

## Resolution 1819R-017

### By Director Paula Phillips

WHEREAS, Administrative Policy 8.52(1) recognizes that bullying obstructs the school district's mission to maintain the safety or welfare of students and threatens the safe environment for students and adults, while disrupting productivity both inside and outside of the classroom; and

WHEREAS, Administrative Policy 8.52(2) defines bullying as" ... deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions intended to cause fear, humiliation, intimidation, harm, or social exclusion; and

WHEREAS, Administrative Policy 8.52(3) prohibits bullying by students (either individually or as a group) and adults (including employees and non-employees of MPS) in "... all schools, in school-district buildings, in educational environments, and on school district property, including any property or vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school district," and in activities conducted under the supervision of schools or the district; and

WHEREAS, Administrative Policy 8.53(3) also prohibits the bullying and harassment of students or employees via telephones, computers, and other electronic devices, as well as through speech or behavior that occurs outside of school; and

WHEREAS, Administrative Policy 8.53(4) lays out procedures for the reporting and investigation of allegations of bullying at the school level; and

WHEREAS, Bullying is not contained within the walls of a school, but can permeate and spread through a community, especially in the age of social media; and

WHEREAS, When parents and youth are involved in developing and implementing solutions to bullying:

- schools are better able to develop more responsive responses because students are more likely to see or hear about bullying than are adults;
- school climate improves because students, who likely have more immediate and personal experience with bullying and its effects than do school and district administrators, become part of the solution, resulting in greater buy-in to anti-bullying efforts; and
- parents can support their schools' messages about bullying at home and also are more likely to recognize signs that their children have been bullied or are bullying others; and

WHEREAS, Although MPS has developed a number of programs and strategies to address bullying, more work needs to be done to include teachers, staff, parents, students, and the community at large in the battle to combat bullying; and

WHEREAS, The District Advisory Council's *Ad Hoc* Committee for Bullying Prevention has developed the following suggestions to assist the district in its anti-bullying efforts:

- focus on proactive practices and restorative practices to build community in schools and to increase positive relationships throughout schools (adults-to-adults, adults-to-students and students-to-students);
- designate at least one half-day a year to focus on bullying-prevention education and team building for all staff in schools;
- build time into each week to allow for student, family, and staff relationship building;

- integrate bullying-prevention education into all student activities;
- create an avenue, such as a student council, through which students may participate in identifying issues and in developing strategies and solutions to prevent bullying in their schools;
- create a replicable student peer-leader program (such as school cadets) that schools may implement as an extra-curricular option;
- increase the availability of mental health services to students;  
increase communication to families about bullying prevention;
- create a clear flowchart for families to understand the steps that happen after suspected bullying has been reported and who to contact if these steps are not being followed;
- develop a clear way for students and families to report concerns about bullying, both anonymously and with a way to receive follow-up from the school within a designated amount of time;
- offer training around bullying prevention to all MPS bus drivers that includes what to do if bullying occurs and how families are to be notified;
- create a system for buses that experience consistent behavior or bullying issues to receive ride-along assessments of the situation and to provide strategies and recommendations for improvements;
- establish a formal partnership with the City of Milwaukee to address bullying as a citywide issue;
- ensure that all K-8 classrooms implement Second Step with fidelity and use the family links letters and information to share with families and to help reinforce what is being taught in the classroom;
- require that all teachers make two positive phone calls about peer relationships per student to the students' respective families each year and document those calls in Infinite Campus;
- establish a program for home visits that are focused on relationship building between home and school;
- encourage family participation in schools' PBIS committees and add bullying prevention to each agenda; and
- conduct an annual bullying prevention audit to monitor fidelity to Second Step, implementation of the health curriculum's bullying requirements, and progress on each of these activities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board direct the Administration to review and analyze each of the suggestions of the District Advisory Council's *Ad Hoc* Committee for Bullying Prevention and prepare a comprehensive report to the Board of the feasibility of their implementation within the Milwaukee Public Schools, said report to include, but not be limited to, estimated costs, human-resources implications, and timelines for implementation; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration be directed to explore, as part of its report, the concept of establishing a safety committee in each school, as recommended by StopBullying.gov, under the following guidelines:

- Each committee would comprise a small group of people focused on school-safety concerns, to include
  - administrators who can answer basic questions about budget, training, curriculum, and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
  - innovative teachers with strong school based relationships with students and families, and staff, who have strong classroom and interpersonal skills and who can offer insights;
  - other school staff - such as school psychologists, counselors, school nurses, librarians, and bus drivers - who can bring diverse perspectives on bullying;
  - parents who can share the family viewpoint and keep other parents in the loop on the committee's work;
  - students who can bring fresh perspectives and help identify real-life challenges to prevention; and
  - other community stakeholders - such as clergy members, elected officials, and healthcare providers - who can provide broader insights.

The primary activities of the safety committees would be to:

- assist in the planning of bullying-prevention and intervention programs with measurable and achievable goals;
  - assist in the implementation of bullying-prevention efforts; --  
develop and communicate, bullying-prevention policies and rules;
  - educate the school community about bullying to ensure that everyone understands the problem and their role in stopping it;
  - evaluate bullying-prevention efforts and refine the plan if necessary;
  - advocate for the school's work in bullying prevention to the entire school community; and
  - sustain the effort over time.
- These committees are not to serve as forums for discussing the behavior of individual students, which would be a violation of student privacy under FERPA; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration bring forward this report no later than 90 days from the adoption of this resolution; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration be directed to revisit existing bullying prevention policies and programs such as Act Now, and develop procedures that address bullying and harassment to ensure that they adequately address the needs of our students and the community and to bring any necessary proposed revisions to the Board as soon as is feasible.

*March 28, 2019*