Presented by: Theodore Best, District Anti-Bullying Coordinator
Anti-bullying Bill of Rights

- Intent is to strengthen standards for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of bullying and reduce the risk of suicide among students

- Effective September 2011

- Changes 13 statutes

- Affects districts and a number of state agencies, including NJDOE
Major Changes

- New definition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)
- District Staff Functions
- Policy and Procedures
- Programs
- Training Requirements
- Public Reporting
"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" 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 any 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, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds* as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, CHAPTER 122, that 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, what 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;

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.
For a determination of HIB on or off school grounds under the ABR, there must be:

- Substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of school or student’s rights;

- An actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic as the motivating factor; and

- One of the following:
  - Physical or emotional harm to a student or his or her property or fear of harm to student or property;
  - Effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students; or
  - Creation of “hostile educational environment,” interfering with student’s education.
New District HIB Policy

Now Includes:
- *New* HIB definition.
- link to the policy on the District Home Page/Web site.
- Expected student behavior – what does positive behavior look like?
- Consequences and remedial measures on multiple levels (individual, school, district)
- Our reporting procedure for HIB instances including how we investigate the matter
- Contacts/Names for new roles at district and school level

*NOTE: Districts have been advised to move away from “zero tolerance” language*

The new policy was created *in consultation* with parents and community members.
Anti–bullying Coordinator

- Appointed by Superintendent
- Coordinates and strengthens district HIB policy to prevent, identify, and address HIB
- Collaborates with anti–bullying specialists, board of education and Superintendent.
- Meets at least twice a school year with the school anti–bullying specialists
- Provides data, in collaboration with the Superintendent to the NJDOE and performs other related duties

*PPS Anti–bullying Coordinator: Theodore Best*
Anti-bullying Specialists

- Appointed by the principal from currently employed staff
  - Guidance counselor, school psychologist, or other school staff trained as an anti-bullying specialist
- Chairs the School Safety Team
- Leads the investigation of reported HIB incidents
- Acts as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of HIB in the school
- Assists the principal in appropriately applying the range of ways for responding to HIB established by the school board
- Provides input to local school board on annual re-evaluation, reassessment, and review of policy
School Safety Team

- Formed to develop, foster, and maintain a positive school climate, including HIB issues
- Meets at least 2 times per school year
- Consists of the principal (*or designee, preferably a senior administrator*) and principal appointees: a teacher in the school, the school anti-bullying specialist (*serves as chair*), a parent* of a student in the school, and other members determined by the principal
- Identifies and addresses patterns of HIB in the school
- Reviews and strengthens school climate and policies in order to prevent and address HIB

*Parent team members may only participate in activities that do not compromise student confidentiality.*
Everyone’s Role

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING

(Refer to pg 12 & 13 of HIB policy)
Districts are responsible for two training requirements:

- **In-service training for all staff** (school leaders, teachers, custodians, district office, security, etc.)
- **Training for new employees**
  - Information regarding the school district policy against HIB must be incorporated into a school’s employee training program
  - The training program must be provided to full-time and part-time staff, volunteers who have significant contact with students, and those persons contracted by the district to provide services to students

- **Board Members** – provided by New Jersey School Boards Association in consultation with recognized experts in school bullying
The superintendent must report at two public hearings all acts of violence and vandalism, including HIB.:
- One between 9/1 and 1/1; and
- One between 1/1 and 6/30

District must also report to the State for the same time period not just acts of HIB but also trainings and programs to prevent HIB.

The District must conduct a Self Assessment for Determining a grade under the ABR and put a link to the report on its Website, as well as District and School grades on respective home pages.
HIB Investigation

- On same day it is learned or some evidence exists, it MUST be reported to the school principal.
- Principal (or his/her designee) initiate’s investigation within ONE school day of verbal report and within 2 school days, a written report must be completed.
- Principal and school Anti-bullying specialist investigate the issue and investigation must be completed ASAP, but no more than TEN school days of written report.
- Principal must submit report to Superintendent within two school days of completion of investigation.
Superintendent must ensure Student Code of Conduct has been implemented/appropriate intervention taken.

Superintendent reports results of each investigation to Board of Ed no later than date of subsequent regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Parents of pupils must be provided IN WRITING with information about the investigation – including findings and whether consequences are imposed. Must be provided within 5 school days after results of investigation are reported to Board of Education.

Upon receiving report, parent or guardian may request hearing before Board of Ed. If granted, must be held within 10 days of request in Executive Session.
According to experts, these are common mistakes schools make when addressing HIB:

- Schools are fixated on the bullies and not on the 85% who are bystanders;
- Keep promoting “Zero Tolerance” but this approach does NOT work and only feeds the “school to prison” pipeline.
- Assume bullies have low self esteem. This is false yet has been believed for MANY years.

We need to mobilize the silent majority into the caring majority: Bystanders to “Upstanders”.
Schools and school districts must annually establish, implement, document, and assess bullying prevention programs or approaches and other initiatives involving school staff, parents, law enforcement and community members.

- The approaches must be designed to create school-wide conditions to prevent and address HIB.
PPS will form broad committee (including community members, students, parents, teachers and led by Anti-bullying Coordinator) to create district-wide “Anti-bullying campaign”. Campaign will be modeled after best practices.
New Law: Instruction & Week of Respect

- The week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year is designated as a “Week of Respect” in the State of New Jersey.
- School districts must observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing HIB.
- Throughout the school year the school district must provide ongoing age-appropriate instruction on preventing HIB in accordance with the core curriculum content standards.
Next Steps for Principals

By September 13th:
- Principals must appoint a School Anti-bullying Specialist who is required to Chair the School Safety Team.
- Ensure the name/phone number/email address of School Anti-bullying Specialist is on your School Web page by September.
- Ensure review of expectations and consequences with all students

By end of September:
- **Back to School Night**: Distribute memo to parents on new HIB policy and reassure parents that school/district takes all issues seriously. Advise parents on how we are addressing HIB and give them name and contact info. of Anti-bullying Specialist.
- Principal and Anti-bullying Specialist will coordinate a **School Safety Team** that must include a parent and a teacher. (NOTE: Parents are NOT permitted to be part of investigative matters as this violates confidentiality).
- Send School Anti-bullying Specialist for district training
- Train all teachers/school staff on new HIB policy
School districts and individual schools are graded by the State on our/your efforts to combat HIB.

It is essential that you document everything including meetings held by the School Safety Teams & any HIB–related programs and campaigns.

This documentation is submitted to State to receive your grade.

Grades will be posted on your Web site.
QUESTIONS