Introduction to Bully Prevention & Intervention Plan and Policy Development

This document is designed to provide guidance to local school boards in the development, establishment and implementation of policies, procedures and programs for the prevention and intervention of bullying behavior in schools, in accordance with P.L. 285-2013. The document is divided into two sections:

*Part 1: Guidance and Requirements for Local Policy and Program Development*

This section provides general guidance and summarizes the basic requirements for the development of corporation plan and policies, focusing on recent updates in definitions as well as a summary of statutory requirements for bullying related components of school corporation policies.

*Part II: Sample School Corporation Policy*

Note: Careful consideration of all issues must inform the final policy and practices of the school district. The sample provided is meant to provide guidance to school corporations in the development of their own plan and policy and is not intended to be used in its entirety as a definition of compliance with P.L. 285-2013.

***Part 1:* Guidance and Requirements for Local Policy and Program Development**

Pursuant to P.L. 285-2013, each school corporation maintains local control over the development of their corporation's bullying prevention and intervention plan and policy, but, at a minimum, the components listed in the amended statute *must* be included in the school corporation’s policies and procedures prohibiting bullying behavior.

As school corporation officials articulate the negative behaviors and resultant disciplinary interventions for students exhibiting bullying behaviors in grades 1-12, staff members should also be trained in skills and strategies for guiding students in the development of social skills, empathy and self-discipline and to apply best practices for *positive* behavioral interventions. It is important to use the policy as an opportunity for preparing staff to effectively *intervene* in instances of bullying. It is equally important to use the policy as a *prevention tool,* by explaining to students the school district’s expectations for their behavior and teaching skills and providing sufficient support for students to fulfill the behavioral expectations

It is recommended that any plan developed by a school corporation should include components that promote dialogue and skill building among students and staff. This ongoing communication will enhance the school community's ability to distinguish bullying behavior from other behaviors, such as "friendly teasing" and "rough and tumble play." It also is through discussion that the school district can help students and staff understand the difference between responsible "reporting" (which is intended to keep someone from getting hurt) of acts of bullying from "ratting" or "tattling." Research has shown that experiential learning techniques, such as role-play situations and other demonstration and modeling strategies can be effective in teaching student and staff the strategies necessary to *prevent* and *remediate* problem behaviors. The preferred pro-social behaviors are most likely to be successfully adopted when school officials engage in data-driven practices for improving school culture and climate as part of a comprehensive bully prevention and intervention plan that utilizes research-based educational practices.

**Requirements for Policy Contents**

Below is a summary of the required policy content with corresponding statutory requirements. Each school corporation has local control over the content of the bullying plan and policy, except that the plan and policy must contain, at a minimum, the following components, as set forth in *P.L. 285-2013:*

1. Development and implementation of a bullying prevention program using age appropriate, research-based information *(IC 5-2-10.1-12, as amended by P.L.132-2007, Section 3 (d)(1))*
2. Establishment of investigation and reporting procedures related to bullying *(IC 5-2-10.1-12, as amended by P.L.132-2007, Section 3 (d)(2))*
3. Adopting discipline rules that comply with IC 20-33-8-13.5*(IC 5-2-10.1-12, as amended by P.L.132-2007, Section 3 (d)(3))*
4. Establish bullying incident reporting procedures using four categories as outlined by the Indiana Department of Education; verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying and electronic or written communication bullying *(IC 5-2-10.1-12, as amended by P.L.132-2007, Section 3 (e), IC 20-20-8-8 and IC 20-34-6-1.)*
5. Provisions to provide training to the school corporation's employees and volunteers who have direct, on-going contact with students concerning the school's bullying prevention and reporting policy (*IC 20-26-5-34.2)*
6. No later than October 15 of each year, each school in the corporation shall provide age appropriate, research based instruction as provided under IC 5-2-10.1-12(d)(1) focusing on bullying prevention for all students in grades 1 through 12*.(IC 20-30-5-5.5)*
7. Instruction indicated above should be delivered by a school safety specialist, school counselor or any other person with training and expertise in the area of bullying prevention and intervention. *.(IC 20-30-5-5.5)*
8. Include a definition of bullying as defined in IC 20-33-8-0.2 (a) and that will not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or include in the definition of the term, any of the actions outlined in IC 20-33-8-0.2 (b).
9. Adopt discipline rules that prohibit bullying and include provisions concerning education, parental involvement and intervention (*IC 20-33-8-13.5(a)(2)(A)).*
10. Detailed procedures for expedited investigation of incidents of bullying, including:
11. Appropriate responses to bullying behavior wherever the behavior occurs
12. Provisions for anonymous reporting
13. Timetables for reporting bullying incidents to the parents of both the targeted student and the bully in an expedited manner.
14. Timetables for reporting bullying incidents to school counselors, administrators, the superintendent and law enforcement (when applicable).
15. Discipline provisions for teachers, school staff or administrators who fail to initiate or conduct an investigation of a bullying incident.
16. Discipline procedures for false reporting (*IC 20-33-8-13.5(a)(2)(B))*
17. A detailed procedure outlining the use of follow up services for both the targeted student and the bully. *(IC 20-33-8-13.5(a)(2)(C))*
18. Discipline rules that apply regardless of location in which the bullying behavior occurred when:
19. The bully and any of the intended targets are students at a school within the school corporation; or
20. Disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interferences with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment. (*IC 20-33-8-13.5(b))*

This document is modeled, in part, on information provided through the following source: (www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm)