

Prevention of School Bullying Task Force

Reporting Back: *SWOT Analysis: Feedback*

Strengths:

- There were many applicants, so there are a lot of people who want to address the issue.
- Lots of knowledge and expertise in the taskforce.
- Diverse group on task force
- Public will; momentum-the timing is right for the taskforce to make positive recommendations
- Timing is right
- The governor is strongly behind the effort and wants to see the task force succeed
- The public understands that this is an equity issue—access for all students and connected to the future of MN
- There are excellent examples of bullying proven to access
- Lots of models to review for best practice
- There are examples in other states as well.
- We are beginning to acknowledge the fact that this is a public health issue, and education issue mental health issue
- Bipartisan.
- Media engagement is high—perhaps coming to a tipping point regarding media
- Coordination between MDE HR DPS

Weaknesses:

- Inconsistent policies across districts
- Statutory framework is weak, (lacks definitions etc.)
- In what statute does it fit?
- How do we find current stories of victims—no state-wide clearinghouse of what is happening in districts—helps to craft solutions and identify what needs to be a solution
- Limited resources to districts
- MN has had an historical reluctance to address this issue is manifested in culture
- MN nice or denial?
- Lack of access to mental health resources; Health, psychologist, psychiatric
- The schools are more diverse than the community that the school is situated in
- Greater need and demand for all kids to be successful.
- 30 years ago we could leave certain people behind, and now it is not ok to leave anyone behind.

- Work and acknowledge own diversity
- Silence; Minimization of the impact of bullying, and still cloaked in shame—families feel they are to blame, afraid to address it
- Is our main focus to prosecute the bully? How do we create a policy that makes a safe space that encourages academic achievement\?
- Issues of disproportionality. Being bullied and becoming a bully because of systems of racism and oppression. Will we discuss that?
- Kids of color more represented in the criminal justice system. And some people think. Those kids should be in the criminal justice system only.—Zero tolerance.
- How do we deal with bullying?
- Capacity of schools, community to address mental health. Parents do not have access to mental health resources.
- Discomfort with sexuality
- Gender based bullying, relational aggression, ELL kids bullied as obvious targets.
- Give voice to the different kids.
- Tolerance

Opportunities:

- We can protect kids, we can save lives
- There are many people who could provide public input and illustration of the problem\this helps to send the message to the students of MN that they are cared for and affirmed by the taskforce and the Governor
- We could make a paradigm shift in the way that we shifted regarding smoking 30 years ago. To say that it is not a rite of passage
- Opportunity to look at the community role—what role adults play, in continuing to influence aggressive behavior
- To have consistence in our policies
- To address the weakness and threats
- Engagement of the USDOE provides opportunity as well.
- build on the resources that we already have in early childhood and so that kids are healthy and supported interim actions—we can work with other sectors
- Long term impact on bigger problems such as family violence
- Take our work even further-to community, adult and parenting behavior. Setting a new standard—looking at this holistically. Pre-k and parents and children.
- Getting ahead of the problem-and stop being reactive-prevention
- The work will show kids that they have rights. If they know there is a law that protects them, that is powerful stuff.

- We can save districts a lot of money and time from dealing with these issues from a legal perspective
- Have reasonable expectations for districts
- Possible to put resources into districts. (Minnetonka—put funds into training everyone k-12. Came from the super and the school board)
- Also, find resources that are not directly tied to money. There are free programs—does not always mean spending money
- When you do spend money, what does that say?
- Do not get bogged down in resources?
- Measure/ data
- Public private collaboration, deal with collective will: faith, community, etc.
- How to get kids to the help they need-is there enough student support staff

Threats:

- There is an element in the population that does not just deny, but encourages it. Boys will be boys, turning boys into girls, glbt challenges—attacking the advocates, not the problem.
- Political process
- Hardcore affinity to local control—this relates to the inconsistency that you see in the school districts. May be safer in another school district
- Parental authority vs teaching skills in the public arena
- Schools, parents, adults: students are role-modeling adult behavior
- Culture, media, TV
- Belief that this is a partisan issue or a LGBT issue. We need to be authentic about who is most affected by bullying.
- Worry that this becomes solely a criminal justice issue and increases the flow of the school to prison pipeline.
- Avoidance and denial of these issues
- Short timeframe
- How to address the bully and the status can shift and slide overtime
- How to address legal liability/ implications of liability
- Data privacy issues
- The belief that addressing bullying deters from academic achievement, or is simply not the job of schools.
- Bullying prevention is soft stuff and we don't have the resources.
- Not job of schools