

## **Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting**

### **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 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.
6. In order to ensure equity of protection for all students in all Minnesota school districts, each school district will be provided with a baseline/minimum policy to respond to bullying, harassment, and cyberbullying. (This policy will be created in advisement with the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, and related relevant state agencies.)

## Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting

7. Funding will be provided to all school districts so as to provide for equitable services among all school-based student services personnel (licensed school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, chemical dependency counselors) to respond to the social/emotional barriers to student learning, specifically incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying.
8. Funding will be provided to all school districts to assist them in the provision of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying prevention efforts
9. The Task Force should recommend that “sexual orientation (including gender identity)” be added to Minn. Stat. § 127A.42, subd.2(6) both for consistency and to clearly express its condemnation of such violations.
10. Definition of “discriminate” found in the Minnesota Human Rights Act be expanded to read: “the term ‘discriminate’ includes to segregate or separate, to create or condone a hostile environment, and, for purposes of discrimination on the basis of sex, includes sexual harassment.”
11. Analyze existing statutes and policies and compare the components of policies and statutes that have been enacted in other states to amend Minnesota’s statute and policies.
12. Use the US Department of Education guide, "Anti-Bullying Policies: Examples of Provisions of State Laws," (See <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/index.html> ) as technical guide in developing or revising anti-bullying legislation or policies." Using the following eleven point framework:
  - I. Purpose Statement
  - II. Statement of Scope
  - III. Specification of Prohibited Conduct
  - IV. Enumeration of Specific Characteristics
  - V. Development and Implementation of Local Education Agency Policies
  - VI. Components of Local Education Agency Policies
    - a. Definitions
    - b. Reporting Bullying
    - c. Investigating and Responding to Bullying
    - d. Written Records
    - e. Sanctions
    - f. Referrals
  - VII. Review of Local Policies
  - VIII. Communication Plan
  - IX. Training and Preventive Education
  - X. Transparency and Monitoring
  - XI. Statement of Rights to Other Legal Recourse

## Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting

### Minnesota Department of Education

1. The Minnesota Department of Education shall staff and provide information to schools on best practices and maintain a resource clearinghouse related to the prevention and reduction of bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, and harassment.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The Department of Education should develop a mechanism by which districts report aggregated data at the end of each school year regarding bullying/harassment reports, consequences and other outcomes, and proactive measures taken to address bullying/harassment.
6. The Minnesota Department of Education will record and annually report incidents of bullying by school district and school building. Each school district shall annually submit a report detailing the number of incidents by district and school building. The report shall provide break down of incidents in which a protected class was involved, with further delineation on each of the protected classes.
7. The Minnesota Department of Education will record and annually report incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying by school district and school building.
8. The Minnesota Department of Education shall add additional relevant questions to the Minnesota Student Survey specifically related to factors impacting school climate, e.g., bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying.
9. IEPs and Section 504 Plans for children who experience bullying should be written to address the skills and proficiencies that the student needs to avoid and respond to bullying and include accommodations, goals, objectives, and proactive measures to address the bullying issue.
10. Minnesota Department of Education take effective steps to advise Minnesota school districts and administrators of their obligations under the Equal Access Act.
11. The Commissioner of Education should begin, at the earliest opportunity, the process of amending Minn. R. 3535.2300 to include "sexual orientation (including gender identity)."

## Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting

### 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)
3. Parents/Guardians of students who are identified as engaging in bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying behaviors will be required to meet with proper school or local officials to participate in a remediation plan.

### 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 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.

## **Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting**

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 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.

### **Support, Consequences and Reporting**

1. Districts should develop a plan for consequences for those who bully or harass others, where the consequences are clear and scaled toward the severity of the individual's conduct. Those experiencing bullying or harassment should be advised of the consequences imposed, to the maximum extent allowable under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and other relevant laws or rules. Staff should be instructed as to what that maximum extent is.
2. Consistent actions and follow up will be taken with the child who is the target and the child who bullies, with gradual consequences for repeated bullying offenses. (Not zero tolerance) These actions would include checking with the individual bullied, a remediation plan for the child bullying and continued observation.
3. Equitable remediation efforts shall be directed toward individuals involved in creating and initiating incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying, as those targeted by such behaviors
4. Each school district will have a designated reporting officer to whom all school building incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying is reported. The designated individual will be responsible for: 1) keeping track of reports of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying, and 2) forwarding reports to a school district designated reporting officer.
5. Each school district shall annually submit a report detailing the number of incidents by district and school building. Data should be collected to measure incidents of bullying at the end of

## Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting

the year. This data should include but not be limited to number of incidents, attendance, and number of other discipline incidents and students level of comfort at school.

### 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
  - o district's bullying policy and
  - o how to recognize and respond to bullying/harassment
  - o the process of reporting it
  - o implementation strategies for its prevention
  - o educated on best practice methods to prevent and reduce bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, and harassment
  - o compliance with Minnesota anti-bullying law, State Human Rights Act and districts' reporting protocols.
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.

## **Combined Recommendations: July 9, 2012 Meeting**

### **Minnesota School Climate Center**

The MN Dept of Education's School Climate Center exists to ensure that all Minnesota's k-12 students are provided safe and supportive learning environments. The Center operates within the All Hazards planning framework by focusing on prevention, intervention, response and recovery. The Center works collaboratively with other state agencies, especially Health, Human Services and Public Safety/Homeland Security and with other school and community organizations and public entities to best utilize available resources on behalf of Minnesota's k-12 students.

#### **Key Services Provided by the Center:**

- Policy Development and dissemination
  - The Center shall review the recommendations of the 2007 Advisory Task Force on School and Staff Emergency/All Hazard Preparedness to identify policy initiatives
  - The Center shall be guided by the Governor's Anti-Bullying Task Force recommendations in the development of policy initiatives
- Single point of contact services for schools, parents, students seeking assistance and guidance
  - Services include information on laws and regulations, state and local resources, and best practices and research
- Qualitative and quantitative data gathering, interpretation and dissemination
  - Center shall support ongoing implementation and interpretation of the Disciplinary Incident Reporting System (DIRS)
  - Center shall ensure gathering and interpretation of data related to school engagement and school climate through methods such as the MN Student Survey
  - Center shall employ methods such as focus groups to guide planning and decision-making relating to emerging trends and issue
- Education and skill building, including workshops, conferences, training of trainers on topics spanning the All Hazards Framework
  - Biennial school climate statewide conference
  - Web-based trainings for staff development
  - Regional workshops
- Multi-sector planning and advisory processes incorporating best practices and research