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State Superintendent of Schools

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*

DATE: February 24, 2009

SUBJECT: Proposed **Model Anti-Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Policy**

PURPOSE:

To adopt the proposed **Model Anti-Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Policy**.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The 2008 Maryland General Assembly added Section 7-424.1, *Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation*, to the Education Article of the **Annotated Code of Maryland** (ATTACHMENT I). By March 31, 2009, this law requires the Maryland State Board of Education to develop a model anti-bullying, harassment, or intimidation policy with consultation and input from local school systems. The model policy is to be used by the twenty-four local school systems to assist them in developing their own anti-bullying, harassment, or intimidation policies. School systems must submit copies of their anti-bullying policies to the State Superintendent by July 1, 2009.

The development of anti-bullying policies comes in response to the growing concern among students, parents, mental health professionals, advocacy groups, elected officials, and school system personnel about incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation occurring in schools. The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a reporting form for use by students, parents, or close adult relatives to report cases of bullying, harassment, or intimidation to school administrators that occurred in schools or at school-sponsored events. Specific data were also required to be collected from these reporting forms by the local school systems and forwarded to MSDE to be included in an annual report to the Maryland General Assembly. Additionally, bullying was added as a separate offense code for schools and school systems to use when reporting suspensions. The development of a model anti-bullying policy by the State Board and anti-bullying policies by the local school systems can be considered as an extension of the effort by all stakeholders to address bullying, harassment, or intimidation.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Individuals representing a variety of backgrounds and professional disciplines were invited and/or volunteered to participate in a workgroup to develop a draft model anti-bullying, harassment, or intimidation policy (ATTACHMENT II). Two formal meetings were held to discuss the workgroup's charge, elicit their expectations, review existing model anti-bullying policies in effect in neighboring states, and begin developing a draft model anti-bullying policy for Maryland based on the requirements of the law. Between and after the formal meetings, further discussion among workgroup members was conducted electronically. Input and suggestions were considered in the development and editing of the draft model policy. Opinion was also sought from the Attorney General's office. The draft model policy was further reviewed for comment by a group of 30 students representing the various geographic areas of the State at the Student Safety Summit on October 27, 2008. Copies of the draft model policy were also sent for review and comment to the local school system Superintendents and their staff, the School Safety Action Committee which I co-chaired with Congressman Elijah Cummings, and the Achievement Initiative for Maryland's Minority Students (AIMMS) Steering Committee. All comments and feedback were examined and consideration was given to their inclusion in the draft model policy. Attachment III is a copy of the final draft of the model policy.

ACTION:

Approve the proposed **Model Anti-Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Policy.**

NSG:DMR:kw

Attachments (3)

Model Ant-Bullying Policy Transmittal February 24-25, 2009.doc