

II. Supportive Schools: Encourage prevention education for all students, staff, family and community

Students, parents, and communities have a right to expect that children are safe and treated fairly in Minnesota schools. An essential foundation to student learning and academic success is a comprehensive focus on the school environment that addresses the physical health, mental health, social/emotional well-being, and safety of all students.

A central component of school bullying prevention is creating a school climate where students are welcomed, supported, and feel safe. School climate and social emotional learning curricular strategies standards promote learning as well as school safety. ~~Evidence based research has demonstrated the academic effectiveness of a focus on school climate and incorporating social emotional learning into school curricula. A positive school climate and social emotional learning are also effective in reducing bullying and harassment and intimidation behaviors. A substantial body of research documents that when social emotional learning is incorporated into the curriculum, students show higher levels of prosocial behavior, more favorable attitudes toward school and others, and better academic achievement. They also experience lower levels of conduct problems and emotional distress. (Durlak, et al, 2011)~~

~~Social emotional learning in bullying prevention at school builds on what each student has learned at home and in the community. Social emotional learning includes:~~

- ~~• Awareness of self and others~~
- ~~• Positive attitudes and values~~
- ~~• Responsible decision making~~
- ~~• Social interaction skills. (cite CASEL)~~

Therefore, the Task Force recommends that districts implement sustained whole-school climate efforts as the best way to prevent bullying behavior. This will promote the skills, attitudes, behaviors for caring, connected, and safe learning environments while also addressing some of the underlying contributing social, emotional and environmental factors that can lead to bullying. Such programming would:

- Focus on positive behavior expectations
- Maintain open communication and supportive relationships, including between students and educators, families and school staff.
- Promote respect for others, inclusivity and appreciation of differences
- Teach social emotional skills including: self and social awareness, empathy, communication, assertiveness, healthy relationships and teamwork, positive problem-solving and conflict resolution, and responsible decision-making.
- Inform students and adults about the dynamics of bullying, promote skills to recognize and respond every time it occurs, and advocate healthy norms for peer interactions.

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