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Best Practice Recommendations by Areas

Effective, successful school bullying prevention efforts are ones that foster and uphold prosocial core values throughout the learning community. The school culture, climate and curriculum shall promote caring, inclusive, accepting school community and nurture peer norms against bullying and harassment. Awareness, skills, and behaviors are taught for prevention of bullying, harassment, as well as appropriate responses to bullying/harassment when it does occur, including the reporting bullying, harassment to adults at school and at home. When bullying and harassment are reported, educator and administrative responses shall be are effective, respectful, supportive for all involved. We endorse restorative and reparative practices whenever possible as opposed to 'Zero Tolerance' or other authoritarian rules that can be counter-productive and deny educational opportunities and supports to children and youth.

State Level (Governor/Legislature/Agencies)

1. Fully fund any mandated programs or curriculum requirements.

2. Establish an on-going Minnesota multi-agency council (MDE, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Public Safety, Human rights) to provide leadership and partnership for a comprehensive, coordinated, data-driven process to advance safe and healthy school communities, prevent and respond to bullying/harassment, and improve school climate to ensure success for ALL students in Minnesota PreK-12 schools and higher education systems. The Council should be tasked with:
    a. Establishing multi-system norms and standards for prevention, intervention;
    b. Advancing evidence-based and promising policy and best practices options;
    c. Coordinating inter-agency action -decision-making, planning, monitoring implementation, acquiring and leveraging resources, etc.
    d. Develop and maintain a student and parent call-in Helpline or a Help Center with ready access to support such as mental health services, counseling support, etc.

3. Require higher education institutions with teacher and administrator preparation programs to train all prospective teachers and administrators in the methods of identifying, correcting and preventing bullying and harassment behavior including compliance with Minnesota anti-bullying law, State Human Rights Act and reporting protocols.

4. Require the Board of Teaching (BOT) and the Board of School Administrators (BOSA) to incorporate in licensure and re-licensure requirements training for best practices in identifying and correcting bullying and harassment behaviors, developmentally appropriate best practices for prevention and effective, pro-social, respectful, protective responses when bullying or harassment occurs.

5. Establish training requirements for other school staff, such as paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodians, cooks, playground supervisors, etc. in methods of identifying, correcting and preventing bullying and harassment behavior.

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Minnesota Department of Education

1. The Minnesota Department of Education maintain a resource clearinghouse with staff to provide information to schools related to best practices for prevention and reduction of bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, and harassment. **OR**
2. Establish a School Climate Center at the Minnesota Department of Education to ensure that all Minnesota's k-12 students are provided a safe and supportive learning environment.
3. The Minnesota Department of Education shall develop and implement a plan that incorporates social and emotional learning standards as part of the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards similar to what is being done in Illinois and Anchorage, Alaska.
4. The Minnesota Department of Education shall develop periodically administer a survey in Minnesota public school districts to ascertain the implementation of evidence-based (CASEL endorsed) Social Emotional Learning programming and anti-bullying curricula, pro-social programs for students and their families. Survey results will be analyzed in order to summarize existing supports for students and their families and to create a plan to ensure that all public school students have access to social emotional and anti-bullying instruction.

Community (Counties, Cities, Businesses, Other)

1. Consider methods to engage parents and community organizations as partners organizations in the goal of eliminating bullying and harassment behavior through prevention/intervention.

2. Establish and maintain home-school partnerships and broader community engagement toward the prevention and reduction of bullying and harassment. Actively enlist community, business, service providers, faith congregations, NGO/non-profit organizations, government, school, and others to build awareness, align messages, and work together toward solutions. (Including, but not limited to, (shared) definitions of bullying/harassment, its prevalence and its toll in our community, plus rationale and strategies to end it, e.g. via public service announcements)

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School Districts

Policy and Practices

1. Recognize that school districts already have adopted policies and strategies with the goal of eliminating bullying and harassment behaviors. Requiring a "one-size fits all" approach may compromise existing and on-going practices where districts have made gains in either reducing such negative behaviors and/or increasing the frequency of more positive behaviors.

2. Schools shall adopted policies and strategies with the goal of eliminating bullying and harassment behaviors and implement a comprehensive bullying prevention program with both prevention and intervention components that includes all children and adults in the school. This includes children who are targets as well as those involved in bullying behavior and bystanders.

3. The adults (not just teachers) in each building must be responsible for creating a climate where education, intervention and follow up is standard practice.

4. Require districts to establish specific protocols/procedures/contact person(s) for reporting harassment, bullying, and provide all stakeholders (students, staff, families, etc) with specific training about their use, including contact person(s) for reporting harassment, bullying as well as what responses/outcomes to expect after a report is made (including explanations, timeline, follow-up procedures.) Schools shall designate a person in the school to whom a student may report the bullying incident. The designated staff shall contact the person who's doing the bullying that day if at possible or no later than the next day. The incident will be reported to the parent within two days of the incident.

5. Districts shall inform students, parents and guardians about it policy as well as bullying prevention activities of the school district or school and shall include, but not be limited to:
    a) availability of the policy
    b) how parents and guardians can reinforce the activities at home and support the school district or school policy;
    c) a process for parents and guardians to report a bullying related situation to the school, which includes name(s) and contact information.

6. Require each school and/or district to designate a trained "investigator" (trained personnel) who will effectively address all reports of harassment/bullying in compliance with the district's policy and Minnesota's bullying and harassment laws .

7. Require districts to provide trained mental health, social work, and/or school counselors to support students and school administrators', including:
    a. supporting training and other efforts to prevent bullying and harassment;
    b. assessing and supporting students with mental health needs; and
    c. promoting prosocial behaviors and relationships, including the restorative and reparative practices.

8. Districts shall ensure that the bullying prevention policy is explained to and discussed with its students.

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9. Districts should put into place, at all grade levels, age-appropriate programs and practices that affirmatively engage students in the work of creating respectful, safe school environments throughout their years in the districts' schools.

10. Districts should assure that all policies and procedures that relate to bullying, harassment, hazing, and related topics are distributed to students and their families AND made accessible in clear ways on the districts' websites.

11. Districts shall bi-annually conduct a review of its policy, making any necessary revisions and additions to assure a positive learning environment for all students.

Curriculum

1. Require age-appropriate, developmental, consistent, continuous PreK-12 classroom lessons/learning opportunities for students across the curriculum, throughout the school environment to prevent bullying/harassment, recognize and respond to bullying/harassment- including procedures for reporting to adults. Including:
    a. Actively teach knowledge and skills for respecting for human differences, inclusiveness and empathy;
    b. problem solving and conflict management/resolution;
    c. multicultural/anti-bias education;
    d. civil discourse, etc.
2. Encourage family/home engagement and provide home communication around prevention efforts. Include language that defines student protection against adults' bullying/harassment behaviors in schools and school-sanctioned activities. (school staff, teachers, contracted service providers, etc).
3. School districts should employ curricula designed to educate students on methods of preventing and reducing bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, and harassment and is designed to educate students on the value of diversity in schools and society.

Staff Development

1. Require training for all PreK-12 staff, service providers, contract employees (busdrivers, etc) , coaches, shall be provided regular, and consistent training on the
    - district's bullying policy and
    - how to recognize and respond to bullying/harassment
    - the process of reporting it
    - implementation strategies for its prevention
    - educated on best practice methods to prevent and reduce bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, and harassment
    - compliance with Minnesota anti-bullying law, State Human Rights Act and districts' reporting protocols.
    - <u>elements of staff-to-student bullying and how it can be prevented</u>
2. Require training about best practices for effective, pro-social, respectful, protective responses when bullying harassment occur, as well as developmentally and situationally appropriate best practices for its prevention.