher conduct. Available online: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/balancingstudentsrights.pdf>

Schwartz, W. (2000). *Preventing Student Sexual Harassment.* ERIC Digest Number 160. New York, ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

This digest reviews effective anti-harassment strategies currently employed by schools.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and National Association of Attorneys General (1999). *Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools*. Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and National Association of Attorneys General.

The comprehensive, premier resource for schools in addressing bullying, harassment, and discrimination, and hate crime. Available online:  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/archives/Harassment/harassment.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2001). *Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties*. Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Education: 48.

The revised guidance reaffirms the compliance standards that OCR applies in investigations and administrative enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) regarding sexual harassment. It continues to provide the principles that a school should use to recognize and effectively respond to sexual harassment of students in its program as a condition of receiving Federal financial assistance. Available online:  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/shguide/index.html>

Viadero, D. (1997). "Beating the Bullies." *Teacher Magazine*.

Article reviews some of the research and discusses some field-tested approaches. Focuses on the teacher's role in preventing bullying.

Walker, H. M. and J. Eaton-Walker (2000). *Key questions about school safety: Critical issues and recommended solutions*, National Association of Secondary School Principals: 46-55.

Assists administrators in putting together a school safety plan.

Appendix B – WSSDA Sample Policy. At approximately the same time, the OSPI made it and other resources available at its website (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002).

In preparation for this project, I contacted WSSDA and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop background information and to try to determine whether a compendium of current Washington state school policies exists. Representatives of both organizations reported that such a compendium does not exist.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The research for this project was conducted from May through August 2002. It was done in connection with the work of the Safe Schools Coalition, a public-private partnership in support of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender youth whose mission is “to help schools - at home and all over the world - become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.” SSC’s role is to reduce bias-based bullying and violence in schools and to help schools better meet the needs of sexual minority youth and children with sexual minority parents/guardians locally, nationally and internationally, by providing resources to schools (posters, publications); raising parent/guardian, student, educator and community awareness; providing skill-based training for educators; serving as a technical advisory resource; conducting and disseminating research.

Working with SSC, I contacted the 296 school superintendents in Washington state to request information about their existing district policies. I analyzed these policies and compiled a database of all the policies statewide and indicated whether they currently prohibit bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

In April 2002, I sent each school district a letter requesting a copy of their existing policies related to bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination. The letter enclosed a postcard (Appendix C - Response postcard) which the districts could return to indicate that they did not have current policies in place on these issues. A copy of the letter was also sent to the school board president of each district, for his or her information

(Appendix D - Letter to school districts). One-hundred eighty-two (62%) districts responded; of those, 137 (46%) sent policies, and 45 (15%) sent postcards. The districts that did not respond numbered 114 (39%).

In consultation with members of the Safe Schools Coalition, a data analysis form was developed in order to compile the same set of data from each school district (Appendix E - Data Analysis Tool). Each policy was reviewed and a form was completed for each. Once these were complete, the results were input into a Microsoft Access database in order to produce reports. (These are shown in Appendix F - Database Data Entry Screens). The data entry was checked for accuracy by a second person. An executive summary of the results was presented to a meeting of the Safe Schools Coalition on September 17, 2002.



## Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

### Characteristics of Effective Policies

Effective school policies share many common characteristics. They include a clear definition of the prohibited harassing and/or discriminating behavior (American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network, 2002); (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights & National Association of Attorneys General, 1999). They include examples of the prohibited behavior (Kulisch, 1998). They charge every member of the school community with reporting. They are clear on how to make a report (American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network, 2002), (Schwartz, 2000). They include reporting procedures that make students comfortable (Kulisch, 1998). A mechanism is included for informing the parents if a report is made (Campbell, 2000; Sullivan, 2000); though it is important to note that this can have unintended consequences, as in the case of students who are fearful to report harassment should their parents learn of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the process. In consideration of this valid concern, a sound approach would be for the policy to allow exceptions or at least include high school students in the decision-making process. Effective policies address how an investigation will be conducted, and they make a statement regarding retaliation (Kulisch, 1998; Schwartz, 2000). Confidentiality is treated with maximum sensitivity within the legal limits (Kulisch, 1998). An annual review is made of the policies to evaluate their ongoing effectiveness for staff review; additionally, they are disseminated to students and parents annually (Rosen, 1997). Moreover, a comprehensive approach to eliminating harassment and hate crime includes: stating the district's commitment to eliminating

harassment; including all harassment prohibited by federal, state, and local laws; defining harassment based on, at least, race, gender, national origin, actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, disability and other types of harassment prohibited by state law or by district choice; defining sexual harassment; explaining that a hostile environment depends on the context in which the conduct occurs; prohibiting retaliation against person who report discrimination or participate in the proceedings; working across all grades and various disciplines to reduce prejudice and increase appreciation for all kinds of people through the curriculum; and including information about the First Amendment and freedom of speech (Human Rights Watch, 2001; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights & National Association of Attorneys General, 1999).

#### Washington Districts With Current Bullying and Harassment Policies

During the course of this project, Washington state school district policies were examined with regard to prohibitions against bullying and harassment. Of the responding districts, eight or (less than a fraction of 1% of all Washington state districts) have policies that prohibit “bullying” specifically: Chimacum, Dayton, Northport, Prescott, Pullman, Riverview, Shoreline, and Vancouver. These districts serve 40,023 students. This finding is in sharp contrast to the districts known to have harassment policies. More than one in three districts does. Of the responding districts, 106 or (36% of all Washington state districts) address “harassment.” The number of students served by these policies total 643,384 or 84% of the students in the total responding districts. These districts are shown in Table 1.

### Washington Districts With Current Discrimination Policies

Of the responding districts, 115 or 39% of all Washington state districts reported having a current policy on bullying and harassment. The number of students known to be currently served by these policies totals 664,956 or 87% of the students in the responding districts. These districts are shown in Table 2.

### Prohibited Behaviors (by type of behavior)

Of those responding districts that have policies on bullying and harassment, many of them prohibited specific types of behavior as part of their policies, including sexual harassment (85%), discrimination (72%), harassment (52%), violence (31%), name-calling (19%), and bullying (8%). (Please note that every school district in Washington is required to have a policy that addresses sexual harassment. Because sexual harassment policies were not specifically requested from districts, some did not send them. As such, the figure of 85% shown above reflects the responding districts that addressed sexual harassment as a component of their overall policies dealing with bullying and harassment.) The number of districts prohibiting specific behaviors, and whether they are listed in district-wide policies, staff/employee manual policies, or in the student manual, is shown in Table 3.

### Prohibited Behaviors (by type of bias expressed)

The responding districts with policies on bullying and harassment also frequently listed examples of unacceptable, bias-based behavior, including discrimination based on race (70%), religion (63%), physical disability (61%), gender (58%), national origin

(56%), color (50%), mental disability (47%), sensory disability (45%), marital status (31%), sexual orientation (20%), previous arrest and/or incarceration (18%), age(15%), socio-economic status (9%), ethnicity (8%), pregnancy (8%), and illness (3%), gender identity (1%). Table 4 shows a complete listing. The number of responding districts specifying unacceptable, bias-based behavior, and whether they are listed in district-wide policies, staff/employee manual policies, or in the student manual, is shown in Table 5.

The data show that the number of districts responding with examples of unacceptable, bias-based discrimination listed in their anti-discrimination policies tends to correspond with district enrollment, except in the case of sexual orientation. For example, under the category “race,” 70% of districts with bullying policies specified race as an example in its policies, which covers 76% of the students in the responding districts. Similarly, under “religion,” 63% of districts with bullying policies specified religion as an example of unacceptable, bias-based discrimination in their policies, which serve 64% of the students in the responding districts.

### Typology of Policies

In reviewing the district policies, patterns emerged. There are five basic types of school district policies on harassment and discrimination. Policies are the rules and regulations developed and adopted by publicly-elected school board members for the administration of a school district. I have categorized them as follows: Communitarian, Individualistic, Legalistic, Positive Climate, and Minimalist. Some districts have policies that are a blending of types; thus, a district may be listed in more than one category.

First, there is the **Communitarian** type. Communitarian policies emphasize the

school district as a community of learners and students as citizens of a larger body. These policies call upon students to behave in ways that promote the common good. For example, one policy appeals to “reasonable standards of behavior for effective citizenship” (Central Valley School District, 2002). Another, in its “Student Rights and Responsibilities” policy, states, “The student is responsible as a citizen to observe the laws of the United States, the State of Washington, and/or its subdivisions, and while in school, the student shall respect the rights of others” (Monroe School District Board of Directors, 2002). A list of districts with Communitarian policies is found in Table 6.

The **Individualistic** type of policy emphasizes the needs of the individual student. For example, “The mission of the Prosser School District is to challenge each learner by equitably providing the tools, resources and conditions necessary to master knowledge skills and behaviors essential for life-long learning and success through a partnership with parents and our diverse community (Prosser Public Schools Board of Trustees, 2002). Similarly, Coupeville Schools states that “the free expression of student opinion is an important part of education in a democratic society...,” (Coupeville Public Schools Board of Directors, 2002). A list of districts with Individualistic policies is found in Table 7.

**Legalistic** policies are characterized by their emphasis on legal standards. Additionally, they seem to be derived from a boilerplate, as they seem to share much standard language in common with each other. It is unclear from the standardized format of these policies whether they reflect the values and input from members of the local communities, as they are very much alike. A sample of a Legalistic Policy, from Shoreline School District, is represented in the Appendix. A complete list of districts

with Legalistic policies is shown in Table 8.

**Positive climate** policies are those that focus on the school as a place for students to learn. These policies emphasize the district’s responsibility to offer a “safe, civil environment” for student achievement (Issaquah School District, 2001). The Issaquah policy further states,

The basic purpose of this policy is three-fold:

- 1) To promote a work and learning environment that is safe, productive and nurturing for all staff and students, and to encourage the free flow of ideas without fear or intimidation;
- 2) To provide our students with appropriate models for respectful problem-solving; and
- 3) To reduce the potential triggers for violent conducts, such as fear, anger, frustration and alienation – especially by making problem-solving procedures and alternative to violence readily accessible to both youth and adults who need them (Issaquah School District, 2001).

The potential pitfall of the Positive Climate type of policy is whereas it may define prohibited behaviors, it may omit specifying forms of bias that may underlie those behaviors (such as race, gender, and the like). A complete list of districts with Positive Climate policies is shown in Table 9.

**Minimalist** policies are lean of definitions, examples, and fully-fleshed out concepts. Many of the policies submitted fit into one or more of the other categories, and were also minimalist. A complete list of districts with Minimalist policies is shown in Table 10.

## Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### Summary

Number responding. Sixty-two percent (182) of the 296 districts responded. Of the 182 respondents, 45 stated that they did not currently have a policy on bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The others sent copies of their policies; 19 stated that they had received the Washington State School Directors Association sample bullying policy and would be using it as a model for their district.

Non-discrimination policies. More than one in three districts is known to have a non-discrimination policy. Of the responding districts, 115 or 39% of all Washington state districts are known to have a current policy on non-discrimination. The number of students known to be currently served by these policies totals 664,956 or 87% of the students in the responding districts.

Bullying and harassment policies. Of the responding districts, 8 or less than a fraction of 1% of all Washington state districts have policies that prohibit bullying: Chimacum, Dayton, Northport, Prescott, Pullman, Riverview, Shoreline and Vancouver. These districts cover 40,023 students. This is in sharp contrast to the districts known to have harassment policies. More than one in three districts does. Of the responding districts, 106 or 36% of all Washington state districts address harassment. The number of students covered by these policies total 643,384 or 84% of the students in the responding districts.

Prohibited behaviors. In responding districts, the following behaviors were

prohibited:

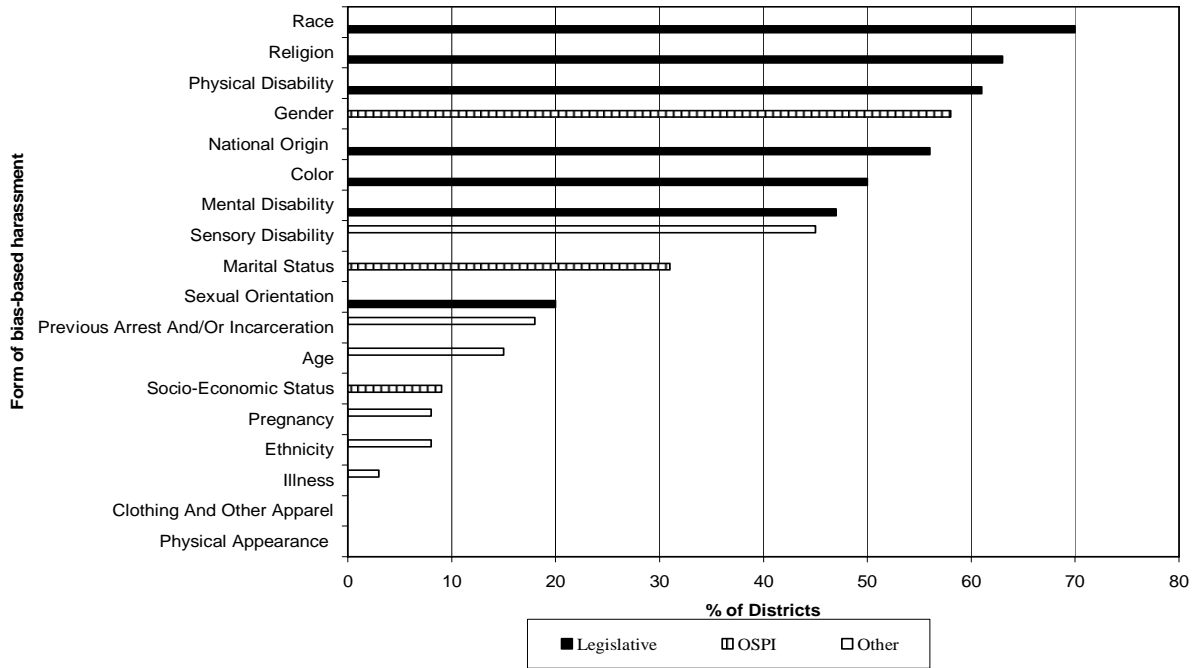
- sexual harassment (85%)
- discrimination (72%)
- harassment (52%)
- violence (31%)
- name-calling (19%)
- bullying (8%)

Forms of bias. In responding districts with bullying and harassment policies, the following examples of bias-based discrimination were specified (Figure 1 below shows them in the context of examples shown in the legislature's and OSPI's policies):

- race (70%)
- religion (63%)
- physical disability (61%)
- gender (58%)
- national origin (56%)
- color (50%)
- mental disability (47%)
- sensory disability (45%)
- marital status (31%)
- sexual orientation (20%)
- previous arrest and/or incarceration (18%)
- age (15%)
- socio-economic status (9%)



- ethnicity (8%)
- pregnancy (8%)
- illness (3%)
- gender identity (1%)



**Figure 1 - Bullying/harassment policies and which forms of bias-based harassment are listed in the legislature's categories and in the OSPI sample policy**

### Conclusions

As Washington school districts work to address the mandate of the bullying law, they can turn to their peer districts for best practices in several areas.

A few districts had particularly clear and succinct definitions, such as those

provided by Arlington, Chimacum, and Dayton. Others, such as Elma, provided helpful details in their policy and procedure for training. The employee in-service education and training program outlined in the Renton policy seem especially inclusive and complete. Both Ephrata and Riverview submitted report/complaint forms that were brief yet comprehensive.

Bainbridge, Seattle and Issaquah's anti-harassment policies are particularly inclusive, in that they include well-written definitions, outline a clearly-defined complaint process, and address false accusations, remedies, retaliation, and dissemination of the policy. Bainbridge's is more wide-ranging than most and includes graffiti, hazing, pranks, offensive jokes, deliberate and unwelcome touching, cornering, pinching, and pulling on clothing as prohibited behaviors. Vancouver and Shoreline's policies could serve as a models regarding bullying prevention.

The policies sent by Burlington-Edison, Chewelah, Marysville and Mukilteo were framed by philosophical statements that grounded the policies in meaning and a community context. The policies from Anacortes and Pullman featured clear, well written, and easy-to-understand disciplinary sanctions. The Prosser policy states that students' procedural due process rights will be guaranteed in the implementation of discipline procedures. Procedures that were complete and simple to follow were sent by East Valley - Spokane, Elma, and Grandview.

Several districts listed a mandate for training, beyond posting of the requirements, in the policy. Twenty-seven districts covering 29% of the student enrollment in the responding districts make provision for training. Finally, a best practice that can encourage policies to be widely-read and adhered to is posting them on the world-wide

web, such as Federal Way and Lake Washington have done. Others can be found at the OSPI website, [www. http://www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us).

There is some difference of opinion regarding the usefulness of consulting resources in meeting the bullying law mandate. In fact, nineteen different districts indicated in their responses that they had received the WSSDA sample policy and that it would be adopted verbatim by their districts. Wrote one administrator, "As you are aware, OSPI will be working with WSSDA to develop a model policy, then districts will have the option of working from that document. We have no desire to learn more about other districts' existing policies. Most in Washington use WSSDA's model policies" (Jerry Harding, 2002).

In conclusion, little more than a third of Washington's school districts are known to have a bullying, harassment, and/or violence policy. Less than half of the state's districts are known to have a policy on non-discrimination. Only eight percent of responding districts have policies that prohibit bullying, and only a third address violence. Given the importance of these policies in providing a safe and positive environment for students to learn, Washington state's mandate to cover every student with a policy covering bullying is laudable. This is a good beginning.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive Summary should optimally be disseminated to all school districts; at a minimum, each responding district should receive a copy. Districts should work with their various stakeholders as they draft or amend their policies related to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. They should draw upon the resources shown in this paper

(

## Appendices

Appendix A - Executive Summary). Further research should explore the number of students served by these policies, as well as students' awareness and willingness to assert their rights under them, in the future.

## Tables

**Table 1 - Districts with a policy addressing bullying and harassment**

Name	Enrollment	Name	Enrollment	Name	Enrollment
Aberdeen	4,172	Lake Washington	23,762	South Whidbey	2,355
Anacortes	3,131	Lake Chelan	1,383	Spokane	31,518
Arlington	5,114	Mary M Knight	236	Steilacoom	2,090
Bainbridge	4,120	McCleary	333	Historical	31
Bellevue	15,510	Mead	8,383	Steptoe	31
Bellingham	10,378	Mercer Island	4,187	Stevenson-Carson	1,096
Bremerton	5,894	Methow Valley	666	Sultan	2,343
Brewster	1,005	Monroe	6,034	Sumner	8,004
Bridgeport	654	Mount Baker	2,387	Tacoma	34,146
Burlington	3,603	Mukilteo	13,761	Tahoma	6,098
Edison	3,603	Naches Valley	1,586	Tekoa	197
Central Kitsap	13,335	Nine Mile Falls	1,624	Tonasket	1,144
Central Valley	11,023	North Thurston	12,887	Toutle Lake	627
Chewelah	1,283	Northport	198	Tumwater	6,184
Chimacum	1,380	Oak Harbor	6,250	University Place	5,346
Clover Park	13,769	Oakesdale	147	Vancouver	21,980
Colville	2,265	Ocosta	767	Vashon Island	1,636
Coupeville	1,107	Olympia	9,103	Wahkiakum	514
Crescent	219	Orchard Prairie	64	Walla Walla	6,182
Creston	116	Orting	1,799	Wapato	3,449
Dayton	610	Pioneer	787	Warden	984
Deer Park	1,964	Port Angeles	4,876	Wenatchee	7,421
East Valley (Spokane)	4,707	Prescott	257	West Valley (Spokane)	3,576
Elma	2,022	Prosser	2,818	White River	4,308
Enumclaw	5,160	Pullman	2,264	Wilbur	244
Ephrata	2,293	Quincy	2,319	Willapa Valley	432
Everett	18,943	Raymond	597	Yakima	14,115
Evergreen (Clark)	22,556	Richland	9,622	Total students in these districts	643,384
Federal Way	22,636	Ritzville	397		
Finley	1,115	Riverside	1,983		
Freeman	920	Riverview	2,918		
Grandview	3,036	Roosevelt	16		
Granite Falls	2,297	Seattle	47,449		
Grapeview	164	Sedro Woolley	4,433		
Highline	17,752	Shoreline	10,416		
Issaquah	14,588	Skamania	77		
Kahlotus	89	Snohomish	8,964		
Kelso	5,222	South Bend	564		
Kennewick	13,993	South Kitsap	11,156		
Kent	26,670				
Kittitas	554				

**Table 2 - Districts with a policy on non-discrimination**

Name	Enrollment	Name	Enrollment	Name	Enrollment
Aberdeen	4,172	Kettle Falls	855	South Whidbey	2,355
Anacortes	3,131	Kittitas	554	Spokane	31,518
Arlington	5,114	Lake Washington	23,762	Steilacoom	
Auburn	13,502	Lake Chelan	1,383	Historical	2,090
Bainbridge	4,120	Lakewood	2,445	Steptoe	31
Bellevue	15,510	Mary Walker	599	Stevenson-Carson	1,096
Bellingham	10,378	Marysville	11,977	Sultan	2,343
Blaine	2,034	McCleary	333	Summit Valley	97
Bremerton	5,894	Mead	8,383	Sumner	8,004
Brewster	1,005	Meridian	1,582	Tacoma	34,146
Bridgeport	654	Methow Valley	666	Tahoma	6,098
Burlington Edison	3,603	Monroe	6,034	Tekoa	197
Cashmere	1,494	Mount Baker	2,387	Tonasket	1,144
Castle Rock	1,378	Mt Vernon	5,744	Toutle Lake	627
Central Kitsap	13,335	Mukilteo	13,761	Tumwater	6,184
Central Valley	11,023	Nine Mile Falls	1,624	University Place	5,346
Cheney	3,455	North Thurston	12,887	Vancouver	21,980
Chewelah	1,283	Northport	198	Vashon Island	1,636
Chimacum	1,380	Oakesdale	147	Wahkiakum	514
Clover Park	13,769	Ocean Beach	1,210	Walla Walla	6,182
Colville	2,265	Ocosta	767	Wapato	3,449
Coupeville	1,107	Odessa	294	Warden	984
Crescent	219	Olympia	9,103	Washtucna	77
Dayton	610	Omak	2,158	Wenatchee	7,421
Deer Park	1,964	Orcas	557	West Valley	
East Valley		Orchard Prairie	64	(Spokane)	3,576
(Spokane)	4,707	Orient	89	White River	4,308
Elma	2,022	Pioneer	787	Wilbur	244
Enumclaw	5,160	Port Angeles	4,876	Yakima	14,115
Ephrata	2,293	Prescott	257	Yelm	4,525
Everett	18,943	Prosser	2,818	Total students in	664,956
Evergreen (Clark)	22,556	Pullman	2,264	these districts	
Federal Way	22,636	Quillayute Valley	1,320		
Finley	1,115	Raymond	597		
Freeman	920	Renton	12,761		
Grandview	3,036	Republic	512		
Granite Falls	2,297	Riverside	1,983		
Green Mountain	129	Riverview	2,918		
Highline	17,752	Roosevelt	16		
Issaquah	14,588	Seattle	47,449		
Kahlotus	89	Shoreline	10,416		
Kelso	5,222	Skamania	77		
Kennewick	13,993	Snohomish	8,964		
Kent	26,670	South Bend	564		

**Table 3 – Listing of prohibited behaviors and where shown in policies addressing bullying, harassment and intimidation**

	Number of Districts		
	District-wide Policy	Staff/Employee Manual	Student Manual
Sexual harassment	90	30	41
Discrimination	76	20	26
Harassment	55	12	31
Name-calling	20	2	9
Bullying	8	1	7

**Table 4 - Listing of prohibited forms of discrimination in responding districts with bullying, harassment, and discrimination policies**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Percentage of districts</i>	<i>Percentage of enrollment affected</i>	<i>Number of districts</i>	<i>Enrollment served in districts</i>
Race	70%	76%	74	490,308
Religion	63%	64%	67	411,904
Physical Disability	61%	64%	65	412,082
Gender	58%	64%	62	410,726
National origin	56%	58%	59	375,215
Color	50%	49%	53	317,471
Mental Disability	47%	32%	50	207,470
Sensory Disability	45%	30%	48	193,632
Marital Status	31%	34%	33	218,136
Sexual Orientation	20%	38%	21	243,058
Previous arrest and/or incarceration	18%	9%	19	60,954
Age	15%	37%	16	239,224
Socio-economic status	9%	15%	10	94,579
Ethnicity	8%	15%	9	96,427
Pregnancy	8%	11%	9	71,086
Illness	3%	6%	3	39,492
Gender identity	1%	1%	1	2,918



**Table 5 – Listing of prohibited forms of discrimination in responding districts and where prohibited**

	Number of Districts		
	District-wide Policy	Staff/Employee Manual	<i>Student Manual</i>
Race	74	19	24
Religion	67	19	22
Physical Disability	65	17	19
Gender	62	16	21
National origin	59	17	19
Color	53	16	12
Mental Disability	50	8	15
Sensory Disability	48	7	14
Marital Status	33	11	10
Sexual Orientation	21	5	12
Previous arrest and/or incarceration	19	1	5
Age	16	12	6
Socio-economic status	10	0	8
Ethnicity	9	2	3
Pregnancy	9	0	4
Illness	3	1	0
Gender identity	1	0	0

**Table 6 - Districts with Communitarian policies**

Auburn
Blaine
Burlington Edison
Central Valley
Chewelah
Coulee/Hartline
Coupeville
East Valley (Spokane)
Finley
Granger
Marysville
Methow Valley
Northport
Olympia
Renton
Richland
Spokane
Tacoma
Tahoma
Yakima

**Table 7 - Districts with Individualistic policies**

Boistfort
Chimacum
Grapeview
Mead
Montesano
Mukilteo
Prosser
Toutle Lake
Vashon Island
Blaine
Burlington-Edison
Coulee/Hartline
Coupeville
Marysville
Richland
Tacoma
Yakima

**Table 8 - Districts with Legalistic policies**

Aberdeen
Almira
Bainbridge
Bellevue
Boistfort
Bremerton
Burlington Edison
Central Kitsap
Central Valley
Cheney
Chewelah
Chimacum
Clover Park
Colville
Coulee/Hartline
Coupeville
Creston
Dayton
Deer Park
East Valley (Spokane)
Elma
Enumclaw
Ephrata
Everett
Evergreen(Clark)
Federal Way
Finley
Franklin Pierce
Freeman
Grandview
Granite Falls
Highline
Kelso
Kennewick
Kittitas
Lake Chelan
Lake Washington
Lakewood
Mercer Island
Meridian
Montesano
Nine Mile Falls
Oak Harbor

Ocean Beach
Ocosta
Odessa
Olympia
Omak
Orcas
Orchard Prairie
Orting
Pasco
Pioneer
Port Angeles
Prescott
Prosser
Quinalt
Quincy
Raymond
Riverview
Roosevelt
Sedro Woolley
Snohomish
South Kitsap
South Whidbey
Steilacoom Historical
Steptoe
Stevenson-Carson
Sultan
Summit Valley
Sumner
Tahoma
Toutle Lake
Tumwater
University Place
Vancouver
Vashon Island
Warden
Washtucna
Wenatchee
West Valley (Spokane)
West Valley (Yakima)
Yakima
Yelm

**Table 9 - Districts with Positive Climate policies**

Almira
Bellingham
Burlington Edison
Cashmere
Coupeville
Dayton
East Valley (Spokane)
Finley
Granger
Grapeview
Issaquah
Kahlotus
Kent
Mary Walker
Methow Valley
Naches Valley
Nine Mile Falls
Northport
Orient
Pullman
Renton
Ritzville
Riverside
Shoreline
South Bend
Spokane
Tonasket
Vancouver
Wahkiakum
Wapato
Warden
Wilbur
Yakima

**Table 10 - Districts with Minimalist policies**

Aberdeen
Bellingham
Boistfort
Cheney
Clover Park
Coupeville
Creston
Dayton
Deer Park
Franklin Pierce
Grapeview
Kelso
Kent
Kittitas
Mary M Knight
Mary Walker
Mead
Meridian
Mt Vernon
Naches Valley
Oakesdale
Oak Harbor
Orting
Port Townsend
Quinault
Quincy
Republic
Ritzville
South Bend
Stevenson- Carson
Sumner
Tacoma
Tekoa
Washtucna
Willapa Valley
Yelm

## Appendices

### Appendix A - Executive Summary

Safe Schools Coalition Report  
*The Prevalence, Characteristics, and Typology of  
Washington State School District Policies on Bullying, Harassment, and  
Discrimination*

#### Introduction.

This report examines a specific aspect of school safety: it explores the comprehensiveness and clarity of Washington state school district policies regarding

The Safe Schools Coalition is a public-private partnership in support of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender youth, whose mission is “to help schools - at home and all over the world - become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.” The complete report will be available at [www.safeschoolscoalition.org](http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org).

bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The report examines the relevant background and context of this project, including a review of the research. It includes data analyzed from the policies related to these behaviors covering nearly two-thirds of Washington state’s school districts; 182 of 296 districts provided copies of their policies related to bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

In March of 2002, the Safe Schools/Bullying Act (SHB1444) was signed into law. This law requires that school districts develop or modify an existing policy to address bullying by August 1, 2003. Copies of any existing policies related to “bullying, harassment, and discrimination” were requested from all of Washington’s 296 school districts. Nearly two-thirds of them responded; 106 districts had policies addressing one or more of these issues.

#### Method.

In April 2002, the school districts were sent a letter requesting a copy of their existing policies related to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The letter enclosed a postcard which the districts could return to indicate that they did not have current policies in place on these issues. A copy of the letter was also sent to the school board president of each district, for his or her information. One-hundred eighty-two districts responded; of those, 137 sent policies, and 45 sent postcards. The districts that did not respond numbered 114.

In consultation with members of the Safe Schools Coalition, a data collection analysis form was developed in order to compile the same type of comparable information from each school district. Each policy was reviewed and analyzed. Results were entered into a Microsoft Access database in order to produce reports. The data entry was checked for accuracy by a second person.

### **Key Research Findings.**

Number responding. Sixty-two percent (182) of the 296 districts responded. Of the 182 respondents, 45 stated that they did not currently have a policy on bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The remaining 137 sent copies of their policies; 19 stated that they had received the Washington State School Directors Association sample bullying policy and would be using it as a model for their district.

Bullying and harassment policies. Of the responding districts, eight or (less than a fraction of 1% of all Washington state districts) have policies that prohibit “bullying” specifically: Chimacum, Dayton, Northport, Prescott, Pullman, Riverview, Shoreline, and Vancouver. These districts serve 40,023 students. This finding is in sharp contrast to the districts known to have harassment policies. More than one in three districts does. Of the responding districts, 106 or (36% of all Washington state districts) address “harassment.” The number of students served by these policies total 643,384 or 84% of the students in the total responding districts.

Prohibited behaviors. In responding districts, the following behaviors were prohibited:

- sexual harassment (85%)\*
- discrimination (72%)
- harassment (52%)
- violence (31%)
- name-calling (19%)
- bullying (8%)

Forms of bias. In responding districts with bullying and harassment policies, the following examples of bias-based discrimination were specified (Figure 1 below shows them in the context of examples shown in the legislature’s and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (OSPI) policies):

- race (70%)\*\*
- religion (63%)\*\*
- physical disability (61%)\*\*
- gender (58%)\*\*
- national origin (56%)\*\*
- color (50%)\*\*
- mental disability (47%)\*\*
- sensory disability (45%)
- marital status (31%)\*\*\*
- sexual orientation (20%)\*\*

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\* Whereas every Washington district is required to have a sexual harassment policy, these were not specifically requested from districts, and some did not send them. As such, the figure of 85% shown above reflects the responding districts that addressed sexual harassment as a component of their bullying/harassment policies.

\*\* required component of every district’s policy according to the 2002 law

\*\*\* recommended example of “other distinguishing characteristics” according to OSPI’s new model policy



- previous arrest and/or incarceration (18%)
- age (15%)
- socio-economic status (9%) \*\*\*
- ethnicity (8%)
- pregnancy (8%)
- illness (3%)
- gender identity (1%) \*\*\*

### **Conclusions.**

As Washington school districts work to address the mandate of the bullying law, they can turn to their peer districts for best practices in several areas.

A few districts had particularly clear and succinct definitions, such as those policies provided by Arlington, Chimacum, and Dayton. Others, such as Elma, provided helpful details in their policy and procedure for training. The employee in-service education and training program outlined in the Renton policy seem especially inclusive and complete. Both Ephrata and Riverview submitted report/complaint forms that were brief yet comprehensive.

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The policies sent by Burlington-Edison, Chewelah, Marysville and Mukilteo were framed by philosophical statements that grounded the policies in meaning and a community context. The policies from Anacortes and Pullman featured clear, well written, and easy-to-understand disciplinary sanctions. The Prosser policy states that students' procedural due process rights will be guaranteed in the implementation of discipline procedures. Procedures that were complete and simple to follow were sent by East Valley (Spokane), Elma, and Grandview.

Several districts listed a mandate for training, beyond posting of the requirements, in the policy. Twenty-seven districts covering 29% of the student enrollment in the responding districts make provision for training. Finally, a best practice that can encourage policies to be widely-read and adhered to is posting them on the world-wide web, such as Federal Way and Lake Washington do. Others can be found at the OSPI website ([www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)) by looking at individual district links. The Safe Schools Coalition's website also has sample policies ([www.safeschoolscoalition.org](http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org)). Click on "law & policy" and then on "model school and district policies and procedures."

### **Suggested references.**

ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project and Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (2002). Adding Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity to Discrimination and Harassment Policies in School, ACLU.

Q&A geared toward school officials regarding adding sexual orientation to a non-discrimination or harassment policy. Available on-line:  
<http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/GLSEN.html>

American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network (2002). Model Anti-Harassment Policy, American Civil Liberties Union.

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Available on-line: <http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/schoolpolicy.html>

Banks, R. (1997). Bullying in Schools. ERIC Digest. Champaign, IL, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

Excellent reference on background and fairly recent research. ERIC Identifier: ED407154.

Cole, K. (2002). Letter Urging Adoption of Safe Schools Policies, American Civil Liberties Union.

Addressed to principals, administrators, and school board members, this letter uses federal court cases and statistics about the experiences of LGBT students to explain to schools why they have a legal responsibility to keep their schools safe. It makes the case for the adoption of nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies as one way of combating anti-gay harassment. Available on-line:  
[http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/ssp\\_letter.html](http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/ssp_letter.html)

Dwyer, K., D. Osher, et al. (1998). Early Warning, Timely Response: a Guide to Safe Schools. Washington D.C., U.S. Department Of Education, Special Education and Rehabilitative Service and U.S. Department of Justice.

This guide presents a brief summary of the research on violence prevention and intervention and crisis response and schools. It is designed to provide school communities with reliable and practical information about what they can do to be prepared and to reduce the likelihood of violence. Creating a safe school requires having in place many preventive measures for children's mental and emotional problems -- as well as a comprehensive approach to early identification of all warning signs that might lead to violence toward self or others. Available online:  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html).

Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network and National Center for Lesbian Rights (2002). Frequently Asked Questions on Safe School Policies. Washington, DC, Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network.

Question and answer document. Available online: [http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN\\_ARTICLES/pdf\\_file/1333.pdf](http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ARTICLES/pdf_file/1333.pdf)

Human Rights Watch (2001). *Hatred in the Hallways: Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Students in U.S. Schools.*

In this report, Human Rights Watch documents attacks on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who are subjected to abuse on a daily basis by their peers and in some cases by teachers and school administrators. It makes suggestions regarding addressing these attacks, including key suggestions addressed specifically to school districts. Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslgbt/toc.htm>

Jones, R. (1999). "'I Don't Feel Safe Here Anymore:' Your legal duty to protect gay kids from harassment." *American School Board Journal.*

The article explores recent court cases that have been brought against school districts on behalf of gay students who said that their complaints about harassment have been ignored. The OCR has clarified that Title IX prohibits sex discrimination against gay students.

Kulisch, W. A. W., Elizabeth R. Koller (1998). "Creating harassment free schools." *Thrust for Educational Leadership* 28(1): 36-38.

A succinct article detailing what steps districts must take to address harassment in schools.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (2001). *Creating Safer Rural Schools: Involving the Community*, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Although addressed to rural schools, the report provides guidelines and checklists that focus on how any school can design a comprehensive violence-prevention and preparedness program that draws on community strength. Available online: <http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/pdf/ruralsch.pdf>

Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State (2002). "Balancing Students' Rights: A Child's Right to Free Speech and Another Child's Right to a Harassment-Free Learning Environment." Seattle, American Civil Liberties Union.

This brief paper explores how reasonable rules against harassment do not violate free speech. Examines both student and teacher conduct. Available online: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/balancingstudentsrights.pdf>

Schwartz, W. (2000). *Preventing Student Sexual Harassment.* ERIC Digest Number 160.

New York, ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

This digest reviews effective anti-harassment strategies currently employed by schools.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and National Association of Attorneys General (1999). *Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools*. Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and National Association of Attorneys General.

The comprehensive, premier resource for schools in addressing bullying, harassment, and discrimination, and hate crime. Available online:  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/archives/Harassment/harassment.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2001). *Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties*. Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Education: 48.

The revised guidance reaffirms the compliance standards that OCR applies in investigations and administrative enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) regarding sexual harassment. It continues to provide the principles that a school should use to recognize and effectively respond to sexual harassment of students in its program as a condition of receiving Federal financial assistance. Available online:  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/shguide/index.html>

Viadero, D. (1997). "Beating the Bullies." *Teacher Magazine*.

Article reviews some of the research and discusses some field-tested approaches. Focuses on the teacher's role in preventing bullying.

Walker, H. M. and J. Eaton-Walker (2000). *Key questions about school safety: Critical issues and recommended solutions*, *National Association of Secondary School Principals*: 46-55.

Assists administrators in putting together a school safety plan.

## Appendix B – WSSDA Sample Policy

### Sample Policy 3207

#### Students

#### **Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

The District is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers and patrons, free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. “Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by any characteristic in RCW 9A.36.080(3), (race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or mental or physical disability), or other distinguishing characteristics, when the intentional written, verbal, or physical act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student’s property; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education; or
- Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Nothing in this section requires the affected student to actually possess a characteristic that is a basis for the harassment, intimidation, or bullying. “Other distinguishing characteristics” can include but are not limited to: physical appearance, clothing or other apparel, socioeconomic status, gender identity, and marital status. Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. “Intentional acts” refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s). This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation or bullying may still be prohibited by other district policies or building, classroom, or program rules.

This policy is a component of the district’s responsibility to create and maintain a safe, civil, respectful and inclusive learning community and is to be implemented in conjunction with comprehensive training of staff and volunteers, including the education of students in partnership with families and the community. The policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the Comprehensive Safe Schools Plan that includes prevention, intervention, crisis response, recovery, and annual review. Employees, in particular, are expected to support the dignity and safety of all members of the school community. Depending upon the frequency and severity of the conduct, intervention, counseling, correction, discipline and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to remediate the impact on the victim and the climate and change the behavior of the perpetrator. This includes appropriate intervention, restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitute violations of this policy. The superintendent is authorized to direct the development and implementation of procedures addressing the elements of this

policy, consistent with the complaint and investigation components of procedure 6590, Sexual Harassment.

**Cross References**

Policy 3200, Rights and Responsibilities

Policy 3210, Nondiscrimination

Policy 3240, Student Conduct

Policy 3241, Classroom Management, Corrective Action and Punishment

Policy 6590, Sexual Harassment

**Legal Reference**

Chapter 207, Laws of 2002

Adoption Date: 040802

### Appendix C - Response postcard

If your district has any policies/procedures related to bullying, harassment and/or discrimination, please send it in the enclosed envelope **by May 22, 2002**.

If not, please return this card, so that I know you have responded and will not follow up with your district. Thank you!

Carmen McDowell  
Phone: 425-653-1696  
Fax: 425-641-3146  
Email: [carmenmc@earthlink.net](mailto:carmenmc@earthlink.net)

Our district does not currently have policies and/or procedures related to bullying, harassment and/or discrimination.

**Appendix D - Letter to school districts**

April 22, 2002

«Superintendent»  
«Title»  
«DistrictName\_» «District»  
«Address»  
«POBox»  
«City», WA «ZIP»

Dear «Salutation»:

I am writing to request a copy of any policies and/or procedures that your district has related to bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination. Under the recently passed Anti-Bullying Law, each school district in Washington state is mandated to "...adopt or amend if necessary a policy, within the scope of its authority, that prohibits the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student." (Substitute House Bill 1444).

I would like to be of service to you as your district addresses this mandate. As a graduate student, I am compiling a resource of existing school policies in Washington state schools, before the changes go into effect. This project is part of my coursework toward completion of master in nonprofit management degree at Regis University. It is also an effort of the Safe Schools Coalition. The results of our research will provide you (and the legislature) a reference of existing policies in the other 295 districts in Washington state. I would like to provide you a copy of the research findings highlighting best practices, as well as a brief annotated bibliography of resources that you can use in your efforts to meet the mandate, once this research project is complete.

Please send me a copy of any policies and/or procedures that your district has related to bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope. If your district does not policies and/or procedures of this type, please return the enclosed card noting such. **Please respond by May 22, 2002.**

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Carmen McDowell  
Student, Master in Nonprofit Management Program  
Regis University, Denver, Colorado

Enclosures

cc: «School\_Board\_President»



### Appendix E - Data Analysis Tool

District: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does the district have a current policy on non-discrimination?

YES                      NO

2. Does the district have a current policy on bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation?

YES                      NO

3. If yes to #2, does it list specific types of prohibited behavior? (e.g. bullying, name calling)

YES                      NO

4. If yes to #2, does it list bases of bias-based discrimination? (e.g. race, religion)

YES                      NO

5. If yes to #3, which types are included in the district’s policy and in where are they included?

Type	District-wide Policy	Staff/employee Manual	Student Manual
Sexual harassment	_____	_____	_____
Bullying	_____	_____	_____
Name-calling	_____	_____	_____
Violence	_____	_____	_____
Harassment	_____	_____	_____
Discrimination	_____	_____	_____

6. If yes to #4, which specific types of bias-based behavior are included in the district’s policy and where are they included?

Type	District-wide Policy	Staff/employee Manual	Student Manual
Religion	_____	_____	_____
Marital status	_____	_____	_____
National origin	_____	_____	_____
Gender identity	_____	_____	_____
Sexual orientation	_____	_____	_____
Race	_____	_____	_____
Color	_____	_____	_____
Ethnicity	_____	_____	_____
Physical Disability	_____	_____	_____
Mental disability	_____	_____	_____
Sensory disability	_____	_____	_____
Illness	_____	_____	_____
Pregnancy	_____	_____	_____
Socio-economic status	_____	_____	_____
Gender	_____	_____	_____

7. Is there any mandate in the district’s policy for training of students or staff beyond inclusion in the student or staff/employee manual?

YES                      NO

8. Flag for best practices?

YES                      NO                      If yes, pages \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix F - Database Data Entry Screens

Microsoft Access - [DistrictsEdit]

Washington State School District Policies on Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

COID: 01109 Name: Washtucna  
 County: Adams  
 Enrollment: 77

Questions 1-4, 7, 8

Number	Answer
1	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: [Empty text area]

Record: 1 of 296

Microsoft Access - [DistrictsEdit]

Washington State School District Policies on Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

5) PolicyTypes

PolicyType	District	Staff	Student
Sexual Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name-calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Record: 1 of 6

TypeNotes: [Empty text area]

TargetNotes: [Empty text area]

6) Target Types

PolicyTarget	District	Staff	Student
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Color	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National origin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Previous arrest and/or inc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensory Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Record: 2 of 296

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