Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act
(*P.L.*2010, *c.*122)

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December 2011

Funds for the development of this publication were provided in full by a grant from the United States Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, under Title IV, Part A: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is grateful for the generous and professional contributions of experts on the subject of bullying, school climate and culture and social-emotional and character development in the production of this *Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.* The development of this publication was guided by the authoritative input from the Office of Civil Rights and the members of two advisory committees convened by the NJDOE:

- *Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee (SSSAC)*, which was established to advise the NJDOE on critical issues, including HIB, that affect students' abilities to learn and grow in safe, supportive and civil school environments; and
- *HIB Guidance Document Subcommittee*, which was a subcommittee of the SSSAC, assembled specifically to advise the NJDOE on this document, which was required pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-24.

The NJDOE would like to thank the committee members for their input and feedback. The committee members and their affiliations are provided below:

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Special appreciation is extended to the following consultants who diligently assisted with the facilitation of the subcommittee, conducted research on critical issues and drafted significant portions of the guidance document:

- Eileen Dachnowicz
- Sheila Engelbach
- Sharon Orosz

The NJDOE also thanks the following representatives of the NJDOE and other State agencies who contributed to the development of portions of this publication:

- Kathleen Duncan, Director, Office of Controversies and Disputes, NJDOE
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

On January 5, 2011, the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* (*P.L.*2010, *c.*122, which can be found at http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/122_.PDF) was signed into law to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating and responding to incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) of students that occur on school grounds* and off school grounds under specified circumstances. The law was adopted, in part, in response to research on the incidence, prevalence and effects of HIB that has emerged since the adoption of the original HIB law in 2002.

Under the *Anti-bullying Bill of Rights Act* (ABR), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) was required to issue guidance for use by parents**, students and school staff in resolving complaints concerning HIB and for the implementation of the ABR (*N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-24). In support of this requirement, this publication has been developed for the following purposes:

- To explain the obligations of school districts and charter schools under the ABR;
- To provide information on best practices for the prevention, intervention and remediation of HIB in schools, including methods for identifying or assisting student populations at high risk for HIB;
- To explain the procedures for petitioning the Commissioner of Education to hear and decide disputes concerning the ABR;
- To explain the jurisdiction of the Division of Civil Rights, New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety in regard to specific types of HIB; and
- To explain the process for appealing final agency determinations to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.

Additionally, the NJDOE was required to amend its pre-existing model policy and guidance to reflect the provisions in the ABR. This document, titled *Model Policy and Guidance for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on School Property, at School-Sponsored Functions and on School Buses*, can be found at the following Website: http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm.

** Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3, "school grounds" means and includes land, portions of land, structures, buildings, and vehicles, when used for the provision of academic or extracurricular programs sponsored by the school district or community provider and structures that support these buildings, such as school district wastewater treatment facilities, generating facilities, and other central service facilities including, but not limited to, kitchens and maintenance shops. School grounds also includes other facilities as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:26-1.2, playgrounds, and recreational places owned by local municipalities, private entities or other individuals during those times when the school district has exclusive use of a portion of such land.*

***Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3, "parent" means the natural parent(s) or adoptive parent(s), legal guardian(s), foster parent(s) or parent surrogate(s) of a student. Where parents are separated or divorced, "parent" means the person or agency who has legal custody of the student, as well as the natural or adoptive parent(s) of the student, provided such parental rights have not been terminated by a court of appropriate jurisdiction.*

Overview of *Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB)*

Definition of HIB

The definition of HIB that applies to the use of this guidance is established at *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14 and is provided below. It is important to note that while the statutory definition of HIB might vary from definitions of bullying provided by program professionals, schools are responsible for the HIB definition at *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14.

The HIB definition below has been separated into component parts for ease of reading and comprehension. Bold type has been added to emphasize selected provisions.

HIB Definition

HIB means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be **a single incident** or a **series of incidents**, that:

- Is reasonably **perceived as being motivated** either by an **actual or perceived characteristic**, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by **any other distinguishing characteristic**;
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus; or **off school grounds**, as provided for in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-15.3,
- Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; **and that**
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of **physically or emotionally harming** a student **or damaging the student's property**, **or** placing a student in reasonable **fear of physical or emotional harm** to his person **or** damage to his property; **or**
- Has the effect of **insulting or demeaning** any student or group of students; **or**
- Creates a **hostile educational environment** for the student by interfering with a student's education or by **severely or pervasively** causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

HIB Off School Grounds

School districts continue to have the right, but are not required, to impose consequences on a student for conduct away from school grounds consistent with *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-7.7, Conduct away from school grounds. The only change in this authority resulting from the ABR is that schools are now required to address HIB occurring off school grounds, when there is a nexus between the HIB and the school (i.e., the HIB substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students).

Seriousness of the Bullying Problem

As documented in the *Commissioner's Annual Report to the Education Committees of the Senate and General Assembly on Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Public Schools* (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009), bullying generally begins in the elementary grades, peaks in grades six through eight, and persists, with decreasing frequency, throughout high school. Some statistics on bullying follow (Ericson, 2001):

- 30% of students in grades six through ten in the United States are involved in moderate or frequent bullying either as bullies, as victims, or as both.
- 1 out of 5 youth admit to being a bully or doing some bullying.

- 43% of the students surveyed fear harassment in the bathroom at school.
- In a recent survey, 77% of the students said they had been bullied and 14% said they experienced severe (bad) reactions to the abuse.
- 8% of students miss 1 day of class per month for fear of bullies.
- Every 7 minutes a child is bullied on the playground, 4% of the time there is adult intervention; 11% of the time there is peer intervention; and 85% of the time there is no intervention.

Conflict vs. Bullying – Bullying is not a phase young people must endure or outgrow. Bullying is *not a conflict* between students or among groups of students. *Conflict* is a *mutually* competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, an argument or a fight which is a normal part of human development. *Bullying* is *one-sided*, where one or more students are *victims* of one or more person's aggression, which is intended to physically or emotionally hurt the victim(s).

There generally are four types of bullying behaviors. These behaviors and some examples are identified below:

- *Verbal* – Includes taunting, name calling, malicious teasing or making threats (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001);
- *Psychological* – Includes spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people from activities, breaking up friendships (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001);
- *Physical* – Includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting or taking personal belongings (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001); and
- *Cyberbullying* – Includes using the Internet, mobile phone or other digital technologies to harm others. (DuPage County Anti-Bullying Model Policy and Best Practices, 2011).

The effects of these bullying behaviors on students include:

- Serious psychological and behavioral effects manifested in low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, suicide, violence and criminal behavior;
- Physical problems such as headaches, dizziness and stomachaches; or
- Poor grades (Olweus, 1994).

Feeling safe in schools powerfully promotes student learning and healthy development (Devine and Cohen, 2007). Bullying, which is a serious impediment to school safety, negatively affects the atmosphere of a school and disrupts the learning environment in the following ways:

- Student achievement suffers among the bullied and those who engage in bullying (http://www.stopbullying.gov);
- Student absenteeism increases. In a national survey, 30% of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) students reported missing at least one day of school in the past month compared to 8.0% for the general student population (GLSEN, 2009);
- Teacher morale declines when social dynamics in the classroom interfere with instruction and discipline and contribute to increased employee absences (http://www.stopbullying.gov);
- Adult-student relationships suffer. Students who witness bullying can become fearful and develop the belief that the adults are not in control or are uncaring (http://www.stopbullying.gov); or

- Parent confidence and trust in the school erodes when students experience bullying or are accused of bullying others (http://www.stopbullying.gov).

Additionally, some students or groups of students are at higher risk for bullying than the general student population.

- Appearance – The way a student looks or his or her body size and sexual orientation are the top two reasons cited for frequent harassment (GLSEN, 2009).
- Two-thirds of teens report they have been verbally or physically harassed or assaulted during the past year because of their perceived or actual appearance, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, race/ethnicity, disability or religion (GLSEN, 2009).
- Children with special needs are especially vulnerable to bullying. A 2008 study in Britain found that 60% of students with disabilities reported being bullied compared to 25% of the general student population. All of the studies conducted in the United States found that children with disabilities were two to three times more likely to be the victims of bullying and that the bullying experienced by these children was more chronic in nature and directly related to their disability (http://www.abilitypath.org).
- One study found that children with physical conditions or disabilities, such as cerebral palsy and Downs syndrome, are more likely to be called names or aggressively excluded from social activities (Olweus, 1994).
- The results of a 2009 National School Climate Survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) indicated that 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed; 18.8% of LGBT students reported being physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation; 9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the past year; and nearly two-thirds of LGBT students felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation (GLSEN, 2009).
- 24% of the Asian students participating in a Preventing School Harassment Survey conducted in California reported harassment due to race, as compared with 22% of Latino students surveyed; 22% of multiracial students; and 13% of Black students (California Safe Schools Research, retrieved 2011).
- Overweight children are 1.2 times more likely to be bullied than their normal weight peers (Harrison, 2010).
- Obese children are 1.6 times more likely to be bullied than their non-obese peers, regardless of sex, race or socioeconomic status (Harrison, 2010).

Organization and Use of this Publication

This document contains six chapters. The first two chapters provide role-specific information on the topic of HIB for each of the following audiences:

- School administrators (e.g., superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, supervisors, coordinators, charter school lead persons), board of education members and other school leaders; and
- School staff (e.g., full- and part-time staff, including teachers, student support services, volunteers and contracted service providers who have significant contact with students, administrative support).

Each of the first two chapters contains information devoted to the topics of prevention, intervention and remediation, which include both legal requirements and suggested best practices. A bibliography is provided at the end of each of these chapters.

Chapters three through five provide information on the following subjects:

- Appealing local board of education decisions or school district actions to the Commissioner of Education;
- Appealing Commissioner of Education determinations to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court; and
- The jurisdiction and services of the Division on Civil Rights (DCR), New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety in regard to specific types of HIB.

Chapter six contains a variety of resources for the prevention and intervention of bullying. The resources include books, articles, Web resources for policy and program development, including evidence-based program data bases, assessment tools and organizations.

Throughout the document the terms "harassment, intimidation and bullying, and "HIB" are used interchangeably to refer to the requirements in the ABR as they pertain to the HIB definition in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14, which is provided above. The term "bullying" is used to refer to general information on this subject and is not limited to the HIB definition in the ABR.

Although this publication and other materials developed by the NJDOE are intended to provide assistance to districts on their responsibilities under the ABR, local boards of education are responsible for implementing the ABR. When questions arise regarding the ABR, school officials should consult, as appropriate, their board of education's policies and procedures, the school attorney or local law enforcement officials, per the *Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials* (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-6.2(b)13) (see http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/regs/agree.pdf).

CHAPTER 1
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER - BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INFORMATION

HIB RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

The intent of *P.L.* 2010, *c.*122 is to strengthen standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating and responding to HIB incidents of students in school and off school premises. This section summarizes the administrative duties that pertain to the HIB prevention provisions in the ABR.

Following each requirement is a letter (i.e., **S** for superintendent; **P** for Principal; and **B** for board of education) indicating the official(s) responsible for the requirement or who have a role in implementing the requirement. Unless specifically noted otherwise, the term "school administrators" refers to superintendents, charter school lead persons and principals. The term "school leader" means a school district staff member who holds a position that requires possession of a chief school administrator, principal or supervisor endorsement.

HIB Policies and Procedures

HIB policies and procedures are an important component of a comprehensive HIB prevention program. The board of education's policies and procedures provide a unified framework for expected student behavior and expected staff roles for implementing the policies, including the promotion of positive behaviors and the prevention of unwanted behaviors. An effective policy provides a foundation upon which more detailed actions and plans can be built.

Policy Development

Each district board of education is required to adopt a policy prohibiting HIB, as defined above and in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored function or on a school bus. Some key points on the development of the HIB policy follow:

- The policy must be developed using a process that includes representation from parents, students, school district and school staff and administrators, volunteers who have significant contact with students and community representatives. **(B, S)**
- The due date for submission of the first revised HIB policy to the executive county superintendent was September 1, 2011. **(S)**
- Each subsequent HIB policy revision must be submitted to the executive county superintendent within 30 days of adoption by the board of education. **(B, S)**
- Boards of education are permitted to adopt a policy that includes components and contents that are more stringent than the minimum required components. **(B, S).**
- The NJDOE, as required in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-15d, has developed a document titled *Model Policy and Guidance for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying on School Property, at School-Sponsored Functions and on School Buses* to aide in the development of local policies and procedures, which can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm. The NJDOE also has developed the *Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Compliance Checklist* to assist in determining compliance with the HIB policy and other requirements under the ABR. The checklist can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/checklist.pdf.

Policy Contents

The board of education has control over the content of the HIB policy. However, the policy must contain, at a minimum, the following components **(B, S)**:

- A statement prohibiting HIB of a student.
- A definition of HIB that is no less inclusive than the HIB definition provided above and in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14.
- A description of the type of behavior that is expected from each student.
  - The ABR addresses HIB committed only against *students*; it *does not* address HIB committed against *adults*.
- The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who commits HIB.
  - While the ABR only addresses HIB committed *against* students, it includes *any person* who commits an act of HIB *against a student*.
  - Under the ABR, HIB has been added to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-2 as a cause for suspension or expulsion of a student.
- A Procedure for reporting HIB.
  - All acts of HIB must be reported *verbally* to the principal on the same day when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident.
  - The principal must inform the parents of all students involved in the alleged incident, and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services.
  - All acts of HIB must be reported in writing within *two days* of the verbal report (the day the incident was witnessed or information about the incident was received).
  - The procedure must include a provision permitting a person to *anonymously* report an act of HIB; however, this must not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- A procedure for prompt investigation of reports of violations and complaints which either identify bullying or describe behaviors that indicate bullying, and that adhere to following actions and timelines identified below.
  - One school day after receiving the report of the incident, the principal or the principal's designee must initiate an investigation of the incident, which must be conducted by a school anti-bullying specialist in coordination with the principal.
  - The principal may appoint other school staff to help with the investigation.
  - The principal implements the HIB policy or the code of student conduct at any point in time there is sufficient information to invoke the provisions of either of these policies.
  - The investigation must be completed no later than 10 school days from the date of the *written* report of the incident.
  - The investigation report can be amended to include new information received by the school anti-bullying specialist after the 10-day period.
- The results of the investigation must be reported to the chief school administrator (CSA) in accordance with the following parameters:
  - The report must be submitted to the CSA within two school days of completion of the investigation.

    The CSA may decide to provide intervention services, establish training programs to reduce HIB and enhance school climate, impose discipline, order counseling as a result of

the findings of the investigation, or take or recommend other appropriate action.

- No later than the date of the board of education meeting following the completion of the investigation, the CSA must report the results of the investigation to the board of education, along with information on any services provided, training established, discipline imposed or other action taken or recommended by the CSA.
- Within five school days of the results of the investigation being reported to the board, parents of involved student offenders and victims must be provided with information about the investigation. However, the parents are not entitled to view the investigation report or any information that would violate student records and student privacy laws and regulations. The information provided to the parents must include:
  - The nature of the investigation;
  - Whether the district found evidence of HIB; and
  - Whether discipline was imposed or services provided to address the HIB incident.
- After receiving the information about the investigation, a parent may request a hearing before the board of education.
- Within 10 school days of a parent requesting a hearing before the board, the board must meet in executive session to review the matter.
  - The board may hear from the school anti-bullying specialist or anyone else regarding the incident, recommendations for discipline or services and any programs instituted to reduce HIB incidents.
- At the next board meeting following receipt of the CSA's report on the results of the investigation, the board must issue a written decision affirming, rejecting or modifying the CSA's decision.
- No later than 90 days after issuance of the board's decision, the decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.
- Within 180 days of the occurrence of an HIB incident based on membership in a group enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination" (*N.J.S.A.* 10:5-1 *et seq.)* a parent, student or organization may file a complaint with the Division of Civil Rights.

- The range of ways in which a school will respond once an HIB incident is identified, which must include an appropriate combination of counseling, support services, intervention services and other programs.
- A statement that prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of HIB, and the consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.
- The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of retaliation or as a means of HIB.
- A statement of how the policy is to be publicized, including notice that the policy applies to participation in school-sponsored functions.
- A requirement that a link to the policy be prominently posted on the home page of the school district's Website and distributed annually to parents who have children enrolled in a school in the school district.
- A requirement that the district anti-bullying coordinator's name, school phone number, school address and school email address be listed on the home page of the *district's* website and that the school anti-bullying specialist's and the district anti-bullying coordinator's

names, school phone numbers, school addresses and school email addresses of the be listed on each *school's* Website.

Additional requirements regarding the HIB policy follow **(B, S)**:

- The first revised policy following the effective date of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-13 was required to be transmitted to the executive county superintendent of schools by September 1, 2011.
- Any subsequent revision to the board of education's HIB policy must be transmitted to the executive county superintendent of schools within 30 days of adoption by the board.
- The school district must annually conduct a re-evaluation, reassessment and review of the HIB policy and make any necessary revisions and additions.
- The board of education must include input from the school anti-bullying specialist(s) in the re-evaluation, reassessment and review.
- Notice of the HIB policy must appear in any publication of the district that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools within the district, including in any student handbook.
- Nothing in *P.L.*2010, *c.*122 may be construed as prohibiting a school district from adopting a policy that includes components that are more stringent than the policy components identified above and in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-15.

Roles and Responsibilities

The ABR establishes new roles and responsibilities for central office and school staff. These requirements are described below:

- District Anti-Bullying Coordinator – The CSA is required to appoint a district anti-bullying coordinator (ABC). The CSA is encouraged, but not required, to appoint a school district employee to perform the ABC role. The responsibilities of the ABC include the following: **(S)**
  - Coordinating and strengthening the school district's policies to prevent, identify and address HIB of students;
  - Collaborating with the ABS' in the school district, the BOE and the CSA to prevent, identify and respond to HIB of students in the school district;
  - In collaboration with CSA, providing data to the NJDOE regarding HIB of students;
  - Executing other duties related to school HIB as requested by the CSA; and
  - Meeting, at a minimum, twice each school year with the ABSs in the district to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify and address HIB in the school district.
- School Anti-Bullying Specialist – The principal in each school is required to appoint a School Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS). The ABS must be a: **(P)**
  - Guidance counselor;
  - School psychologist; or
  - Other certified staff member trained to be the ABS from among the currently employed certified staff in the school.

  Since the principal is the one who must appoint school staff to this role, the legislative language and intent is for the ABS to be someone other than a school administrator (e.g., someone with a student support services or student advocacy point of view and function) to counter-balance the administrative, including disciplinary, point of view. The principal must

serve on the school safety team (described below) and the ABS is required to chair the team; therefore, the aim is for the ABS to have this leadership role, rather than the principal. This same dynamic exists in other areas of the law (e.g., the ABS acts as the primary person for preventing, identifying and addressing HIB; the ABS leads HIB investigations in consultation with the principal), which requires someone other than the school administrator to perform these functions. Additionally, there is nothing in the law that would preclude the principal from appointing more than one ABS from currently employed school staff. **(P)**

- The responsibilities of the ABS include the following:
  - Chairing the school safety team;
  - Leading the investigation of HIB incidents in the school; and
  - Acting as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and addressing HIB incidents in the school.

- School Safety Team – A school safety team (SST) must be formed in each school in the school district. The team must be called either the school safety team or the school anti-bullying team to ensure ease of identification by parents, students and staff throughout the state. The purposes of the team is to develop, foster and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the ongoing, systematic operational procedures and educational practices in the school and to address issues, such as HIB, that affect school climate and culture. **(P, S)** The SST must consist of the following members:
  - The principal or his or her designee who, when possible, is a senior administrator in the school, and the following appointees of the principal –
  - A teacher in the school;
  - An ABS;
  - A parent of a student in the school; and
  - Other members as determined by the principal.

  The responsibilities of the SST include the following:
  - Receiving records of all complaints of HIB of students that have been reported to the principal*;
  - Receiving copies of all reports prepared after an investigation of an HIB incident*;
  - Identifying and addressing patterns of HIB of students in the school*;
  - Reviewing and strengthening school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent HIB of students;
  - Educating the community, including students, teachers, administrative staff and parents, to prevent and address HIB of students;
  - Participating in the training required under the ABR and other training which the principal or the ABC may request. Additionally, the SST must be provided professional development opportunities that may address effective practices of successful school climate programs or approaches;
  - Meeting, at a minimum, twice each school year; and
  - Executing other duties related to HIB as requested by the principal or ABC.

**A parent who is a member of the SST is not permitted to participate in the first three activities identified above or in any other activities of the team which may compromise the confidentiality of a student, consistent with, at a minimum, the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20*

U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99), N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7, Student Records and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.9, Student records.

- Reprisal, Retaliation or False Accusation – The ABR stipulates that a member of the board of education, school employee, student or volunteer is not permitted to engage in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness or one with reliable information about an act of HIB. **(S, P, B)**
- Immunity – A BOE member or school employee who promptly reports an HIB incident to the principal or to any school administrator or safe schools resource officer and who makes the report in compliance with the BOE's policies and procedures is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.
- Disciplinary Action for School Administrators – A school administrator who receives a report of HIB from a school district employee and fails to initiate or have an investigation conducted, or who should have known of an HIB incident and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the HIB may be subject to disciplinary action.

REQUIREMENTS FOR HIB PREVENTION PROGRAMS, APPROACHES AND OTHER INITIATIVES

The overarching goal of the ABR is to develop and sustain safe and civil school environments in which HIB does not occur. Consistent with this goal, the ABR establishes the following requirements to support the school district's overall HIB prevention program.

HIB Prevention Programs

Central office and school building staff must annually establish, implement, document and assess the programs, approaches or other initiatives used to prevent HIB of students. School staff, students, administrators, volunteers, law enforcement officials, parents and other community members must be involved in these annual activities. The SST has a role in the annual review, under its responsibility to develop, foster and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the ongoing systemic process and practices in the school and addressing school climate issues, such as HIB.

The programs, approaches or other initiatives must be designed to create school-wide conditions to prevent and intervene with HIB of students. Schools are encouraged to use existing evidence-based programs. A searchable data base to help identify evidence-based HIB prevention and intervention programs can be found at the SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-based Programs (http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/). However, schools may use other approaches or initiatives as part of their comprehensive HIB prevention efforts, but should ensure there is a means for collecting and assessing data on the effectiveness of the approaches or initiatives to be considered in the annual review. These data also should be collected for any evidence-based programs implemented by schools in the district. **(S,P)**

HIB Instruction – In accordance with the core curriculum content standards, each school district must provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction on preventing HIB throughout the school year. **(B,S,P)**

Professional Development and Training

The ABR includes professional development requirements for BOE members, school leaders (i.e., a school district staff member who holds a position that requires the possession of a CSA, principal or supervisor endorsement), educational staff and other school employees, volunteers and contracted service providers who have significant contact with students and prospective educators. These requirements are summarized below:

- *Board of Education Members* – Each newly elected or appointed BOE member must complete, during the first year of the member's first term, an HIB training program offered by the New Jersey School Boards Association. **(B)**
- *School Leaders* – The training required to be taken by school leaders under *N.J.S.A.* 18A:26-8.2 and the Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders must include information on the prevention of HIB. The NJDOE's guidance can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/HIBGuidancePD.pdf. **(S, P**)
- *District Anti-Bullying Coordinators (ABC) and School Anti-Bullying Specialists (ABS)* – Each BOE must provide time during the usual school schedule to ensure that appropriate staff are prepared to act in the school district as ABCs and ABSs. **(B, S, P)**
- *School Safety Team (SST)* – The members of the SST must participate in the in-service training provided by the district and other training as requested by the principal or the ABC.
  - The SST members must be provided with professional development opportunities that address effective school climate improvement practices, programs or approaches. **(B, S, P)**
- *Existing School Employees, Volunteers and Contractors* – All school staff, including administrators, instructors, student support services, administrative/office support, transportation, food service facilities/maintenance, volunteers who have significant contact with students and persons contracted by the district to provide services to students, must be provided with training on the BOE's HIB policies.
  - The training must include instruction on preventing HIB on the basis of the protected categories identified in the definition of HIB provided in this document and as established at *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14 and other distinguishing characteristics that may incite incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying.
  - The NJDOE's training PowerPoint resources can be used to assist with local in-service programs; however, the use of these materials is not sufficient to fulfill the in-service training requirements regarding *local* policies and protected groups (see http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.shtml). **(B, S, P)**
- *New Full- and Part-time Employees, Volunteers and Contractors* – Information on the BOE's HIB policies must be incorporated into the school district's or school's employee training program and delivered to all full-time and part-time staff, volunteers who have significant contact with students and persons contracted by the district to provide services to students. **(B, S, P)**
- *Teachers and Educational Services Professionals* – In addition to the in-service training described above, these staff must have the following training within the five-year professional development cycle. The NJDOE's guidance on this requirement can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/HIBGuidancePD.pdf. **(B, S, P)** –
  - HIB Prevention – Two hours of instruction in HIB prevention.

- Suicide Prevention – In addition, the pre-existing suicide prevention professional development requirement must include an HIB component which includes information on the risk of suicide and HIB incidents and information on reducing the risk of suicide in students who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.

- *Teacher Certification* – Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, all candidates for teaching certification who have completed a teacher preparation program at a regionally accredited institution of higher education must have satisfactorily completed a program on HIB prevention. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, any person seeking certification through the alternate route must, within one year of being employed, satisfactorily complete a program on HIB prevention. The NJDOE's guidance on this requirement can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/HIBGuidanceEdPrep.pdf.

HIB Policy Discussions with Students

Each school district must develop a process for annually discussing the HIB policy with students. In planning these *discussions*, districts are encouraged to give consideration to the following suggestions: **(B, S, P)**

- Organize small-group *discussions* as opposed to large-group presentations;
- Plan *discussions* that are age appropriate;
- Couple the *discussions* with activities that build HIB prevention skills; and
- Provide opportunities for follow-up and processing of information presented to provide opportunities for questions, reinforcement of information or skills and to ensure understanding.

Week of Respect

Each school district is required to annually observe a Week of Respect, during which time districts must provide age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing HIB. The Week of Respect must be observed during the week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year. Resources in support of the Week of Respect can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/violence_memo.pdf. **(S, P)**

Internet Information

The following Website information must be posted as specified below: **(S)**

- *School District Website* – The home page of each school *district's* Website must list the following contact information for the *ABC* –
  - Name;
  - School phone number;
  - School address; and
  - School email address.

- *School Websites* – The home page of each *school's* Website must list the following contact information for both the *ABC and the ABS* – **(P)**
  - Name;
  - School phone number;
  - School address; and
  - School email address.

Bullying Prevention Fund
Although this account has been established in the NJDOE to carry out the provisions of the ABR, there are no funds in the account at the publication of this document.

STAFF AND PUBLIC HIB REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The ABR includes requirements for staff reporting and public reporting of HIB and related information. The requirements for these reports are described below:

Obligation to Report
All school employees observing or having direct knowledge from a participant or a victim of an act of violence, including HIB, must file a report describing the incident to the school principal in a manner prescribed by the commissioner. The principal is required to provide a copy of the report to the CSA and notify the CSA of the action(s) taken for each incident. **(S, P)**

Bi-Annual Public Reports
Two times each school year (between September 1 and January 1, and between January 1 to June 30), the CSA must report to the BOE, at a public hearing, all acts of violence, vandalism and HIB which occurred during the previous reporting period. The reports must include the following information: **(S, B)**

- The number of reports of HIB;
- The status of all HIB investigations;
- The nature of the HIB based on the protected categories identified in *N.J.S.A.*18A:37-14;
- The names of the investigators;
- The type and nature of any discipline imposed on any student engaged in HIB; and
- Any other measures imposed, training conducted or programs implemented to reduce HIB.

Report Card
The report cards issued by the NJDOE, pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:7E-3, will include data identifying the number and nature of all reports of HIB. These data will be collected through existing reporting systems. **(S)**

The Relationship of Hazing to HIB
As described in the *Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials* (MOA), which establishes the foundation for cooperative relationships between school and law enforcement officials (required under *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-6.2(b)13; the MOA can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/regs/agree.pdf), hazing may be considered to be HIB (see the description of hazing below). While bullying is not a separately defined offense under the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice, the conduct that constitutes bullying frequently constitutes one or more criminal or disorderly persons offenses. Common bullying offenses include assault, harassment, threats, robbery and sexual offenses. The MOA establishes that the school district must report to law enforcement officials any hazing incident that involves a criminal offense, and reminds school officials that hazing which involves the participation of a coach or a teacher may constitute child abuse in some circumstances.

Hazing, as is the case with HIB, is a behavior that is inconsistent with the development and promotion of a positive school climate. New Jersey schools might consider addressing hazing on school grounds, at school-sponsored functions, and on school buses as part of their codes of student conduct. School districts also may wish to consider addressing hazing behavior that occurs away from school grounds, consistent with *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-7.6.

Hazing

Hazing is a process, based on tradition that is used by groups to maintain a hierarchy (i.e., a pecking order) within the group. Regardless of consent, the rituals require individuals to engage in activities that are physically and psychologically stressful. These activities can be humiliating, demeaning, intimidating and exhausting, all of which results in physical or emotional discomfort. Hazing involves group dynamics and proving one's worthiness to become a member of a specific group. The newcomer, or victim, is hazed. Once accepted by the group, the victim becomes a bystander and watches others get hazed. Eventually the bystander typically achieves senior status and power, and becomes a perpetrator of hazing (Lipkins, 2006).

The statutory definition of hazing in New Jersey (*N.J.S.A.* 2C:40-3) is provided below:

> *a. A person is guilty of hazing, a disorderly persons offense, if, in connection with initiation of applicants to or members of a student or fraternal organization, he knowingly or recklessly organizes, promotes, facilitates or engages in any conduct, other than competitive athletic events, which places or may place another person in danger of bodily injury.*
> *b. A person is guilty of aggravated hazing, a crime of the fourth degree, if he commits an act prohibited in subsection a. which results in serious bodily injury to another person.*

The hazing statute also establishes the following:

> *Notwithstanding any other provision of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to a prosecution under this Act.*
>
> *Hazing is a separate offense under N.J.S.A. 2C:40-3. Hazing is a disorderly persons offense when the conduct, other than competitive athletic events, may place another person in danger of bodily injury. When serious bodily injury results, the offense is aggravated hazing, which is a crime of the fourth degree. The consent of the person hazed is not a defense. N.J.S.A. 2C:40-4. Any other criminal conduct under the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice also may be charged. N.J.S.A. 2C:40-5.*

BEST PRACTICES IN BULLYING PREVENTION

During the last twenty years, research studies have reported on the nature of bullying and the extent to which bullying negatively contributes to student problems ranging from underachievement to teen suicide to deadly acts of violence. Information is beginning to emerge on the essential features of bullying prevention strategies, which underscore the importance of systemic and sustained prevention efforts. As reported in the DuPage County Anti-Bullying Model Policy and Best Practices, 2011, research studies indicate that multifaceted and long-term approaches aimed at reducing bullying in schools are more likely to succeed than single-component or short-term programs. Such programs may include the following:

- A school-wide component centered on training, awareness, monitoring, and assessment of bullying;
- A classroom component focused on reinforcing school-wide rules and building social and emotional skills and empathy; and
- An intervention component for students who are frequent targets or perpetrators of bullying.

Programs directed at only one of these levels, or interventions designed only for bullying targets and bullying offenders, are less likely to be effective (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). When bullying prevention activities are scaffolded onto a larger comprehensive framework for prevention and positive youth development, the prevention efforts are strengthened, while also addressing some of the underlying, contributing social, emotional and environmental factors that can lead to bullying (DuPage County, 2011). The use of evidence-based programs, those that have repeatedly demonstrated success in a variety of environments, are more likely to produce desired results, when used with fidelity to the program's design. Additionally, programs are more likely to be effective when supported by strong administrative leadership and the ongoing commitment to the program on the part of the adults in the school system. As noted in the DuPage County Anti-Bullying Model Policy and Best Practices, 2011, the most promising programs incorporate the following characteristics:

- Efforts begin early and continue throughout student's educations. Effective HIB programs should have no "end date," but should become part of the life of the school.
- A focus on creating a school-wide environment or climate that builds connection and caring among students, among staff and between students and staff, and discourages bullying and aggression.
- Surveys of students, staff and parents to assess the nature, extent and perceptions of bullying behavior and attitudes towards bullying.
- Training to prepare staff to recognize and respond to bullying.
- Ongoing staff development to sustain bullying prevention programs.
- Review and enhancement of the BOE's code of student conduct related to HIB behavior.
- Development of consistent rules and consistent enforcement of the rules against HIB.
- Classroom activities to discuss issues related to bullying and to teach or devise strategies for responding to and reporting bullying.
- Integrating bullying prevention themes in all curriculum disciplines.
- Individual and group work with children who have bullied peers.
- Involvement of parents in bullying prevention and intervention activities.
- Use of teacher or staff groups to increase staff knowledge and motivation to ending bullying.

A systematic review of 44 school-based HIB prevention programs indicates that, on average, anti-bullying programs reduce HIB acts by 20-23% and victimization by 17-20% (Farrington and Ttofi, 2010). The duration (number of days) and intensity (number of hours) of a program are significantly related to the reduction of bullying and victimization. Increased duration and intensity contribute to more significant changes.

School Climate and Culture

Students face the challenges of a dramatically accelerated pace of life, economic pressures on parents and a pervasive culture of advertising and digital media, some of which appears to support anti-social norms, and violent problem solving. To help prepare for these challenges, a focus on social-emotional and character development (SECD) and the social environment of the school is critically important. Strategies that focus on SECD, school climate and school culture promote successful behaviors, reduce safety and health concerns, positively affect academics, build caring communities, prepare students to be ethical leaders and provide resources and political capital in the community.

School climate refers to the current quality of school life. It is based on people's experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structure. *School climate* is often linked with the term *"school culture,"* which describes the way schools "do things," informed by shared history, customary practices, formal and informal traditions, celebrations, teamwork and a psychological sense of community (The School Climate Challenge, 2008).

The terms *school culture* and *school climate* describe the environments that affect the behavior of teachers and students. *School culture* is the shared beliefs and attitudes that characterize the district-wide organization and establish boundaries for its constituent units. *School climate* characterizes the organization at the school building and classroom levels. It refers to the "feel" of a school and can vary from school to school within the same district. School climate and school culture are two distinct but highly interactive aspects of a school system. Changes in one produce changes in the other.

Research reports on school climate suggest that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can increase achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behavior (Marshall, 2004**).** Research findings on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicate that a positive, supportive and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students (Haynes and Comer, 1993). In addition to there being a substantive connection between school culture and student achievement, there is a strong connection among school culture and staff member satisfaction, parent engagement and community support.

School climate is a key factor in whether students or adults will bully one another (DuPage County Schools, 2011). To reduce HIB, it is important to assess and improve, as appropriate, the climate or "feel" of the school and the social norms with regard to HIB.

Some practical questions to consider regarding the things that contribute to a school's climate are included below. The "feel" experienced when considering these questions is indicative of the

school climate (the following is adapted from Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment Prevention, 2006).

- How do you feel and what are your thoughts when observing school walls?
- Are there displays of student work? Are pro-social slogans prominently posted everywhere? Are there posters announcing upcoming school community events?
- How are you greeted (or not greeted) by students and adults in the hallway?
- Are students and adults helpful and interested in who you are and how to help you get where you want to go?
- Do students and staff make eye contact with you?

Dimensions of School Climate

School climate is a complex concept that includes the following dimensions:

- *Safety* – Feeling safe in schools powerfully promotes student learning and healthy development (Devine and Cohen, 2007). Students and staff feel safe when:
  - School and district rules and norms pertaining to safety that include HIB are clearly communicated through the policies and codes of student conduct (National School Climate Center, 2011);
  - Enforcement of these rules and norms is clear and consistent. There is growing evidence that schools in which rules are effectively enforced (i.e., better behavior and discipline management) have lower rates of student victimization and student delinquency (Gottfredson, et al., 2005);
  - Students and adults feel safe from physical harm in the school; and
  - Students have a sense of social-emotional security and feel safe from teasing, harassment and exclusion (National School Climate Center, 2011).

- *Relationships* – One of the most important aspects of relationships in schools is the degree to which people feel connected to one another. The amount of *connectedness* experienced by the average student appears to consistently contribute to predicting his or her likelihood of aggression and victimization (Wilson, 2004). For middle school and high school students, safe, caring and responsive school climates tend to foster a greater attachment to school and provide the optimal foundation for social, emotional and academic learning. (Blum et al., 2002). Most elementary students feel connected to their schools; however, school connectedness generally begins to decline in middle schools. When it comes to high schools, as many as 40-60% of all youth - urban, suburban and rural - report being disconnected from their schools (Monahan, 2010).

  Districts are encouraged to consider implementing strategies that support the most vulnerable students and reinforce the importance of respecting individual differences, including for race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or for any other distinguishing characteristic (e.g., personal appearance, social standing) among all school relationships: student-student, adult-student, adult-adult. Some examples of these strategies include the following:
  - Instituting a Gay-Straight Alliance in the school;
  - Training staff to be supportive of student differences; or
  - Celebrating important cultural events of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- *Teaching and Learning* – A positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust. Each of these aspects has been shown to directly improve the learning environment, as evidenced in the factors explained below:
  - Student Support – Teacher support is integral to student achievement. Research findings indicate that the student-teacher relationships in kindergarten are related to later academic and behavioral outcomes for students. If a teacher is negative and disagreeable in kindergarten, it is more likely that the students will have behavioral and academic problems in later grades (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Student Engagement – When teachers support and interact positively with students, students are more likely to be engaged in the learning process and to behave appropriately (Skinner and Belmont, 1993).
  - Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) – Evidence-based SECD programs have resulted in impressive gains in achievement test scores and in increasing the academic emphasis of elementary and middle school students (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Civic Education – Implementing learning activities that extend beyond the walls or life of the classroom is an effective way to incorporate the study of rights and duties of citizenship into a school, while promoting student learning (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Service Learning – Service learning projects promote civic engagement, since these activities teach students ways to apply classroom material to "real-life" situations. When students are given ownership and choice in their service learning projects, there is evidence of increases in students' self-concepts and increases in their tolerance for diversity (Morgan & Streb, 2001).
  - Supportive Teaching – Teaching in a supportive style, including the use of encouragement and encouraging student's questions, the provision of opportunities for students to excel, the fostering of independent thinking, and the provision of individual attention, enhances the classroom climate (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Interpersonal Skills – Encouraging and supporting the development of interpersonal skills, such as conflict resolution, empathy, ethical decision making and personal responsibility, improves school climate and contributes to student success (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Individual Differences – Respecting individual differences among student-student, adult-student, adult-adult relationships is at the core of positive school climate (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Adult-Student Relationships – Developing caring and supportive one-to-one adult-student relationships promotes positive school climates (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Modeling – Teaching, encouraging and modeling behaviors for students to be supportive of each other's emotional and academic needs is associated with positive school climates (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Teacher Support – When teachers feel supported by both the principal and their peers they are more committed to their profession (National School Climate Center, 2011).
  - Teacher's Beliefs – Establishing a positive school climate also is associated with the development of teachers' beliefs that they can positively affect student learning (National School Climate Center, 2011).

- *Institutional Environment* – The size and physical layout of a school can affect students' feelings about safety. The following tend to occur in schools that have positive institutional environments (adapted from The National School Climate Center, 2011):
  - Staff, students, and families feel a positive connection to the school and participate in many different aspects of school life.
  - The building, its classrooms and all physical structures are neat, clean and appealing.
  - Staff and students have adequate resources and materials.
  - Efforts are made to form smaller learning communities as a way to improve the school learning environment. While smaller schools are positively correlated to school connectedness, school size is not the only way to improve the learning environment.
  - School administrators convey a clear vision for the school and strive to successfully implement the vision.
  - Administrators are accessible to and supportive of staff members.
  - Administrators are committed to ongoing professional development for themselves and their staff members.
  - Professional relationships are characterized by supportive attitudes and positive interactions; staff members effectively work together.

Assessing Bullying

A best practice for effective bullying prevention and intervention involves regular, thorough assessments of the bullying behavior and climate of a school. Different types of bullying occur with varied frequency and magnitude among different populations in assorted school settings at various points in time. Therefore, a data-driven approach for reducing bullying and improving school climate, rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach, is critically important for the development of an effective bullying prevention strategy. School-wide bullying prevention and intervention programs are more purposeful and relevant when they are informed by the students' views (San Antonio & Salzfas, 2007).

The importance of engaging in data collection efforts is underscored by the evidence of a disparity in the number of incidents that are reported to school staff and those that go unreported. For example, according to a 2001 study funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) only 36% of students who were bullied notified a teacher or another adult at school about the event (DuPage County Schools, 2011). Data can help administrators and educators tailor a bullying prevention strategy to meet the school's needs, and can serve as a baseline from which administrators can measure and report their progress in reducing bullying. Provided below are a few tips for assessing bullying:

- It is essential to be able to identify where, when and how students experience bullying at school (DuPage County Schools, 2011).
- The assessments should consider multiple factors and individuals within the school system using direct measures, such as surveys and interviews, and indirect measures, such as disciplinary and attendance records (Marshall, 2004).
- Anonymous student questionnaires and focus groups can be employed to assess the nature and extent of bullying and perceptions of and attitudes towards bullying (DuPage County Schools, 2011).

- Having students identify "hot spots" for bullying behavior can be very revealing. Once these areas are identified, it is imperative for district or school officials take immediate action (DuPage County Schools, 2011).

Staff, Student, Parent and Community Support for HIB Prevention

Bullying and other problem student behaviors typically do not only occur in school, and the solutions to these problems cannot be borne exclusively by school staff. Schools are most likely to prevent bullying and other problem student behavior and promote student well-being and success through comprehensive, coordinated and systematically planned programs, services and activities that are cooperatively developed in consultation with school staff and administrators, students, volunteers, law enforcement, parents and other community members, as required under *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-17.

Some of the benefits of a community-wide approach to bullying prevention include the following:

- *Increased awareness of bullying* – Students report that bullying typically happens in unsupervised areas. The more adults watching, the better.
- *Increased attention to bullying that occurs beyond the school house door* – Since bullying also occurs in the community, wherever children and youth gather, it is important for community members to be vigilant and coordinate with school officials.
- *Increased input and support from the community for bullying prevention programs* – The commitment of parents and community members is vital to developing and sustaining effective programs.
- *Increased exposure to the message* – Bullying prevention messages can have more impact when they come from many adults and credible resources in a community, not only from educators and parents.

Provided below are some ideas for community-wide strategies to prevent bullying:

- Involve youth, parents, professionals and volunteers in promoting HIB prevention.
- Use resources that exist in the community.
- Engage interested partners from a variety of sources, including educators, counselors, medical and mental health professionals, child development and family centers, social service agencies, law enforcement officials, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, volunteer groups and businesses.
- Include the voices of students from especially vulnerable populations, including racial, ethnic or religious minorities; gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning individuals; individuals with mental, physical or sensory disabilities; and other groups representing distinguishing characteristics.
- Inform parents and students of resources that are available to help learn about bullying and bullying prevention efforts.
- Develop a comprehensive, long-range strategy for addressing bullying.
- Use assessment results to identify bullying concerns, determine priorities for a bullying prevention plan, target responses to bullying incidents and assess progress.
- Become an advocate for appropriate anti-bullying policies in the schools and other community institutions.
- Continually assess the effectiveness of community efforts.

Coordination of HIB Prevention Activities
Bullying and other prevention efforts should be coordinated by a group that is representative of the school and community. The School Anti-Bullying Specialist and the School Safety Team (SST) roles are intended to lead this effort.

- In addition to the required SST members, the principal might consider including volunteers, law enforcement officials, parents and other community members, a teacher from each grade, a non-teaching staff member, a school counselor or other school-based mental-health professional or a school nurse.
- While the SST is required, at a minimum, to meet twice each school year, meetings could be held regularly to review survey data, plan and assess bullying prevention policies and activities, motivate staff, students and parents and ensure that efforts are sustained.
- A student advisory committee could be formed to focus on bullying prevention and provide valuable suggestions and feedback to school staff.
- Observances of the Week of Respect and School Violence Awareness Week could be used to focus on prevention messages that will be sustained throughout the school year.

Staff Development
In addition to being required under the ABR, staff training typically enables and enhances the implementation of bullying prevention activities and builds commitment to these activities. Some key areas of focus for bullying training include the following:

- Understanding the nature of bullying and its effects;
- Recognizing, reporting and responding to bullying;
- Identifying and addressing the special needs of vulnerable populations;
- Utilizing classroom activities to discuss bullying and related issues;
- Integrating bullying prevention into the curriculum;
- Coordinating with others in the school to prevent bullying; and
- Sustaining bullying prevention programs.

Increase Adult Supervision in Areas Where Bullying has Occurred
Once student questionnaires or other information gathering techniques reveal where most incidents of bullying occur, seek creative ways to increase an adult presence in those areas.

Intervene Consistently and Appropriately in Bullying Situations
Train staff to immediately intervene to stop bullying whenever it is observed, and to vigilantly follow the BOE's HIB policies and procedures. Separate follow-up meetings should be held with both victims and alleged offenders. Parents of affected students must be contacted by the principal, and should be involved to the extent possible.

Focus Class Time on Bullying Prevention
Bullying prevention should include a classroom component. For example, 20-30 minutes a week could be set aside to discuss bullying and peer relations with students. This facilitates teachers keeping their fingers on the pulse of student concerns, allows for discussions about bullying and its effects, and provides opportunities to reinforce rules and expectations and impart or devise tools for students to address bullying problems. Anti-bullying themes and messages should be incorporated throughout the school curriculum.

Continue Bullying Prevention Efforts for a Sustained Period Time

There is no end date for bullying, and therefore, there should be no end date for prevention activities. Bullying prevention should be woven into the educational program and the entire school environment. These efforts should begin early and continue throughout students' educations.

BEST PRACTICES IN BULLYING INTERVENTION

Intervention is the next step on the continuum of a comprehensive bullying program. Research reports indicate that educators might not recognize students identified by their peers as students who bully (http://www.stopbullying.gov). In 2005, The Colorado Trust launched a project titled the Bullying Prevention Initiative. The results of this study indicate that a reduction in bullying occurred in schools where teachers and students were willing to intervene, treat each other fairly and demonstrate that they care about one another.

In order to effectively intervene, all school staff should know the signs of bullying so that they can appropriately intervene even when there is only a suspicion that bullying may be occurring, which is important for sending the message that bullying is not acceptable behavior. Some key factors for effective bullying intervention follow:

- Respond in the moment to manage the situation and ensure safety.
  - Stop the bullying immediately.
  - Separate the students involved.
  - Do not immediately ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying incident.
  - Do not try to sort out the facts at this point in the intervention.
- Ensure the victim's safety.
  - Check that the victim is physically or emotionally unharmed and determine his or her safety needs;
  - Use short-term environmental arrangements, such as a seat or schedule change.
  - Increase adult presence in the vicinity of a predictable bullying incident.
- Address the bully and bystanders.
  - Use the incident as a "teachable moment." Help bystanders understand the harmful effects of the incident, including any inappropriate behavior on the part of bystanders, and the expectations and options for bystanders in these types of incidents.
  - Restate and clarify behavioral expectations (i.e., "We respect, protect and care for each other here.")
  - Reference school rules and the code of student conduct.
  - Escort or refer the offender(s) to the office.
- Encourage bystanders to do the right thing and take an active, pro-social role next time by giving them specific suggestions for the next time they observe a bullying incident:
  - Say "STOP!"
  - Get an adult for immediate help.
  - Report incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying, or rumors of potential confrontation.
  - Encourage other students to walk away.
- Follow the school district's reporting procedures.
- Stay alert to possible continued bullying incidents by using active supervision strategies.
  - Move around the area; increase your proximity to areas where students regularly interact.
  - Routinely scan for possible problems or incidents.
  - Interact with students regularly to establish rapport.
- Provide support to the victim.

- Develop a screening process to better understand the victim's point of view and determine appropriate interventions for improving the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of interventions and supports for the victim. The screening process could include:
  - Review of academic records and, if applicable, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
  - Interview with the student.
  - Student completed checklists or rating scales.
  - Possible observations of settings and situations where bullying is known to occur.
- Alter Long-term Environmental Arrangements – Change the victim's seat or schedule; position staff in the vicinity of predictable bullying incidents.
- Provide Social Skills Instruction – Examples of topics include assertiveness skills, empowerment skills and responding appropriately in the moment.
- Increase positive contact with adults – Set up dedicated meeting times. Provide mentoring.
- Encourage relationship building and peer supports, including active listening skills, empathy, problem solving, and providing support to vulnerable or victimized peers.

Best Practices in Responding to Children Who Bully

- Conduct a screening and functional assessment as a means of gathering information to uncover variables associated with patterns of behavior and determine the function or purposes of the behavior. This includes identifying setting events and antecedents – the conditions that trigger behavior – and the factors that support continuation of the behavior. The purpose of behavioral information gathering is to improve the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of behavior support plans and interventions.
- Collect data from a combination of sources of information (e.g., interviews, observations, review of office conduct referrals, checklists, rating scales).
- Assess data in order to determine the pattern(s) of the behavior(s) of concern.
- Select interventions based on the function of a student's behavior. Provided below are summary descriptions of two theorists that provide insight for determining effective interventions for HIB. Both theories indicate that it is essential to be mindful of the function or purpose the behavior serves for a student, and that logical consequences, rather than punishments (e.g., out-of-school suspension) have a greater likelihood of affecting the behaviors of concern:
  - Social theorists, such as Adler (1956) and Dreikurs (1982), maintained that:
    - Humans are social beings, and their main desire (basic motivation) is to belong;
    - All behavior is purposeful; the behavior of another person cannot be understood unless one knows which goal it is directed towards, and it is always directed towards finding one's place in the world;
    - Human beings are decision-making organisms; and
    - Human beings do not see reality as it is, but only as they perceive it, and their perceptions may be mistaken or biased.
  - Dreikurs (1968) contended that every act has a consequence, and if students are to avoid unpleasant results of their acts they must behave in a way that will help to produce favorable results. Logical consequences should offer students a clear and logical choice of behavior and results, and the students must perceive that they have a choice and must

accept the relationship of their choice to the response. Consequences are structured and arranged by the adult, but must be experienced by the students as logical in nature (Dreikurs, 1972). Some key points on consequences follow –

  - Logical consequences express the reality of the social order, not of the person (i.e., punishment, the power of a personal authority).
  - Logical consequences are logically related to the behavior of concern; punishment rarely is. The student must clearly see the relationship between his or her act and the result of his or her own behavior rather than that of others.
  - Logical consequences involve no element of moral judgment; punishment inevitably does. A logical consequence gives the student the choice of deciding for him or herself whether or not the student wants to repeat a given act.
  - The voice is friendly when consequences are invoked; there is anger in punishment, either open or concealed.

- Short- and long-term interventions should focus on addressing social-emotional, behavioral, academic, environmental and other issues related to the underlying reasons for the bullying pattern. Examples of possible interventions include:
  - Relationship building with a positive peer network;
  - Relationship building with staff or mentor;
  - Academic supports to address academic deficits contributing to poor social behaviors;
  - Self-identity and self-confidence empowerment building that reduces the need for the student to act out and gain power;
  - Changing the student's seat assignment, changing the student's schedule, controlling the location of offenders and their associates and the victims; and
  - Morning and afternoon "check-in" systems to increase positive contact with adults.

Instruction for Building Social Skills Competence

Provide short- and long-term instructional interventions to support the student's development of positive social skills intended to replace the bullying behavior, including instruction in the following subjects:

- Awareness and respect for differences;
- Empathy building and tolerance;
- Appropriate and positive use of power;
- Assertiveness and leadership skills;
- Goal setting; and
- Constructively managing conflict and situations that involve an audience.

Instructional interventions may occur one-on-one with the student or in small groups using instructional formats that could include:

- Role plays,
- Discussion;
- Practice; and
- Problem-solving situations.

Range of Responses to HIB

The ABR requires boards of education to establish a *range of responses* to HIB incidents, and the principal and ABS to appropriately apply these responses. The responses must include

remedial actions provided for and *consequences* imposed on a student or a staff member who commits an act of HIB against a student. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses, consider the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the code of student conduct and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-7.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commit one or more acts of HIB may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as set forth in the board of education approved code of student conduct. Additionally, remedial measures should be designed to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the problem; protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and take correction for documented systemic problems related to HIB. While consequences and remedial actions typically are different, they can overlap and have complementary purposes: modifying bullying behavior.

School staff should use violations of the school rules as opportunities to help students improve their social and emotional skills, accept personal responsibility for their learning environments, and understand consequences for poor choices and behaviors. A clear distinction exists between remediation and consequences:

- *Remediation* – Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary defines the term "remedial" as "intended as a remedy" and "concerned with the correction of faulty study habits and the raising of a pupil's general competence." Remediation is intended to correct the problem behavior, prevent a recurrence of the behavior, protect and provide support for the victim and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to HIB. Remedial measures provide the student with an opportunity to reflect on behavior, learn pro-social skills and make amends to those affected by the bullying behavior.
- *Consequences* – Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary defines consequence as "a conclusion derived from logic" and "something produced by a cause or necessarily following from a set of conditions." Consequences in school policies tend to be primarily punitive in nature (e.g., out-of-school suspension). However, punitive measures are not necessarily logical outcomes or commonsense responses to behavior; typically are not effective in correcting behavior and can be counterproductive; should be used only when appropriate and absolutely necessary; and almost always should be used in conjunction with remediation measures (DuPage County Schools, 2011). *Logical consequences* (described above), on the other hand, are complementary to remedial strategies, in that they are designed to correct the behavior of concern, while the student also experiences the negative effects of his or her behavior.

Since *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-15(b)(4) establishes that the response to a person (not only a student) who commits an act of HIB must include both consequences and appropriate remedial action, school officials are responsible for taking all appropriate steps to understand and rectify the problem, which by law involves *more than traditional punitive actions.* The overall school climate and school culture and the individual and institutional factors that contribute to climate and culture might overtly or inadvertently support HIB behaviors; these factors *always* should be considered in the response to an act of HIB. Additionally, in all cases the district should attempt to *actively involve parents* in the remediation of the behaviors(s) of concern.

For each incident of HIB, the school officials *must* respond to the individual who committed the act. The range of responses to each confirmed HIB act should include individual, classroom, school or district responses, as appropriate to the findings from each incident. Examples of responses that apply to each category are as follows:

- *Individual Responses* can include consistent and appropriate positive behavioral interventions such as peer mentoring, short-term counseling or life skills groups intended to remediate the problem behaviors.
- *Classroom Responses* can include classroom discussions about an HIB incident, role plays (when implemented with sensitivity to student's situations or involvement with HIB), research projects, observing and discussing audio-visual materials or books on these subjects, skill-building lessons in courtesy, tolerance, assertiveness and conflict-management;
- *School Responses* can include theme days, learning station programs, "acts of kindness" programs or awards, use of student survey data to plan prevention and intervention programs and activities, social norms campaigns, posters, public service announcements, "natural helper" or peer leadership programs, "upstander" programs, parent programs, the dissemination of information to students and parents explaining acceptable uses of electronic and wireless communication devices, and HIB prevention curricula or campaigns.
- *District-wide Responses* can comprise adoption of school-wide programs, including enhancing the school climate, involving the community in policy review and development, providing professional development, coordinating with community-based organizations such as mental health services, health facilities, law enforcement and faith-based organizations, and launching HIB prevention campaigns.

The following factors should be considered when determining remedial measures:

- *Personal*
  - Life skill deficiencies;
  - Social relationships;
  - Strengths;
  - Talents;
  - Interests;
  - Hobbies;
  - Extra-curricular activities;
  - Classroom participation;
  - Academic performance; and
  - Relationship to students and the school district.
- *Environmental*
  - School culture;
  - School climate;
  - Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
  - General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments;
  - Staff ability to prevent and manage difficult or inflammatory situations;
  - Social-emotional and behavioral supports;
  - Social relationships;
  - Community activities;
  - Neighborhood situations; and
  - Family situation.

The following factors should be considered when determining *consequences*:

- *Student Considerations*
  - Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved and their relationship to school staff and the educational program;
  - Degree of harm;
  - Surrounding circumstances;
  - Nature and severity of the behaviors;
  - Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
  - Relationships between the parties involved; and
  - Context in which the alleged events occurred.
- *School Considerations*
  - School culture, climate and general staff management of the learning environment;
  - Social, emotional and behavioral supports;
  - Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
  - Family, community and neighborhood situation; and
  - Alignment with policy and procedures.

Consequences and remedial measures could include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

Examples of Remedial Measures

- Personal – Student Exhibiting Bullying Behavior
  - Develop a behavioral contract with the student. Ensure the student has voice in the outcome and can identify ways he or she can solve the problem and change behaviors;
  - Meet with parents to develop a family agreement to ensure the parent and the student understand school rules and expectations;
  - Explain the long-term negative consequences of HIB on all involved;
  - Ensure understanding of consequences, if HIB behavior continues;
  - Meet with school counselor, school social worker or school psychologist to decipher mental health issues (e.g., what is happening and why?);
  - Develop a learning plan that includes consequences and skill building;
  - Consider wrap-around support services or after-school programs or services;
  - Provide social skill training, such as impulse control, anger management, developing empathy and problem solving;
  - Arrange for an apology, preferably written;
  - Require a reflective essay to ensure the student understands the impact of his or her actions on others;
  - Have the student research and teach a lesson to the class about bullying, empathy or a similar topic.
  - Arrange for restitution (i.e., compensation, reimbursement, amends, repayment), particularly when personal items were damaged or stolen;
  - Explore age-appropriate restorative (i.e., healing, curative, recuperative) practices; and
  - Schedule a follow-up conference with the student.
- Personal – Target/Victim
  - Meet with a trusted staff member to explore the student's feelings about the incident;
  - Develop a plan to ensure the student's emotional and physical safety at school;

    - Have the student meet with the school counselor or school social worker to ensure he or she does not feel responsible for the bullying behavior;
    - Ask students to log behaviors in the future;
    - Help the student develop skills and strategies for resisting bullying; and
    - Schedule a follow-up conference with the student.
- Parents, Family and Community
    - Develop a family agreement;
    - Refer the family for family counseling; and
    - Offer parent education workshops related to bullying and social-emotional learning.
- Environmental (Classroom, School Building)
    - Conduct school and community surveys or implement other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to the bullying;
    - Revise school policy and procedures;
    - Communicate behavioral expectations to students, parents and staff;
    - Modify student schedules or transportation routes;
    - Increase supervision in "hot spots" (e.g., locker room, hallways, playground, cafeteria, school perimeter, bus) where bullying occurs or is likely to occur;
    - Provide ongoing professional development for staff to learn effective intervention and prevention strategies; and
    - Involve the Parent Teacher Association or Parent Teacher Organization.

Examples of Consequences

The use of negative consequences should occur in conjunction with remediation and not be relied upon as the sole intervention approach. Negative consequences should be immediate, short-term, varied, graded and developmentally appropriate, such as the following:

- Admonishment;
- Temporary removal from class;
- Deprivation of privileges;
- Classroom or administrative detention;
- Referral to disciplinarian;
- In school suspension;
- Out of school suspension (short-term or long-term);
- Report to law enforcement or take other legal action;
- Expulsion; and
- For adult offenders, bans from providing services, participating in school-district sponsored programs or being in school buildings or on school grounds and other disciplinary measures permitted under local bargaining unit agreements, board of education policies and State law.

Victim Support

It is not sufficient to only impose consequences and to implement strategies for remediating the behavior of students or staff who commit acts of HIB. *Support should be provided for the victims of HIB*. Districts should identify a range of strategies and resources that will be available to individual victims of HIB, and respond in a manner that provides relief to victims and does not stigmatize victims or further their sense of persecution. The type, diversity, location and degree of support are directly related to the student's perception of safety. Sufficient safety measures

should be undertaken to ensure the victims' physical and social-emotional well-being and their ability to learn in a safe, supportive and civil educational environment.

Examples of support for student victims of HIB include:

- Teacher aides;
- Hallway and playground monitors;
- Partnering with a school leader;
- Provision of an adult mentor;
- Assignment of an adult "shadow" to help protect the student;
- Seating changes;
- Schedule changes;
- School transfers;
- Before-and after-school supervision;
- School transportation supervision;
- Counseling; and
- Treatment or therapy.

The Role of Peers in Bully-Victim Interactions

Immediate anti-bullying interventions address the bullies and victims, but long-term interventions should engage the entire student body and should specifically engage groups of students who witness acts of bullying. It is essential to change the behavior of the bystanders who witness bullying but do nothing to stop it. Although anti-bullying attitudes are common, few students actually express anti-bullying attitudes or try to intervene in bullying. On the contrary, many students act in ways that encourage or support the bullying, taking on the participant roles of assistants or reinforcers of the bully. Other students, so-called outsiders, withdraw and pretend not to notice these events. Fortunately, there also can be defenders who give support to the victims (Salmavalli, 1996).

In the 2004 research of Salmavalli and Voeten, it was found that participant role behaviors varied greatly between classrooms. While they posited that changing attitudes might be a good starting point for bullying prevention, an even more critical issue is learning and transferring anti-bullying behaviors to actual bullying situations. The "participant role approach is intended to encourage students in bystander roles to stop bullying behaviors; build citizenship; develop social-emotional literacy; and increase empathy for others." Salmavalli (1999) suggests three steps for curriculum-based bullying prevention activities using the "participant role approach:"

- Step One – Raise awareness.
  - Discuss bullying in the classroom, starting with themes such as the definition of bullying, practical examples of bullying and understanding how it feels to be bullied, moving on to the group mechanisms involved in bullying.
  - Point out that in a group setting, people often behave in a different way from their beliefs about bullying. Most students have attitudes against bullying, but in actual situations they may behave in ways that encourage and maintain bullying in the school.
  - Make students aware of the discrepancy between their attitudes and behavior as a starting point for change. By introducing the different participant roles, students are provided with concrete content for discussion.
- Step Two – Encourage self-reflection.

    - Provide students with opportunities to learn appropriate behavior during bullying events by reflecting on their observations and their behavior.
- Step Three – Commit to anti-bullying behaviors.
    - Help students find ways in which they could behave individually and as a group to put an end to bullying.
    - Rehearse roles different from their previous ones using drama and role play techniques. These activities provide a safe context for students to explore feelings associated with different participant roles, and to rehearse anti-bullying behaviors that the students have not previously tried, such as telling others to stop bullying.
    - Make sure that class rules address bullying behavior that includes bystander reactions.

Systemic HIB Problems

Corrective actions should be taken to address documented systemic problems related to bullying, such as when there is an ongoing, unresolved bullying complaint; when there are concerns with patterns of bullying complaints; or when concerns of systemic bullying issues have been raised as a result of an investigation or as documented in a complaint (e.g. school officials not fulfilling their responsibilities regarding HIB laws and regulations). Institutional responses at the classroom, school building or district level typically include a combination of strategies which could include the following:

- Analysis of existing data to identify bullying issues and concerns;
- Use of findings from school surveys (e.g., school climate surveys);
- Focus groups;
- Mailings – postal and email;
- Cable access television;
- School culture change;
- School climate improvement;
- Adoption of evidence-based bullying prevention practices and programs;
- Training for all certificated and non-certificated staff;
- Professional development plans for involved staff;
- Participation of parents and other community members and organizations (e.g., Parent Teacher Associations, Parent Teacher Organizations) in the educational program and in problem-solving bullying issues;
- Formation of professional learning communities to address bullying problems;
- Small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school's response to the actions, in the context of the acceptable student and staff member behavior and the consequences of such actions;
- School policy and procedure revisions;
- Modifications of schedules;
- Adjustments in hallway traffic;
- Examination and adoption of educational practices for actively engaging students in the learning process and in bonding students to pro-social institutions and people;
- Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school;
- Supervision of student victims before and after school, including school transportation;
- Targeted use of monitors (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, locker room, playground, school perimeter, bus);
- Targeted use of teacher aides;

- Disciplinary action, including dismissal, for school staff who contributed to the problem;
- Supportive institutional interventions, including participation in the Intervention and Referral Services team, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8;
- Parent conferences;
- Family counseling;
- Development of a general bullying response plan;
- Participation of the entire student body in problem-solving HIB issues;
- Recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- Peer support groups;
- School transfers; and
- Involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers and juvenile officers.

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CHAPTER 2
ALL SCHOOL STAFF -
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INFORMATION

HIB RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF

The intent of the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* (*P.L.*2010, *c.*122) is to strengthen standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating and responding to *HIB incidents of students* in school and off school premises. The provisions in the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* (ABR) that affect school districts are explained in this publication in Chapter 1, School Administrator and Board of Education Member – Bullying Prevention and Intervention. The provisions of the ABR that specifically pertain to school staff are explained below.

Policy Development

Each district board of education is required to adopt a policy prohibiting HIB on school grounds at a school-sponsored function or on a school bus. The salient point for school staff is that the district's HIB policy must be developed using a process that includes representation from parents, students, school district and *school staff* and administrators, volunteers who have significant contact with students and community representatives.

Staff Training and Development

- *Professional Development* – The following is required for teachers and education services professionals in each five-year professional development cycle. The NJDOE's guidance on this requirement can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/HIBGuidancePD.pdf. The NJDOE's training PowerPoint resources can be used to assist with local in-service programs; however, the use of these materials is not sufficient to fulfill the in-service training requirements regarding *local* policies and protected groups (see http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.shtml).
  - Two hours of instruction in suicide prevention which must include –
    - Information on the relationship between risk of suicide and HIB incidents; and
    - Information on reducing the risk of suicide in students who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.
  - An additional two hours of instruction on HIB prevention.
- *Existing School Employees, Volunteers and Contractors* – All school staff, including administrators, instructors, student support services, administrative/office support, transportation, food service, facilities/maintenance, volunteers who have significant contact with students and persons contracted by the district to provide services to students, must be provided with training on the BOE's HIB policies.
  - The training must include instruction on preventing HIB on the basis of the protected categories identified in the definition of HIB, provided in this document and as established at *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-14, and other distinguishing characteristics that may incite incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying.
- *New Full- and Part-time Employees, Volunteers and Contractors* – The school district is required to incorporate information regarding its HIB policy into the employee training program, which must be provided to full-time ad pat-time staff, volunteers who have significant contact with students and persons contracted by the district to provide services to students.

- *District Anti-Bullying Coordinators (ABC) and School Anti-Bullying Specialists (ABS)* – These staff must be provided time during the usual school schedule to ensure they are prepared to act in these roles.
- *School Safety Team (SST)* – The members of the SST must participate in the in-service training provided by the district and other training as requested by the principal or the ABC, and must be provided with professional development opportunities that address effective school climate improvement practices, programs or approaches.
- *Teacher Certification* – Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, all candidates for teaching certification who have completed a teacher preparation program at a regionally accredited institution of higher education must have satisfactorily completed a program on HIB prevention. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, any person seeking certification through the alternate route must, within one year of being employed, satisfactorily complete a program on HIB prevention. The NJDOE's guidance on this requirement can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/HIBGuidanceEdPrep.pdf.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The ABR establishes new roles and responsibilities for central office and school staff. These requirements are described below:

- *District Anti-Bullying Coordinator* – The chief school administrator (CSA) is required to appoint a district anti-bullying coordinator (ABC). The CSA is encouraged, but not required, to appoint a school district employee to perform the ABC role. The responsibilities of the ABC include the following: **(S)**
  - Coordinating and strengthening the school district's policies to prevent, identify and address HIB of students;
  - Collaborating with the School Anti-Bullying Specialists in the school district, the BOE and the CSA to prevent, identify and respond to HIB of students in the school district;
  - In collaboration with the CSA, providing data to the NJDOE regarding HIB of students;
  - Executing other duties related to school HIB as requested by the CSA;
  - Meeting twice each school year with the ABS' in the district to discuss and strengthen procedures and policies to prevent, identify and address HIB in the school district.

- *School Anti-Bullying Specialist* – The principal in each school is required to appoint a School Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS). The ABS must be a:
  - Guidance counselor;
  - School psychologist; or
  - Other person trained to be the ABS from among the currently employed staff in the school.

  The responsibilities of the ABS include the following:
  - Chairing the school safety team;
  - Leading the investigation of HIB incidents in the school; and
  - Acting as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and addressing HIB incidents in the school.

- *School Safety Team* – A school safety team (SST) must be formed in each school in the school district. The purposes of the team are to develop, foster and maintain a positive school

climate by focusing on the ongoing systematic operational procedures and educational practices in the school and to address issues, such as HIB, that affect school climate and culture. The SST must consist of the following members:

- The principal or his or her designee who, when possible, is a senior administrator in the school, and the following appointees of the principal –
- A teacher in the school;
- An ABS;
- A parent of a student in the school; and
- Other members as determined by the principal.

The responsibilities of the SST include the following:

- Receiving records of all complaints of HIB of students that have been reported to the principal*;
- Receiving copies of all reports prepared after an investigation of an HIB incident*;
- Identifying and addressing patterns of HIB of students in the school*;
- Reviewing and strengthening school climate and the policies of the school in order to prevent HIB of students;
- Educating the community, including students, teachers, administrative staff and parents, to prevent and address HIB of students;
- Participating in the training required under the ABR and other training which the principal or the ABC may request. Additionally, the SST must be provided professional development opportunities that may address effective practices of successful school climate programs or approaches;
- Meeting, at a minimum, twice each school year; and
- Executing other duties related to HIB as requested by the principal or ABC.

**A parent who is a member of the SST is not permitted to participate in the first three activities identified above or in any other activities of the team which may compromise the confidentiality of a student, consistent with, at a minimum, the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99), N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7, Student Records and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.9, Student records.*

<u>HIB Prevention Programs, Approaches and Other Initiatives</u>

- *HIB Prevention Programs* – Schools and school districts must annually establish, implement, document and assess HIB prevention programs, approaches or other initiatives. *School staff,* students, administrators, volunteers, parents, law enforcement and community members must be involved in this annual process**.** The programs, approaches or other initiatives must be designed to create school-wide conditions to prevent and intervene with HIB of students.
- *HIB Instruction* – In accordance with the core curriculum content standards, each school district must provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction on preventing HIB throughout the school year.
- *Week of Respect* – Establishes that the week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year is designated as a "Week of Respect," during which time districts must provide age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing HIB.

BEST PRACTICES FOR STAFF IN BULLYING PREVENTION

HIB Prevention Activities

As reported in the DuPage County Anti-Bullying Model Policy and Best Practices, 2011, during the last twenty years, research studies have been conducted and reports made about the nature of bullying and the extent to which bullying negatively contributes to problems ranging from underachievement to teen suicide to deadly acts of violence. Information on effective HIB prevention and the importance of systemic, sustained bullying prevention efforts is emerging. Multifaceted approaches aimed at reducing bullying in schools appear to be more likely to succeed than single-component programs. Multifaceted approaches typically include, at a minimum, the following components:

- A school-wide component centered on training, awareness, monitoring and assessment of bullying;
- A classroom component focused on reinforcing school-wide rules and building social-emotional skills and empathy; and
- An intervention component for students who are frequent targets or perpetrators of bullying.

Programs directed at only one of these levels, or interventions designed only for the targets and perpetrators of bullying, are less likely to be effective (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). When schools are able to scaffold bullying prevention onto a larger, comprehensive framework for prevention and positive youth development, their prevention efforts are strengthened, while also addressing some of the social, emotional and environmental factors that can lead to bullying (DuPage County Schools, 2011). Where possible, it is important to use evidence-based programs that have repeatedly demonstrated success or programs specifically designed to address data-driven needs and to obtain strong administrative leadership and ongoing commitment on the part of the adults in the school system.

School Climate in the Classroom Setting

Although school climate should be addressed on a school-wide basis, there are a host of activities that teachers can use to improve classroom climate, which can contribute to improvements in the climate of the school. Provided below are descriptions of the variables that comprise school and classroom climate and activities that can help improve school and classroom climate (portions adapted from The National School Climate Center, 2011).

<u>Safety</u>

- Give students an opportunity to think about and share their core values for the class and their commitment to and responsibility for the rules.
- Develop each classroom's rules collaboratively by the teacher and students to reflect the classroom's specific values, strengths and needs.
- Brainstorm rules that meet students' collective dreams, and enable them to define rules that embody the communal class values.
- Help students think through the rules that are most important to the classroom culture they want to create. Limit the list to a few key rules; this is much more powerful than a long list of "do's and don'ts."
- Frame the rules in positive language for students to focus on "correct" behaviors. This avoids unintentionally suggesting or triggering negative behaviors.

- Make the rules a centerpiece of the educational environment; have students create pictures, slogans and other works to represent each one.
- Make the rules a part of the teacher's contract with the students. Invite students and their families to sign the pledge.
- Refer to the rules to hold students accountable for enforcing them. Utilize disruptive or positive in-class experiences as teachable moments to remind students of the rules and their support for them.
- Provide opportunities for students to respectfully hold each other accountable for the rules. This can be done, for example, through in-class discussions, hand signals that indicate a rule has been broken, or infusing social-emotional learning lessons regarding specific rules into a few lessons a month.
- Revisit the rules periodically so that the correct ones can be reinforced, or to determine whether adjustments are in order.
- Clearly communicate that bullying will not be tolerated.

Relationships

Educators should strive to model appropriate behaviors and build healthy student-teacher connections (DuPage County Schools, 2011). "School connectedness" is defined as the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals. School connectedness is a powerful predictor of and is associated with positive adolescent health and academic outcomes, student satisfaction and reduced conduct problems, and is a protective factor against risky sexual, violent and drug use behaviors.

The amount of connectedness to school experienced by students appears to be consistently associated with predictions of their likelihood of aggression and victimization (Wilson, 2004). For middle school and high school students, safe, caring and responsive school climates tend to foster greater attachment to school and provide the optimal foundation for social-emotional and academic learning (Blum, Mc Nelly and Rinehart, 2002). While most elementary students feel connected to their schools, school connectedness generally begins to decline during the middle school years. By high school, as many as 40-60% of all urban, suburban and rural youth report being disconnected from their schools (Monahan, et al., 2010).

Teaching and Learning

A positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust, and directly improves the learning environment. Provided below are key findings on the relationship between the conditions of learning and student performance:

- Teacher support is integral to student achievement. Research reports indicate that the student-teacher relationship in kindergarten is related to later academic and behavioral outcomes for students. If a teacher is negative and engages in conflict with students in kindergarten, it is more likely that the student will have behavioral and academic problems in later grades (Skinner and Belmont, 1993).
- When teachers support and interact positively with students, students are more likely to be engaged and behave appropriately (Skinner and Belmont, 1993).
- Research reports indicate that the use of evidence-based character education programs lead to higher academic achievement in elementary school (Morgan and Streb, 2001).

- Evidence-based social and emotional learning programs have resulted in impressive gains in achievement test scores and in increasing the academic focus of elementary and middle school students (Morgan and Streb, 2001).
- Implementing learning activities beyond the classroom is an effective way to incorporate civic education into a school; these activities promote student learning (Morgan and Streb, 2001).
- Service learning projects promote civic education by teaching students ways to apply classroom material to "real-life" situations. When students are given ownership and choice in their service learning projects, there is evidence that these students' experience gains in their self-concepts and their tolerance for diversity (Morgan and Streb, 2001).
- Teaching in a supportive style, which includes using encouragement, providing opportunities to excel, encouraging questions, fostering independent thinking and providing individual attention enhances the classroom climate.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of interpersonal skills, such as conflict resolution, empathy, ethical decision making, and personal responsibility, helps students to succeed in life (National School Climate Center, 2011).
- Respecting individual differences in all areas, including race, culture, gender and sexual orientation at every level of the school, including student-student, adult-student and adult-adult interactions promotes self-esteem and increases tolerance (National School Climate Center, 2011).
- When teachers feel supported by both the principal and their peers they are more committed to their profession (National School Climate Center, 2011).
- Establishing a positive school climate also is associated with the development of teachers' beliefs that they can positively affect student learning (National School Climate Center, 2011).

<u>Institutional Environment</u>

The size and physical layout of a school can affect students' feelings about safety. In schools that have a positive institutional environment:

- Staff, students and families experience a positive connection to the school and participate in many different aspects of school life.
- Classrooms and all physical structures and facilities are neat, clean and appealing.
- Staff and students have adequate resources and materials.
- There is an effort to form smaller learning communities as a way to improve the school learning environment; smaller schools are positively correlated to school connectedness, but school size is not the only way to improve the learning environment.
- School administrators communicate a clear vision for the school and strive to successfully implement the vision.
- Administrators are accessible, committed to staff development and supportive of staff members.
- Professional relationships are characterized by supportive attitudes, positive interactions and effectiveness.

"Upstander" Support

Use classroom meetings, school assemblies and conversations with individual students to teach them strategies for supporting victims of bullying. Bystanders can be empowered to take action by:

- Understanding that bystander's silence makes aggressive students more powerful and contributes to the harm done to the target.
- Modeling the desired, positive bystander behavior.
- Protecting bystanders from retaliation.
- Discouraging bystanders from confronting aggressive youth directly about their behavior, and helping them find safer and more effective interventions.
- Encouraging bystanders to tell adults about cruel behavior they witness.
- Helping bystanders find ways to be friendly toward targets of bullying and isolated peers.

Collaborating with Parents

Parents can be included in bullying prevention by:

- Advising them that the ABR mandates parental involvement on the School Safety Team, in the development and annual review of the board of education's HIB policy, and in the annual assessment of HIB prevention programs, approaches and other initiatives.
- Advising them of the board of education's HIB policies and the code of student conduct.
- Maintaining open, honest communication about bullying and other issues of concern.
- Holding a parents' night to discuss bullying.
- Encouraging them to become involved in developing a community-wide strategy to address bullying.
- Facilitating parental participation through the provision of transportation, snacks, child care and accessible venues (e.g., neighborhood church, community center) that often result in increased attendance.

Whole School Approach

Recognize that bullying prevention must occur in the broader school environment (e.g., on the bus, on the playground, at school-sponsored functions, in the lunchroom) by:

- Maintaining adult supervision in known "hot spots," (e.g., the lunchroom, the playground, the hallways, the stairwells, the locker room, the lavatories, the bus, the parking lot).
- Being aware of bullying risk and protective factors.
- Modeling positive interactions.
- Identifying and reporting witnessed or reported incidents of bullying, as required under the ABR and the board of education's HIB policy.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL STAFF IN BULLYING INTERVENTION

Signs That A Student Might Be Bullied

Providing safe classroom environments is an important part of the mission to reduce bullying. Students should observe and recognize that teachers and staff are in control and that they care about their students. An essential part of this role is recognizing bullying and understanding its many shapes and forms (Olweus, 2011). Check for any of the following possible student indicators of bullying. While these indicators might not be a sign of bullying or any other problem, staff should pursue whether bullying is a possible contributor (adapted from http://www.stopbullying.gov):

- Torn or dirty clothing or damaged books or other possessions;
- Cuts, bruises or scratches;
- Few, if any, friends or playmates;
- Afraid to go to school, or complaints of headaches or stomach pains;
- Not sleeping well or having bad dreams;
- Lost interest in schoolwork;
- Appearing sad, depressed or moody;
- Seeming anxious or having poor self-esteem; and
- Becoming quiet, sensitive or passive.

Signs That a Student Might Be a Bully

Bullying among students is aggressive behavior that is intentional. Being able to recognize the characteristics of students who have the potential to bully also will help you to create a safe classroom and school for students. Keeping an eye out for students with these characteristics may help school staff prevent bullying or trigger your intervention as early as possible. Students who bully their peers tend to (adapted from http://www.stopbullying.gov):

- Be impulsive, aggressive or easily angered;
- Have a strong need to dominate;
- Show defiance and aggression towards adults, including teachers and parents;
- Be easily frustrated;
- Lack empathy toward students who are bullied;
- Have difficulty following rules;
- Be involved in other antisocial or rule-breaking activities, such as vandalism, delinquency and substance abuse; or
- View violence and the use of violence in a positive way.

Bullying Intervention Strategies

To reduce bullying, research reports indicate that an important component of a school-wide approach is classroom intervention. These research findings indicate that educators might not recognize students identified by their peers as students who bully (http://www.stopbullyingnow.com). School staff should be able to identify the warning signs (see above) and consistently intervene when HIB occurs, which establishes the norm that bullying is not acceptable behavior (DuPage County Schools, 2011). If a bullying situation is not handled appropriately, the response can inadvertently promote, rather than reduce bullying.

Provided below are strategies for intervening with bullying (adapted from http://www.stopbullying.gov):

- Respond in the moment.
  - Manage the situation and ensure student safety;
  - Stop the bullying immediately. Stand between the bully and the bullied, preferably blocking eye contact between them;
  - Do not send any students away – especially bystanders;
  - Do not immediately ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying incident; and
  - Do not try to sort out the facts at this point in time.

- Support the bullied student in a way that allows him or her to regain self-control, to save face and to feel supported and safe from retaliation.
  - Make a point to talk with the student later in private, particularly if he or she is upset, to explore the incident. However, do not have the same conversation at the time of the incident. It can be very uncomfortable to be questioned in front of other students, particularly when the student already has been victimized and frequently only wants to "get away;"
  - Let the victim's teachers know about the incident so that they can provide additional support and protection, as appropriate;
  - Use short-term environmental arrangements, such as a seating or a schedule change, to separate the victim from the bully; and
  - Increase supervision to assure that the bullying is not repeated and does not escalate.

- Include bystanders in the conversation.
  - Give bystanders guidance on appropriate interventions or ways to get help next time;
  - Do not put bystanders on the spot to publicly explain their observations;
  - Use a calm, supportive voice to let them know that you noticed their inaction, or that you are pleased with the way they tried to help; and
  - If they did not act, encourage them to take a more active, pro-social role next time.

- Stay alert to possible continued HIB incidents by using active supervision strategies.
  - Move around the area to increase your exposure and proximity to students;
  - Routinely scan for possible problems or incidents; and
  - Interact with students regularly to establish rapport.

- Make it a "teachable moment" to help bystanders understand the events and their implications.
  - Restate and clarify behavioral expectations, i.e. "We support, defend and care for each other here!";
  - Reference school rules and the code of student conduct;
  - Escort or refer students to the office; and
  - Give them specific suggestions for these behaviors the next time they observe an HIB incident, including the following:
    - Say "STOP!";
    - Seek an adult for immediate help;
    - Report incidents of cyberbullying or rumors of potential confrontation;

- Encourage other students to walk away;
- Follow the school's reporting procedures; and

Victim Support

School staff should consider developing screening processes to better understand the victim's point of view and determine appropriate interventions to improve the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of bullying interventions and supports for the victim. A screening process could include the following (adapted from http://www.stopbullying.gov):

- A review of academic records and, if applicable, the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.);
- An interview with the student;
- Student-completed checklists or rating scales;
- Observations of settings and situations where bullying is known to occur; and
- Intervention and supports might include –
  - Altering Environmental Arrangements, such as changing student seating or schedules and positioning staff in the vicinity of predictable bullying incidents.
  - Providing social skills instruction, including assertiveness skills, empowerment skills and responding in moment.
  - Providing assistance in reading or interpreting social signals, building self-esteem or identifying friends and classmates who can give them support.
  - Increasing positive contact with adults, such as setting up dedicated meeting times and providing mentoring.
  - Encouraging relationship building and peer supports, including the use of active listening skills, empathy and problem solving, and having peers provide support to vulnerable or victimized students.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL STAFF IN CORRECTING HIB

The ABR requires boards of education to establish a *range of responses* to HIB incidents, and the principal and ABS to appropriately apply these responses. The responses must include *remedial* actions provided for and *consequences* imposed on a student or a staff member who commits an act of HIB against a student. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses, consider the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the code of student conduct and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-7.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commit one or more acts of HIB may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as set forth in the board of education approved code of student conduct. Additionally, remedial measures should be designed to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the problem; protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and take correction for documented systemic problems related to HIB. While consequences and remedial actions typically are different, they can overlap and have complementary purposes: modifying bullying behavior. The following factors should be considered when determining consequences:

Student Considerations

- Age, developmental and maturity levels of the involved parties involved and their relationship to the school district;
- Degree of harm;
- Surrounding circumstances;
- Nature and severity of the behaviors;
- Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
- Relationships among the involved parties; and
- Context in which the alleged events occurred.

School Considerations

- School culture, climate and general staff management of the learning environment;
- Social, emotional and behavioral supports;
- Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
- Family, community and neighborhood situations; and
- Alignment with policy and procedures.

The following personal and environmental factors should be considered when determining remedial measures:

Personal

- Life skill deficiencies;
- Social relationships;
- Strengths;
- Talents;
- Interests;
- Hobbies;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Classroom participation;

- Academic performance; and
- Relationship to students and the school district.

Environmental
- School culture;
- School climate;
- Student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student;
- General staff management of classrooms or other educational environments;
- Staff ability to prevent and manage difficult or inflammatory situations;
- Social-emotional and behavioral supports;
- Social relationships;
- Community activities; and
- Family and neighborhood situations.

Consequences and *remedial* measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:
Examples of Consequences
- Admonishment;
- Temporary removal from class;
- Deprivation of privileges;
- Classroom or administrative detention;
- Referral to disciplinarian;
- In school suspension;
- After-school programs;
- Out of school suspension (short-term or long-term);
- Expulsion;
- Report to law enforcement or other legal action; and
- Bans from participating in school-district sponsored programs or being in school buildings or on school grounds or staff disciplinary actions that are permitted under local bargaining unit agreements, board of education policies and state law;

Examples of Remedial Measures
- Personal - Student Exhibiting Bullying Behavior
  - Develop a behavioral contract with the student. Ensure the student has voice in the outcome and can identify ways he or she can solve the problem and change behaviors;
  - Hold a parent conference to develop a family agreement to -
    - Ensure the parent and the student understands school rules and expectations;
    - Explain the long-term negative consequences of bullying on all involved; and
    - Establish the consequences if the bullying behavior continues;
  - Meet with the school counselor, school social worker or school psychologist to -
    - Assess possible mental health issues;
    - Develop a learning plan that includes consequences and skill building;
    - Consider wrap-around support services; or
    - Provide additional social skill training, such as impulse control, anger management, developing empathy and problem solving;
  - Arrange for an apology, preferably written;

- Write a reflective essay to ensure the student understands the impact of his or her actions on others;
- Have the student research and teach a lesson to the class about HIB, empathy or a similar topic;
- Arrange for restitution (i.e., compensation, reimbursement, amends, repayment), particularly when personal items were damaged or stolen;
- Explore age-appropriate restorative (i.e., healing, curative, recuperative) practices
- Conduct a follow-up conference with the student;
- Participate in a peer support group;
- Consider recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- Provide corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- Implement supportive student interventions, including participation of the Intervention and Referral Services team, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8;
- Conduct a behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the Child Study Team, as appropriate;
- Implement a behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- Assign leadership responsibilities (e.g., hallway monitor, bus monitor);
- Involve school "disciplinarian;"
- Arrange alternative placements;
- Provide student counseling; and
- Refer for student treatment or therapy.

- Personal – Target/Victim
  - Meet with trusted staff member to:
    - Explore feelings about the incident; and
    - Develop a plan to ensure student's emotional and physical safety at school.
  - Meet with guidance counselor or social worker to:
    - Ensure the student does not feel responsible for the behavior;
    - Ask the student to log behaviors in the future; and
    - Develop skills and strategies to resist bullying.
  - Conduct follow-up conference with student.

- Parents, Family and Community
  - Develop a family agreement;
  - Refer for family counseling; and
  - Provide parent education workshops related to HIB and social-emotional learning.

- Environmental (Classroom, School Building or School District)
  - Administer school and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to HIB;
  - Engage in school culture change;
  - Improve school climate;
  - Increase supervision in "hot spots" (e.g., locker rooms, hallways, playgrounds, cafeterias, school perimeter, busses);
  - Adopt evidence-based, systemic HIB prevention programs;
  - Revise school policy and procedures;

- Modify schedules or transportation routes;
- Adjust hallway traffic;
- Supervise the student before and after school, including school transportation;
- Use monitors in a targeted locations (e.g., hallway, cafeteria, locker room, playground, school perimeter, bus);
- Assign teacher aides or adult "shadows" to protect the student;
- Conduct small or large group presentations for fully addressing the behaviors and the responses to the behaviors;
- Provide general professional development programs for certificated and non-certificated staff to teach effective prevention and intervention skills and strategies;
- Implement professional development plans for involved staff;
- Impose disciplinary sanctions for school staff who contributed to the problem;
- Implement supportive institutional interventions, including participation of the Intervention and Referral Services team, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8;
- Conduct parent conferences;
- Communicate behavioral expectations to students, parents and students;
- Refer for family counseling;
- Involve parent-teacher organizations;
- Involve community-based organizations;
- Develop a general HIB response plan;
- Consider the recommendations of a student behavior or ethics council;
- Participate in peer support groups;
- Arrange alternative placements;
- Provide for school transfers; and
- Involve law enforcement (e.g., safe schools resource officer, juvenile officer) or take other appropriate legal action.

School Climate and Culture

The ABR requires that the programs, approaches or other initiatives implemented by school staff to create school-wide conditions for preventing and addressing HIB must be annually assessed involving school staff and administrators, students, volunteers, parents and other community members, including law enforcement. Additionally, the purpose of the School Safety Team is to foster a positive school climate by focusing on the ongoing, systematic practices in the school, and to address school climate issues such as HIB. The overall school climate and school culture and the individual and institutional factors that contribute to climate and culture might overtly or inadvertently support bullying behaviors; these factors *always* should be considered in the response to an act of bullying.

It is the responsibility of the adult staff to use violations of the school rules as opportunities to help students understand consequences for poor choices and behaviors, improve their social and emotional skills and accept personal responsibility for their learning environment. The ABR empowers school staff to use the new requirements to strengthen positive student behavior and the conditions of learning that support these behaviors.

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CHAPTER 3
PETITIONING THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION TO HEAR AND DECIDE DISPUTES CONCERNING *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-13 *et seq.*

The New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) Office of Controversies and Disputes assists the Commissioner in using the process established by the Administrative Procedure Act (http://www.state.nj.us/oal/general.html) to hear and decide disputes under the State school laws (http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/law.htm), which includes *N.J.S.A.* 18A:37-13 *et seq*. A controversy or dispute under the State school laws arises when one party alleges that another has violated:

- State statutes governing education (Title 18A, found at http://lis.njleg.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientID=228445&Depth=2&depth=2&expandheadings=on&headingswithhits=on&hitsperheading=on&infobase=statutes.nfo&record={754C}&softpage=Doc_Frame_PG42); or
- Rules of the State Board of Education (http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/).

The allegations are generally as a result of different views of the meaning and application of the law, and one party seeks a legal ruling from the Commissioner resolving the dispute.

Typical parties in school law disputes are parents, who may file on their own behalf and/or on behalf of their minor children; adult students; school officials and employees; boards of education and board members; charter schools; private schools for the handicapped; and, in cases where decisions of NJDOE officials are appealed to the Commissioner, the State Department of Education. Common types of cases include disputes about student discipline (including for harassment, intimidation and bullying), student residency/domicile status, tenure/seniority claims, tenure charges, actions of local boards of education, certain decisions of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), and final decisions on penalties recommended by the School Ethics Commission upon finding that school officials have violated the School Ethics Act.

What types of matters are *not* handled through Controversies and Disputes?

- ***Disagreement with a Local Board of Education*** – Disagreement with a local board of education, in the absence of allegations that the law is being violated, does not create a viable dispute before the Commissioner. When a board exercises its discretion and takes action within the scope of authority granted it by statute or rule, unless a petitioner can demonstrate on appeal that the board's action was taken without rational basis or in bad faith, or was contrary to law, the Commissioner may not substitute his judgment for that of the board and must uphold the board's action.
- ***Day-to-Day Issues*** – Many day-to-day issues commonly concerning parents, students and the public are not appropriate for judicial-type hearings and legal rulings at the State level and are best pursued through the local school district administration and board of education (http://www.state.nj.us/education/directory). Where problems or questions persist, assistance with resolution may be available through the office of the Executive County Superintendent of Schools (http://www.state.nj.us/education/counties/).
- ***Complaints about School Personnel*** – Complaints about school personnel are not generally heard as disputes before the Commissioner of Education. In New Jersey, hiring, evaluating, disciplining, and deciding whether to retain the services of teaching staff members rest with

the local school district administration and board of education rather than the State. The Commissioner's role in such matters is limited to adjudication of any school law disputes that may arise under the particular circumstances, such as deciding tenure charges in accordance with *N.J.S.A.* 18A 6-10 *et seq*., if certified by the board, or hearing any appeal by the filer of the charges, if the board voted not to certify them. Similarly, any action against a teaching staff member's license, other than suspension for resignation on insufficient notice, must be requested through the State Board of Examiners (http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/license/sbe.htm), not the Commissioner

- ***Special Education Disputes*** – Disputes arising under the laws governing special education are pursued through the NJDOE's Office of Special Education (http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/).
- ***School Ethics Complaints*** – Complaints against school officials under the School Ethics Act are pursued through the School Ethics Commission (http://www.state.nj.us/education/ethics/).
- ***Elementary and Secondary Education Act Complaints*** – Complaints under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act - NCLB) are handled in accordance with the NJDOE's NCLB complaint policy (http://www.nj.gov/education/grants/nclb/issues/complaint_policy.htm).
- ***Compliance Investigation*** – Matters appropriate for NJDOE investigation or audit, such as overspent budgets, financial malfeasance, and compliance with criminal history record check laws, are best directed to the NJDOE's Office of Compliance Investigation (http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_oci.htm).

How do I initiate an appeal to the Commissioner of Education?

Before initiating an appeal to the Commissioner, a petitioner must generally have pursued available rights of appeal at lower levels, including the local board of education. If still aggrieved, a party may appeal to the Commissioner within 90 days (less where a specific law so requires) of receipt of notice of final action, by filing a Petition of Appeal with the NJDOE's Office of Controversies and Disputes according to the procedures detailed in *N.J.A.C.* 6A:3-1.1. *et seq. (http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap3.pdf).*

These rules require the following information, in the form of a petition as described at *N.J.A.C.* 6A:3-1.4:

- Name, address, telephone number and, if available, fax number of both the petitioner and the respondent (generally, the board of education);
- The specific allegation(s), and the facts supporting them, which constitute the basis of the controversy;
- A statement of the relief which the petitioner is seeking; *and*
- The signature of petitioner, or his/her attorney, if applicable.

Additionally, the petitioner must write or type the statement contained in *N.J.A.C.* 6A:3-1.4 attesting to the truthfulness of the allegations set forth in the Petition of Appeal; the statement must be *signed* by petitioner and *notarized*. Finally, the petitioner must serve a copy of the petition on each respondent and must submit to the NJDOE's Office of Controversies and Disputes, with the Petition of Appeal, proof that each respondent was served (i.e., the petition was mailed or delivered). Such proof may be in any one of the following forms:

- An acknowledgment of service (mailing or delivering the petition) signed by the attorney for the respondent, or signed and acknowledged by the board of education or its agent;
- A sworn affidavit of the person making service;
- A certificate of service signed by the attorney making service; *or*
- A receipt (or copy) of certified mailing to the board of education's secretary or the board of education's attorney.

How do I request emergency relief in an appeal to the Commissioner of Education?
If relief is sought on an emergency basis, in addition to the information explained above the petitioner must file a motion accompanied by a memorandum addressing the standard for granting such relief pursuant to *Crowe v. DeGioia,* 90 *N.J.* 126 (1982); see *N.J.A.C.* 6A:3-1.6. This means the petitioner must demonstrate that:

- The petitioner will suffer irreparable harm if the requested relief is not granted;
- The legal right underlying petitioner's claim is settled;
- The petitioner has a likelihood of prevailing on the merits of the underlying claim; *and*
- When the equities and interests of the parties are balanced, the petitioner will suffer greater harm than the respondent will suffer if the requested relief is not granted.

Please note that – unless other applicable law provides a shorter time frame – there is a 90-day filing deadline for petitions of appeal, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:3-1.3(i), and that efforts to resolve a matter informally do not generally absolve petitioners from compliance with this deadline, and failure to observe it may result in dismissal of a petition. Also note that submissions received after the close of NJDOE business at 4:15 p.m. will be deemed filed the next business day.

Papers are to be submitted to the following address:

Commissioner of Education
c/o Director of Office of Controversies and Disputes
New Jersey State Department of Education
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625

With the *prior permission* of the Office of Controversies and Disputes and up to a limit of 10 pages, a petition may also be faxed to (609) 292-4333, with the hard copy to follow by mail. Questions may be directed to the Office of Controversies and Disputes at (609) 292-5705.

What happens after an appeal is filed?
Filing a Petition of Appeal initiates a "contested case proceeding" where the petitioner will bear the burden of proving the allegations made in the petition through presentation of evidence and argument. In most cases, the alleged violator ("respondent") will be required to answer the petitioner's allegations within 20 days, and the matter will be sent to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for hearing of testimony and argument and consideration of evidence by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (52:14B-1). At the conclusion of OAL proceedings, the ALJ issues an initial decision recommending findings of fact and conclusions of law to the Commissioner.

The initial decision and entire case record are then sent to the Commissioner, who has 45 days

from the filing of the initial decision to review the matter, receive exceptions from the parties, and issue a final decision adopting, rejecting or modifying the initial decision of the ALJ. The ALJ's decision is, in itself, of no force and effect, but final Commissioner decisions have the force of law unless stayed or reversed on appeal.

If a party is dissatisfied with the Commissioner's decision, can it be appealed?
Yes. Prior to enactment of P.L. 2008, c. 36 on July 7, 2008, Commissioner decisions – other than appeals from New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) decisions and NJDOE determinations in certain matters involving "Abbott" districts, which were, by law, appealable directly to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court – could be appealed to the State Board of Education and thereafter to the courts. As of July 7, 2008, however, all Commissioner decisions are final agency decisions appealable to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.

How many cases are filed each year? Where can I find past Commissioner decisions?
Between 500 and 600 Petitions of Appeal are filed most years. Many of these are withdrawn or resolved by settlement, but many others result in substantive decisions of the Commissioner. Substantive Commissioner decisions issued since mid-1997 are available on the NJDOE's Website at New Jersey School Law (http://www.state.nj.us/education/legal/index.html), as is information about where to find earlier decisions.

CHAPTER 4
APPEALING FINAL COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION DECISIONS TO THE APPELLATE DIVISION OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

The Appellate Division of the Superior Court is New Jersey's intermediate Appellate Court. It is comprised of 35 judges who sit in two and three judge panels chosen from parts consisting of four or five judges. Appellate Division judges hear appeals from decisions of the trial courts, the Tax Court and State administrative agencies. The Appellate Division decides 6,500 to 7,000 appeals and approximately 7,500 motions each year.

Procedure

There is a four-step process for appealing Commissioner of Education determinations to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court, which includes matters that pertain to the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act:

- *Chief School Administrator Decision* – First, the chief administrator of a school district or a lead person of a charter school must render a decision on a harassment, intimidation and bullying case.
- *Board of Education Determination* – Second, the school board or governing authority must either decide to accept, reject or modify the chief school administrator's or charter school lead person's decision.
- *Commissioner of Education Appeal* – Third, the Commissioner of Education must render a decision on an appeal of the chief school administrator's or board of education's decision(s).
- *Appellate Division* – Fourth, an appeal of the Commissioner of Education's decision may be filed with the Appellate Division of the Superior Court for a ruling.

Instructions and Forms

The Appellate Division may not take any action in a case until it has obtained jurisdiction in the matter. With few exceptions, the Appellate Division does not have jurisdiction unless a notice of appeal or a motion for leave to appeal has been filed. Instructions and forms for filing either a notice of appeal or a motion for leave to appeal can be found in the pro se kit and other materials located at http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/appdiv/forms/forms.htm, and in the *Rules Governing the Courts of the State of New Jersey* (the Court Rules can be found at http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/rules/). The pro se kit found at http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/appdiv/forms/10837_appl_prose_kit.pdf contains the following items.

- A cover letter;
- Appellate Division Practice Checklist;
- Instructions for completing the forms;
- Notice of Appeal form;
- Prescribed Transcript Request form;
- Civil Case Information Statement form;
- Criminal Case Information Statement form;
- Notice of Motion form; and
- Certified Statement in Support of Motion for Leave to Proceed as an Indigent form.

Before a party begins completing the forms mentioned above, the information below and the

material referenced above should be carefully reviewed. It is suggested that when reviewing the Appellate Division Practice Checklist (http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/appdiv/forms/forms.htm), you note especially the time limits for serving and filing documents and how these time limits apply to your case. An appeal may be filed as of right from a final agency decision within 45 days from the date of service of the decision or notice of the action taken. An appeal is properly filed by the timely submission of a notice of appeal, case information statement and transcript request form.

While the pro se kit (http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/appdiv/forms/10837_appl_prose_kit.pdf) is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to practice and procedures in the Appellate Division, the information and forms contained therein should be helpful in the preparation of the documents that a party will need in order to proceed with an appeal.

Consideration should be given to obtaining the assistance of an attorney, since an appeal can be a complex, legal proceeding. Even if it is found that completing the forms is not a difficult task, please be aware that the level of assistance that the Clerk's office has provided through these detailed instructions does not continue throughout the course of an appeal. The Clerk's office cannot assist with the legal research that may be needed before writing can begin on an appellate brief; nor assist with assembling the documents that will be needed for the appendix; nor assist with drafting the procedural history, statement of facts, and legal arguments that will be required in the appellate brief. The assistance of the Clerk's office, to attorneys and to pro se litigants alike, is limited to procedural matters, i.e., information concerning the Court Rules and practice and procedure. The Clerk’s office cannot provide any assistance or legal advice as to the issues, arguments or merits of an appeal.

Legal Assistance

If the party cannot afford to pay for an attorney in a civil matter, he or she may be able to obtain legal assistance from the Legal Aid office in the party’s county.

Fees

A $200 filing fee is required when filing a notice of appeal, and a $30 filing fee is required when filing a motion for leave to appeal. Once an appellant has paid the filing fee, there is no fee required for filing a motion while the appeal is open. Please note, however, that any motion made after a case is closed must be accompanied by a $30 filing fee.

In addition, if an appeal is being made of a final judgment, order or decision, a deposit for transcripts in the amount of $500 for each day or fraction of a day of trial or hearing is to be paid, pursuant to *Court Rule* 2:5-3. This fee is paid to the court reporter that was present at the proceedings in question or, in the case of sound recorded proceedings, to the clerk of the court or agency in which those proceedings took place.

Assistance

Although an Appellate Division Practice Checklist is provided at http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/appdiv/forms/forms.htm, please bear in mind that during the course of the appeal, it will very likely become necessary for the party to consult the full text of the Court Rules and the cases construing the Court Rules. Copies of the Court Rules are

available in the State Library in Trenton, in the law libraries in the county courthouses, at some county and municipal public libraries throughout the State and at http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/rules/.

If, after consulting the materials provided in the pro se kit and the Court Rules, you still have questions concerning Appellate Division practice and procedure, you may contact the Appellate Division Clerk's Office at (609) 292-4822 for assistance.

CHAPTER 5
THE DIVISION ON CIVIL RIGHTS: JURISDICTION AND SERVICES REGARDING HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

The ABR requires this guidance document to include an explanation of the jurisdiction and services of the Division on Civil Rights (DCR), New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety in regard to specific types of harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB). The information on the Division on Civil Rights is provided below.

DCR JURISDICTION

Q1. What is the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights regarding HIB of students?

A. The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) is the state agency charged with enforcing the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (known as the LAD), *N.J.S.A.* 10:5-1 to -49.

Q2. Which schools are covered by the LAD?

A. The protections for students under the LAD do not apply to any school that is operated or maintained by a bona fide religious or sectarian institution. ***Except for those religious schools,*** all public schools, charter schools, private schools, technical or vocational schools, colleges and universities are required to comply with the LAD.

Q3. How does the LAD help to protect students against HIB?

A. The LAD is a state statute that prohibits most schools (see Q2) from discriminating against students based on race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and disability. (As discussed below, although DCR is the state agency charged with enforcement of the LAD, a student or parent may file a complaint directly with the Superior Court of New Jersey, without first filing with DCR.)

"Discrimination" includes HIB that targets a student because of any of the protected characteristics listed above. This is known as "bias-based HIB."

The LAD requires covered schools to take appropriate action to prevent and remediate harassment, intimidation and bullying that targets a student because of his or her ***actual*** or ***perceived*** race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability. When schools do not take appropriate preventative and remedial action, they may be held responsible for bias-based HIB committed by students, school employees, volunteers and by those contracted service providers who have significant contact with students.

Discrimination is based on a "perceived" protected characteristic when the perpetrator believes that the victim is a member of a LAD-protected group or has

a LAD-protected characteristic, even if that belief is wrong. For example, harassing a heterosexual student using derogatory words or phrases commonly associated with homosexuality may constitute discrimination based on perceived sexual orientation. Similarly, harassing a non-Muslim student using anti-Muslim comments may constitute discrimination based on perceived creed or religion.

Q4. How does the LAD differ from the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act?

A. The *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* addresses HIB that targets a student because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, a mental physical or sensory disability***, or because of any other distinguishing characteristic.*** The LAD prohibits harassment, intimidation or bullying that targets a student because of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, nationality, sex, sexual orientation gender identity or expression, or disability. The LAD does ***not*** cover harassment, intimidation or bullying that targets a student because of any other distinguishing characteristics.

Q5. Does the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act change students' protections or school districts' obligations under the LAD?

A. No. The LAD has prohibited certain types of HIB since long before the legislature enacted the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, and the new law did not amend or change the LAD.

The new *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* clarifies some rights and responsibilities and establishes new procedures. Following these procedures should make it easier to effectively prevent and remediate HIB. However, merely following the new procedures will not automatically insulate a school or school district from liability under the LAD, if the administration fails to take appropriate actions that are reasonably calculated to end the specific types of bias-based HIB taking place.

Q7. What does the LAD require a school administration to do regarding bias-based HIB?

A. When school staff or administrators know, or ***should*** know, that bias-based HIB is happening, the administration must take actions reasonably calculated to stop it.

The school or school district may be held liable under the LAD if the school administration failed to take actions reasonably calculated to stop the HIB, **AND**

The conduct was sufficiently severe or pervasive that a reasonable student of the same age, maturity level and protected characteristic would find that the bias-based HIB created an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.

Q8. Are people who report or complain about bias-based HIB in schools protected from reprisal or retaliation?

A. Yes. The LAD prohibits reprisal or retaliation against anyone who reports or complains about bias-based HIB. The LAD also prohibits reprisal or retaliation

against anyone who assists someone else in reporting or complaining about bias-based HIB. Assisting someone else would include testifying at a hearing,

This means that it would violate the LAD for a school administrator, teacher, coach, other staff member or school board member to take away privileges or take any other adverse or negative action against anyone - student or adult - because he or she has complained about or reported bias-based HIB.

Q9. What can a student (or parent) do if he or she is being subjected to bias-based HIB?

A. The student or parent should report the bias-based HIB to the school administrators as soon as possible, and give them a reasonable opportunity to take action to stop it. If more incidents of bias-based HIB occur after your first report, you should report each new incident as soon as possible.

DCR SERVICES

The services provided by DCR regarding complaints of bias-based HIB are described below:

- DCR accepts and files administrative complaints. If the school administration does not remedy the situation within a reasonable amount of time after you have reported it, a student may file a formal complaint against the school or school district to seek relief under the LAD. (If the student is under age 18, the student's parent may file the LAD complaint on behalf of the student.)
- If the school administration has initiated an investigation under the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*, in most cases it would be reasonable to delay filing a formal LAD complaint until after the school administrators have completed their investigation, and have reported the results of that investigation to you and to the local board of education.

A student or parent has ***two options*** for filing a LAD complaint:

- Filing an administrative complaint with the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, ***or***
- Filing a complaint with the Superior Court of New Jersey. (If you choose to file your complaint in Superior Court instead of filing with DCR, you should also mail a copy of your complaint to DCR.) Additional information can be found in Chapter 4: Appealing Final Commissioner of Education Decisions to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.

In deciding whether to file a complaint with DCR or the Superior Court, you may wish to consider factors such as the costs, and the procedures and remedies available in each forum. There is no charge for filing a complaint with DCR, while the Superior Court charges filing fees. A jury trial and the possibility of recovering punitive damages are only available in Superior Court.

If you choose to file an administrative complaint, you should contact the nearest office of the Division on Civil Rights:

- Newark Regional Office: (973) 648-2700
- Trenton Regional Office: (609) 292-4605
- Camden Regional Office: (856) 614-2550
- Atlantic City Regional Office: (609) 441-3100

An intake investigator will speak with you to determine whether your situation states a claim under the LAD. If it does, the DCR will prepare a complaint for you to sign, and it will be filed and sent to the school or school district.

More information about filing complaints is available on the DCR Website, which can be found at www.NJCivilRights.gov.

TIME FRAMES

Time frames for filing a complaint with the DCR or the Superior Court of New Jersey follow:

- If you choose to file a complaint with the DCR, it must be filed ***within 180 days*** of the most recent act of bias-based HIB;
- If you choose to file a complaint with the Superior Court, it must be filed ***within 2 years*** of the most recent act of bias-based HIB.

As noted above, if the school administration has initiated an investigation under the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*, in most cases you should delay filing a formal LAD complaint until after the school administration has completed its investigation and reported the results of its investigation to you and to the local board of education. That report would normally be issued long before the end of the 180-day or 2-year limitations periods for filing a LAD complaint, but if you are close to those deadlines and wish to file a LAD complaint, you should keep track of the dates and make sure your complaint is filed before the deadline.

INVESTIGATION AND PROBABLE CAUSE DETERMINATION

The school or school district will file a written response to your complaint, and your complaint will be assigned to a DCR investigator, who will conduct an investigation. During the investigation, the investigator will gather information in a variety of ways, which may include getting copies of written records and other documents, and interviewing you and other witnesses. If the school administration has conducted an investigation under the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*, the investigator also will review available documents related to that investigation.

During the investigation, the investigator will often attempt to negotiate a settlement between you and the school or school district, with the intent of amicably resolving your complaint without the need for a formal hearing.

If no settlement can be agreed upon, DCR will review the evidence gathered in the investigation, and will determine whether there is probable cause to support the allegations of your complaint.

If the investigation shows enough evidence to support your complaint, the Director of the Division on Civil Rights will issue a written report called a ***Finding of Probable Cause***, and then a hearing on your complaint will be held in the Office of Administrative Law.

If, instead, the evidence gathered in the investigation shows that the school administration met its obligations under the LAD or that no actionable HIB under the LAD occurred, the Director of the Division on Civil Rights will issue a written report summarizing the evidence, and will sign a ***Finding of No Probable Cause***, which dismisses your complaint.

Finding of Probable Cause and Prosecution of the Complaint
In cases in which the DCR Director has issued a Finding of Probable Cause, a State attorney will prosecute the complaint on behalf of the DCR, unless you choose to hire a your own attorney to represent you at the hearing,

At the hearing, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) will hear testimony from you and/or other witnesses and will review documents and other evidence presented in support of your complaint and evidence submitted in support of the school or school district's defenses. Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the ALJ will issue a written recommended decision.

Issuance of a Final Order on the Complaint
After receiving a copy of the ALJ's recommended decision, both sides will have an opportunity to submit written objections (called "exceptions") to the Director of the DCR, who will make a final decision on the complaint.

The Director of DCR will review the ALJ's recommended decision and any exceptions submitted by the parties, as well as the documents and other physical evidence the ALJ accepted at the hearing. If the parties have provided all or part of a transcript of the OAL hearing, the DCR Director also will review relevant portions of the hearing transcript. Based on all of the evidence, the DCR Director will make a final decision on whether the evidence shows that the school or school district failed to meet its obligations under the LAD, and if so the remedies that should be ordered.

As remedies, the Director may order the school or school district to provide equitable relief (for example, improving anti-bullying policies and procedures or providing staff training) and to pay compensatory damages and your attorney's fees. The Director also may order the school or school district to pay monetary penalties to the State Treasury. Punitive damages are only available in Superior Court actions.

APPEALING A DCR FINAL AGENCY DETERMINATION TO THE APPELLATE DIVISION OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

Q.10. Which decisions of the DCR Director can be appealed?

A. A complainant may appeal a Finding of No Probable Cause. Either party may appeal the Findings, Determination and Order (Final Order) issued by the DCR Director after an OAL hearing.

Q11. What is the time frame for filing an appeal?

A. An appeal must be filed with the Appellate Division Clerk's office within 45 days of the date the party is served with the DCR Director's Final Order or Finding of No Probable Cause.

Q12. Will a State attorney be involved in an appeal?

A. If the school or school district files an appeal of the DCR Director's Final Order, a State attorney will represent DCR at the Appellate Division to the defend the DCR Director's Final Order.

If the complainant wishes to appeal all or part of the DCR Director's Final Order or Finding of No Probable Cause, he or she will need to retain his or her own attorney to file and present the appeal, or the complainant may instead proceed without an attorney (known as appearing "pro se"). When a complainant appeals a Finding of No Probable Cause or a Final Order, a State attorney will defend the DCR Director's Finding of No Probable Cause or Final Order.

The New Jersey Judiciary's Website provides information and forms for proceeding at the Appellate Division without an attorney: http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/prose/index.htm#appellate.

Additional information on the Appellate Division regarding appeals to final Commissioner of Education decisions is provided in this publication in Chapter 5, Appealing Final Commissioner of Education Decisions to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey.

CHAPTER 6
RESOURCES ON BULLYING

These resources are presented only as a representation and not as an exhaustive selection or review of materials available on the subject of bullying. Inclusion of these resources is not an explicit or implied endorsement of the materials or organizations identified below, nor does it signify verification or agreement with the information contained in the materials or the positions or practices of the organizations or sources of information. These resources are presented only to provide perspectives, options and contacts to assist with local decision making and responses to bullying.

Understanding Bullying

Books

Bullying: A Handbook for Educators and Parents. Rivers, I., Duncan, N., and Besag, V. E. (2009). Rowman & Littlefield Education, Lanham, MD.

Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Olweus, D. 1993. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Bullying Behavior: Current Issues, Research and Interventions. Geffner, R.A., Loring, M. and Young, C. (Eds.) 2001. Haworh Press, New York.

School Bullying: Insights and Perspectives. Smith, P. K., and Sharp, S. (1994). London: Routledge.

The Truth about Bullying: What Educators and Parents Must Know and Do. Urbanski, J. and Permuth, S. (2009). Rowman & Littlefield Education, Lanham, MD.

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Birkett, M., Espelage, D. L., & Koenig, B. (2009). LGB and questioning students in schools: The moderating effects of homophobic bullying and school climate on negative outcomes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(7), 989-1000.

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Haynie, D. L., Nansel, T., Eitel, P., Crump, A. D., Saylor, K., Yu, K., & Simons-Morton, B. (2001). Bullies, victims, and bully/victims: Distinct groups of at-risk youth. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 21(1), 29-49.

Herba, C. M., Ferdinand, R. F.; Stijnen, T., Veenstra, R., Oldehinkel, A. J., Ormel, J., Verhulst, F. C. (2008) Victimization and Suicide Ideation in the TRAILS Study: Specific Vulnerabilities of Victims, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(8) 867-876.

Hunt, C. (2007). The effect of an education program on attitudes and beliefs about bullying and bullying behavior in junior secondary school students. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 12(1),* 21-26.

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Wang, J., Iannotti, R. J., & Nansel, T. R. (2009). School bullying among adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 45*, 368-375.

Policy and Program Development

A tutorial on the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) regulations requiring all New Jersey school districts to have developed, adopted and implemented a code of student conduct http://cscd.rutgers.edu/page/codeofstudentconduct/

Dealing with Legal Matters Surrounding Students' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/SchoolHealth/SelectedNSBAPublications/SexualOrientationandGenderIdentity/DealingwithLegalMattersSurroundingStudentsSexualOrientationandGenderIdentity.aspx.

NJDOE Code of Student Conduct Compliance Checklist
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/codes/checklist.pdf

NJDOE Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards
http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs/chpe/

NJDOE Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Compliance Checklist
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/checklist.pdf

NJDOE Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Power Point Presentations
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.shtml

NJDOE Model Policy and Guidance for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying on School Property, at School-Sponsored Functions and on School Buses
http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm

NJDOE Resources Supporting the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/#si

NJDOE Week of Respect and School Violence Awareness Week Resources
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/violence.shtml

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Books

A School-Based Anti-violence Program. Sudermann, M., Jaffe, P., Schiek, E. *et al.* (1996). London, ON: London Family Court Clinic.

Behavioral interventions in schools: A response-to-intervention guidebook. Hulac, D., Terrell, J., Vining, O., & Bernstein, J. (2011) New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group; US.

Blueprint for Violence Prevention – Book 9, Bullying Prevention Program. United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention.

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School--How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle (Updated Edition). Coloroso, B. (2009) HarperCollins, New York, NY.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Realistic Strategies for Schools (The Guilford Practical Intervention in Schools Series) Swearer, S.M., Espelage, D.L., Napolitano, S.A. (2009). The Guilford Press, New York, NY.

Bullying Prevention: Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence, Orpinas, P. and Horne, A.M. (2005). American Psychological Association.

The Bullying Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Principals, Teachers and Counselors. Hoover, J.H. and Oliver, R. 1996. National Educational Service, Bloomington, IN.

Bully proof: A Teachers Guide to Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students. Sjostrom, Lisa, & Stein, Nan. (1996). Boston, MA: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and the NEA Professional Library.

Keys to Dealing With Bullies (Barron's Parenting Keys). Barry Edwards McNamara, Francine McNamara (Contributor). Keys Hauppauge, N.Y. : Barron's Educational Series, 1997.

Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools. United States Department of Education. 1999.

Understanding Girl Bullying and What to Do About It: Strategies to Help Heal the Divide. Field, J.E., Kolbert, J.B., Crothers, L.M. and Hughes, T.L. (2009). Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA.

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Espelage, D. L., & Swearer, S. M. (2003). Bullying prevention and intervention: Integrating research and evaluation findings. *School Psychology Review* [Special Issue].

Geffner, R., & Loring, M. T. (2001). Intervention, research and theories of psychological, maltreatment, trauma, and nonphysical aggression. *Journal of Emotional Abuse* [Special Issue], 2 (2/3).

Flynt, S. W. & Morton, R. C. (2007). Bullying prevention and students with disabilities. *National Forum of Special Education Journal*, 19(1), 1-6.

Larson, J., Smith, D.C., & Furlong, M.J. (2002). Best practices in school violence prevention. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best Practices in School Psychology IV* (pp 1081-1097). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

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McCoy, E. What to Do... When Kids Are Mean to Your Child (What to Do Parenting Guides, Vol. 1). Pleasantville, N.Y. : Reader's Digest, c1997. 96 p. : col. ill. ; 21 cm.

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Whitted, K. S., & Dupper, D. R. (2005). Best practices for preventing or reducing bullying in schools. *Children and Schools, 27, 167 – 175.*

Assessment

Aggressive Behavior – Teacher Checklist (Dodge & Coie, 1987)
The Aggressive Behavior - Teacher Checklist consists of 6 statements which measure a child's aggressive behavior, i.e., using physical force and/or threatening others. Teachers are instructed to mark the response that best applies to a particular child. Ages 6-12, Grades 1-6.
From: The Violence Institute of New Jersey at UMDNJ, Searchable Inventory of Instruments Assessing Violent Behavior and Related Constructs in Children and Adolescents
To acquire checklist, contact
Dr. Kenneth A. Dodge at 919-613-7319 or email dodge@duke.edu

Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ; Olweus, 1986, 1996)
The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire is filled out anonymously by students in a classroom. It consists of 40 questions for the measurement of bully/victim problems, such as exposure to various physical, verbal, indirect, racial, or sexual forms of bullying/harassment, various forms of bullying other students, where the bullying occurs, pro-bully and pro-victim attitudes, and the extent to which the social environment (i.e., teachers, peers, parents) is informed about and reacts to the bullying. Age range- 8-16 yrs., Grade range- 3rd-10th.
From http://vinst.umdnj.edu/VAID/TestReport.asp?Code=ROBVQ
To acquire questionnaire, contact Dr. Dan Olweus at dan.olweus@psych.uib.no

Bullying-Behaviour Scale (Austin and Joseph, 1996)
The BBC consists of six forced-choice items, three representations of negative physical actions and three depictions of negative verbal actions. Internal consistency reliability of the BBC was satisfactory, and boys were found to score higher than girls on this measure, suggesting that analyses should be conducted separately for boys and girls. This instrument does not measure relational victimization, which is a weakness of the measure. However, the authors believe that the Social Acceptance subscale of the SPPC can indirectly assess this domain. No validity data are reported for the BBC. Hence, further research is necessary, particularly in regard to this instrument's concurrent validity with self, peer, and teacher reports.

From: Assessment of bullying: a review of methods and instruments.(Assessment & Diagnosis), Journal of Counseling and Development.
To acquire scale, contact
Dr. Stephen Joseph at: Phone: 44 0 2476 528182 S.Joseph@warwick.ac.uk

The Comprehensive School Climate Inventory, National School Climate Center
The CSCI measures twelve essential dimensions of a healthy school climate in four broad categories: safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, and the institutional environment as well as two distinct dimensions for personnel only.
http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci-cost.php

Measuring Bullying Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences: A Compendium of Assessment Tools is a publication of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Centers for Disease Control
This compendium provides researchers, prevention specialists, and health educators with 33 tools to measure a range of bullying experiences: bully perpetration, bully victimization, bully-victim experiences, and bystander experiences.
http://www.stopbullying.gov/community/tip_sheets/assessment_tools.pdf

Measuring Student Engagement in Upper Elementary Through High School: A Description of 21 Instruments, Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance
This report reviews the characteristics of 21 instruments that measure student engagement in upper elementary through high school. It summarizes what each instrument measures, describes its purposes and uses, and provides technical information on its psychometric properties.
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/pdf/REL_2011098_sum.pdf

Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools, The Centers for Disease Control
This compendium provides researchers and prevention specialists with a set of tools to assess violence-related beliefs, behaviors, and influences, as well as to evaluate programs to prevent youth violence.
http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/measure.htm

Peer Nomination Instrument (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995)
The Peer Nomination Instrument assesses relational and overt aggression, and has been used to identify aggressive children in the classroom. The instrument consists of 19 items, including four subscales designed to assess social behavior. Children are given a class roster and must select up to three classmates who fit the description in each item, such as "children who say mean things to other kids," or "children who say and do nice things for others." Items assess relational aggression, overt aggression, pro-social behavior and isolation. Ages 9 -12, Grades 3-6.
Description From: The Violence Institute of New Jersey at UMDNJ, Searchable Inventory of Instruments Assessing Violent Behavior and Related Constructs in Children and Adolescents
To acquire instrument, contact Dr. Nicki R. Crick, at (612) 624-3347 or email crick001@umn.edu

Peer-Preferred Social Behavior Subscale of the Walker-McConnell Scale of Social Competence and School Adjustment (Walker & McConnel, 1995)
Focuses on assessing peer-preferred social competencies. Contains positively worded items that reflect adaptive social-behavioral competencies within the school environment. It is highly relevant for assessing social skills in educational settings.
Elementary version, grades K-6.
Adolescent version, grades 7-12.
From: Assessment of Children's Social Skills: Recent Developments, best Practices, and New Directions, by Kenneth W. Merrell, in EXCEPTIONALITY, *9*(1&2), 3–18
Can be acquired at http://www.goodreads.com/

Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ; Rigby and Slee, 1993) and the Peer Relations Assessment Questionnaire (PRAQ; Rigby, 1997)
PRQ:
This was devised by Drs. Rigby and Slee in 1993. It is a comprehensive research questionnaire suitable for students aged 8 to 18 years, takes approximately 30 minutes to complete, and focuses mainly on bullying. Because of its length and complexity, computer based analyses are needed to obtain comprehensive results.
PRAQ:
These questionnaires are shorter and of more practical value for schools wishing to examine the nature of students' peer relations in their school. The package includes questionnaires for students, teachers and parents.
From: http://www.kenrigby.net/
Click on: Useful questionnaires on left side of page
Click on the underlined link in the paragraph that comes up
Determine which form is appropriate for your school
Contact Dr Rigby to obtain this form at 08 83021371 or email ken.rigby@unisa.edu.au
Short version at: http://www.kenrigby.net/prq-child.pdf

School Climate Bullying Survey (SCBS) (Cornell & Sheras, 2003)
The School Climate Bullying Survey (Cornell & Sheras, 2003) is a self-report survey used to measure attitudes and behaviors associated with school bullying. It has three school climate scales: Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying, Aggressive Attitudes, and Willingness to Seek Help. It measures the level of bullying and teasing at school as well as other key features of school climate, such as how willing students are to seek help for a threat of violence. These scales are reliable across gender and age groups, and are predictive of several indicators of school disorder. The SCBS was designed to assess the nature and prevalence of bullying at school and to measure specific aspects of school climate that could guide bullying prevention efforts.
From: Validity of Three School Climate Scales to Assess Bullying, Aggressive Attitudes, and Help Seeking
School Psychology Review, Sep 2009 by Bandyopadhyay, Sharmila, Cornell, Dewey G, Konold, Timothy R
To acquire, contact the Virginia Youth Violence Project at: edh-yvp@cms.mail.virginia.edu

The Student Experience Survey: what school is like for me (Frey, et. al., 2005)

The Student Experience Survey (Attitude Scales) is a 21-item instrument for third- through sixth-grade students designed to assess perceptions and attitudes related to bullying. Students are asked about perceptions of bullying or aggressive behavior, assertiveness skills, and their own and adults' responsiveness to bullying. The survey can be used as a pre/post measure to evaluate effects of the Steps to Respect program. The survey is administered in classrooms and takes 15–20 minutes to complete.
From: http://www.cfchildren.org/media/files/StR%20Student%20Experience%20Survey.pdf

SurveyMonkey
A dedicated page for a "do-it-yourself" survey tool for bullying detection, which includes a 10-question survey that students can adopt in order to distribute and disseminate via email, on fliers, through Facebook, and elsewhere. The application is free to use.
www.surveymonkey.com/bullying

Surveys Conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, including the Crime and Safety Survey, Schools and Staffing Survey, and several longitudinal education surveys
This is a list of surveys and studies available through the National Center for Education Statistics.
http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/surveygroups.asp?group=1

Evidence-Based Program Databases
Blueprints for Violence Prevention
http://ibs.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprintsquery/

National Registry of Evidence-based Programs (NREPP)
http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice
http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index.htm

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Expert Panel, United States Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/panel.html

Preventing Drug Abuse Among Children and Adolescents: A Research-based Guide for Parents, Educators and Community Leaders, National Institute on Drug Abuse
http://www.drugabuse.gov/pdf/prevention/RedBook.pdf

Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
http://www.casel.org/downloads/Safe%20and%20Sound/1A_Safe_&_Sound.pdf

What Works Clearinghouse
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

State and National Online Resources
Cyberbullying Research Center

http://www.cyberbullying.us/

Education Northwest
http://educationnorthwest.org/

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
http://www.fightcrime.org/

Garden State Equality
http://www.gardenstateequality.org/

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network)
http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html

National Center for School Engagement
http://www.schoolengagement.org/

New Jersey Association of School Administrators
http://www.njasa.com

New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers
http://www.njasro.org

New Jersey Association of School Psychologists
http://www.njasp.org

New Jersey Association of School Social Workers
http://www.njassw.org

New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention
http://www.njbullying.org

New Jersey Department of Education, Keeping Our Kids, Safe, Healthy and in School
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/
http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/

New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division on Civil Rights
http://www.nj.gov/oag/dcr/index.html

New Jersey Education Association
http://www.njea.org

New Jersey Parent-Teacher Association
http://www.njpta.org

New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association

http://www.njpsa.org

New Jersey School Boards Association
http://njsba.com

New Jersey School Counselors Association
http://www.njsca.org

New Jersey State Police
http://www.njsp.org/

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=194&srcid=-2

Stop Bullying.Gov
http://www.bullyinginfo.org

United States Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics
http://nces.ed.gov/

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html?src=oc

U.S. Department of Justice, Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section
http://www.cybercrime.gov

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Gang Center
http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov

Other Resources

American Federation of Teachers: http://www.aft.org/
- See a Bully, Stop a Bully, Make a Difference Campaign

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/
- A revamped multimedia Safety Center to incorporate multimedia, external resources from renowned experts, and downloadable information for teens.
- A new "Social Reporting" system to enable people to report content that violates Facebook policies so that it can be removed as soon as possible, while notifying parents or teachers of the content so that the reasons for its posting can be addressed.

The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention - Eight federal agencies (Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice, Defense, Agriculture, and Interior, the National Council on Disability and the Federal Trade Commission) joined together to establish the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Steering Committee to focus on the following activities:

- StopBullying.gov: Provides information from various government agencies on how children, teens, young adults, parents, educators and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying.
- Enforcing Civil Rights Laws: The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has issued guidance as a "Dear Colleague" letter to clarify issues of bullying and violation of federal education anti-discrimination laws. http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf
- Shaping State Laws and Policies: The U.S. Secretary of Education has issued a memo to Governors and Chief State School Officers in each state providing technical assistance and outlining key components of comprehensive and effective state anti-bullying laws and policies. http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/101215.html

National Association of Student Councils: http://www.nasc.us/

- Raising Student Voice and Participation Bullying Challenge (RSVP) Process

National Education Association: http://www.nea.org/

- Bully-Free: It Starts with Me Campaign
- Nationwide Study of Bullying: Teachers' and Education Support Professionals' Perspectives

National Parents and Teachers Association: http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp

- Connect for Respect Campaign

National School Boards Association:
http://us.vocuspr.com/Newsroom/MultiQuery.aspx?SiteName=NSBANew&Entity=PRAsset;PRAsset&PublishType=Press+Release;Newsroom+Page&XSL=Welcome&Title=Newsroom&Cache=&SF_PRAssetUDF_UDF20618=1&PubTypeFilterList=1;0

- Students on Board for Bullying Prevention

New Jersey State Bar Foundation, Teasing and Bullying Program:
http://www.njsbf.org/educators-and-students/programs.html

Princeton Center for Leadership Training:
http://www.princetonleadership.org/