



This Act makes numerous changes to the laws related to school bullying and safe school climate. Principally, it:

1. establishes a 33-member social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative and tasks it with, among other things, developing a biennial state-wide school climate survey, model positive school climate policy, and student suicide risk assessment (§§1-3);
2. requires the State Department of Education (SDE), by August 1, 2021, to publish on its website the model

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policy and school climate survey the collaborative develops (§2);

3. modifies the definition of bullying by, among other things, eliminating the requirement that the action occur between students (§3);
4. specifies that schools, when they contact parents and guardians whose children have been involved in bullying, must let the parents know the results of the investigation into the incident and requires the schools to also notify the parents or guardians that they may refer to information on the board of education’s website about rights and remedies under school law (§3);
5. requires boards of education to publish such information in plain language on their websites by June 30, 2021 (§4); and

6. requires boards of education, in consultation with the collaborative and SDE, to provide on the department website certain training materials for school administrators regarding bullying prevention and intervention (§5).

The effective date of this legislation is July 1, 2019 except the provisions related to the collaborative are effective upon passage.

Addition details of this legislation follow.

§§1-3 – Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative

The Act establishes a 33-member Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative and tasks it with the following:

1. collecting information on school climate improvement efforts of local and regional boards of education;
2. documenting any needs the boards articulate for technical assistance and training to foster positive school climates;
3. identifying best practices to promote positive school climates;
4. directing resources to support state-wide and local initiatives to foster and improve positive school climates and improve access to social and emotional learning in schools;
5. developing an assessment to screen students in grades 3-12 for suicide risk;
6. developing a biennial state-wide school climate survey and model positive school climate;



7. developing a plain language explanation to distribute to parents and guardians that describes their right to file a written complaint with the State Board of Education alleging the local or regional board of education's failure to implement the state's educational interests and the associated remedies and providing the explanation of these rights and remedies to each board of education by January 1, 2021; and
 8. performing other functions concerning social and emotional learning and fostering positive school climates.
- b. students, their parents and guardians, and school employees feel engaged and respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision;
 - c. educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
 - d. each person feels comfortable contributing to the school's operation and care of its physical environment.

Definitions

The Act provides a number of new definitions pertaining to this topic. They are as follows:

1. A **“school climate”** means the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents', and school employees' experiences of school life, including norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. (Currently, school climate means the quality and character of school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.)
 2. A **“positive school climate”** is defined as a school climate in which:
 - a. norms, values, expectations, and beliefs are promoted that support feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe;
3. **“Social and emotional learning”** means the process through which people achieve emotional intelligence through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
 4. **“Emotional intelligence”** means a person's ability to:
 - a. perceive, recognize, understand, and manage his or her emotions and those of others;
 - b. use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including reasoning, problem solving, and interpersonal communication; and
 - c. understand and identify emotions.

The legislation details the representatives to the collaborative, it specifies charges, and reporting requirements. CABE and CAPSS are represented in the membership.





Model Positive School Climate Policy

The Act requires the collaborative, by January 1, 2020, to develop a model positive school climate policy. In doing so, it may review safe school climate plans that local and regional boards of education have developed and implemented.

Suicide Assessment

The Act requires the collaborative, by July 1, 2020, to submit to the Children’s and Education Committees the assessment it develops to screen students for suicide risk and any recommendations for implementing the assessment in public schools.

School Climate Survey

The Act requires the collaborative, by July 1, 2021, to develop a biennial state-wide school climate survey and provide it to SDE. The survey must be designed to obtain confidential information from school employees and students’ parents and guardians concerning their impressions of the school’s climate. The survey must ask about their impressions of:

1. the student learning environment at the school, including academic supports and resources available to students and school safety;
2. school employee communication to parents and guardians about students;
3. the teaching environment at the school, including employee resources, supports, and professional development; school leadership; and collaborative planning time availability;
4. whether there is a positive climate at the school;

5. whether individuals of all races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds feel welcome at the school; and
6. the availability of supports and strategies to develop and retain teachers and administrators, including minority teachers and administrators, school psychologists, and counselors, and suggestions for increasing the availability of such supports and strategies.

§3 – Bullying Definition

The Act modifies the definition of “bullying” to mean an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent, or pervasive and (1) causes a student emotional or physical harm, (2) places a student in reasonable fear of such harm, or (3) infringes on a student’s rights or opportunities at school. Under this definition, the actions do not necessarily have to occur between two students.



Previous legislation indicated bullying is one or more students’ repeated use of a written, oral, or electronic communication directed at or referring to a student in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture repeatedly directed at another student in the district, that (1) causes a student physical or emotional harm or property damage, (2) places the student in fear of such harm or property damage, (3) creates a hostile school environment for the student, (4) infringes on his or her rights at school, or (5) substantially disrupts the school’s education process or orderly operation.



As under previous existing law, bullying includes written, oral, or electronic communication or a physical act or gesture on the basis of having, or associating with individuals who have, certain actual or perceived characteristics (e.g., race, gender, or disability).

§3 – Safe School Climate Plans

Previous existing law required boards of education to develop and implement a safe school climate plan to address bullying in schools, among other things. The plan must require schools, within 48 hours of completing an investigation into alleged bullying, to notify the parents/guardian of the (1) student who committed the bullying and (2) student against whom the bullying was directed.

The Act specifies that this notice must include the results of the investigation. It additionally requires the notice, which must be verbal or by email if the parents’ or guardians’ email addresses are known, that they may refer to the plain language explanation of their legal rights and remedies that is published on the board of education’s website as required by the Act.

§5 – School Administrator Training

The Act requires boards of education to develop training materials for school administrators. The materials must provide information on preventing and intervening in discrimination against, and targeted harassment of, students based on their (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics (e.g., race, color, or physical disability) or (2) association with individuals or groups who have one or more such characteristics.

The materials may be developed in consultation with or provided by one or more organizations offering training on identifying, preventing, and intervening in discrimination.

Policy Implications

This legislation impacts policy #5131.911, “Bullying” and its accompanying administrative regulation which currently is a sample safe school climate plan.

The sample safe school climate plan, contained within CABE’s sample administrative regulation has not been changed at this time. The State Department of Education is required by this new legislation to publish on its website, the model positive school climate policy, developed by the school climate advisory collaborative, by August 1, 2021. The school climate advisory collaborative is charged with developing a model positive school climate policy by January 1, 2020.



A policy is still recommended to accompany the “safe school climate plan.”

Students

Hazing

Bullying

The Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Definitions

“Bullying” means ~~an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive which: the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:~~

- A. ~~causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,~~
- B. ~~places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or~~
- C. ~~infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.~~

- ~~A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,~~
- ~~B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,~~
- ~~C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,~~
- ~~D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or~~
- ~~E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.~~

Bullying shall include, but **need** not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

Students

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Bullying

Definitions (continued)

“**Cyberbullying**” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“**Teen dating violence**” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

“**Mobile electronic device**” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“**Electronic communication**” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

“**Hostile environment**” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

“**Outside of the school setting**” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“**School employee**” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

“**School climate**” means the quality and character of school life ~~with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. (and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.)~~ based on patterns of students’, parents’ and guardians’ and school employees’ experiences of school life, including, but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Definitions (continued)

“Positive school climate” means (A) a school climate in which the norms, values, expectations and beliefs that support feelings of social, emotional and physical safety are promoted, (B) students, parents and guardians of students and school employees feel engaged and respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision, (C) educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning, and (D) each person feels comfortable contributing to the operation of the school and care of the physical environment of the school.

“Emotional intelligence” means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.

“Social and emotional learning” means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. physical violence and attacks
2. verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. threats and intimidation
4. extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Students

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Bullying (continued)

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the schools and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school wide, classroom and individual.

The District's program: *(Also outlined in the section pertaining to the "Safe School Climate Plan.")*

1. Requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan by the Board of Education to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
2. Permits anonymous reports of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ by parents or guardians and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ or receive reports of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

4. Requires the Safe School Climate Specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report, and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
5. Requires the Safe School Climate Specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying or teen dating violence, including language about bullying and ~~teen dating violence~~ in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
7. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and ~~teen dating violence~~;
8. Requires each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation, ~~The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying or school dating violence~~ of the results of such investigation and verbally and by electronic mail, that such parents/guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies posted on the district's website; (available under C.G.S. 10-4a and 10-4b)
9. Requires each school to invite the parents/guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act of bullying was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying and ~~teen dating violence~~;
10. Requires each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting of the parents/guardians of the student against whom the act of bullying or ~~teen dating violence~~ was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

11. Establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying ~~and teen dating violence~~ in such school and make such list publicly available; and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
12. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
13. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~;
14. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
15. Requires the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ constitute criminal conduct;
16. Prohibits bullying ~~and teen dating violence~~ (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
17. Requires, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
18. Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide;

Note: *Certified employees are required to complete annual training on the prevention and identification of bullying and response to bullying and the prevention and response to youth suicide.*

The State Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required to provide annual training to non-certified school employees.

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

19. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of the school year of the process by which they may make reports of bullying or teen dating violence;
20. As required, the Board of Education shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, cooperative assistance and approval not later than July 1, 2014; and
21. Requires that not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the State Department of Education, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and each individual school in the District's Internet website and such plan is to be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying and teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist of each school is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying and teen dating violence. The safe climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and teen dating violence promptly.

In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of bullying and teen dating violence. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.
2. School rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
4. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school.

Students

Hazing

Bullying (continued)

5. Individual interventions with the bully or student who commits teen dating violence, parents and school employees and interventions with the students against whom the acts of bullying and teen dating violence are directed, parents, and school employees.
6. School wide training related to safe school climate.
7. Student peer training, education and support.
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.
9. Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

Note: Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement may originate from public, private, or philanthropic sources. For purposes of this section, “interventions with the bullied child” includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District’s safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in the schools of the district.
3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent to the Department of Education;
4. Respond to bullying and teen dating violence in District schools;
5. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying and teen dating violence issues in the District and make recommended changes to the District’s safe school climate plan.

Students

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Bullying

District Safe School Climate Coordinator (continued)

6. Successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training only required once.)

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist in each school shall:

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and
3. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and teen dating violence reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each District school shall establish a new committee or designate at least one existing committee that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school. The committee must include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying and teen dating violence;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying and teen dating violence among students in the school;
3. Implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, (developed pursuant to Section 87 of PA 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying or teen dating violence (defined in Connecticut General Statutes 10-222d) and report such information, as necessary, to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the school's security and safety committee;

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Committee (continued)

4. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
5. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
6. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and
8. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3 or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student.

Safe School Climate Plan

The Board of Education shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools. Such plan shall:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying and ~~teen dating violence~~ to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make such reports;
2. Enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying; ~~and teen dating violence~~
3. Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ to orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist, or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Plan (continued)

4. Require the Safe School Climate Specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
5. Require the Safe School Climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying; ~~and teen dating violence;~~
8. Require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. ~~The required notification and invitation shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;~~ of the results of such investigation, and verbally and/or by electronic mail, if such parents or guardians electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under C.G.S. 10-4a and 10-4b published on the District's website;
9. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying ~~or teen dating violence;~~
10. Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying ~~and teen dating violence~~ in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Plan (continued)

11. Direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~;
13. Direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such student against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
14. Require the Principal of a school, or the Principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal, or the Principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ constitute criminal conduct;
15. Prohibit bullying ~~and teen dating violence~~ (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying ~~or teen dating violence~~ was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
16. Require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's Safe School Climate Plan; and
17. Require that all school employees annually complete the training described in C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended.

Or Shorter Version: *(for the section of this policy pertaining to the "Safe School Climate Plan.")*

As part of this policy, the Board of Education shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools. Such plan shall establish deadlines for reporting investigating, and notifying parents and guardians about bullying and teen dating violence incidents; prohibit retaliation against those who report bullying and/or teen dating violence; and require school officials to notify law enforcement officials when it is believed that bullying or teen dating violence conduct constitutes a crime.

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Assessment (continued)

The Board requires each school in the District, on and after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, to complete an assessment using school climate assessment instruments, including uniform surveys that collect information about students' perspectives and opinions about school climate at the school and allow students to complete and submit such surveys anonymously, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-222h, as amended by PA 11-232. The Board will collect the school climate assessments of each District school and submit them to the Department of Education.

Note: *The Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required by the amended C.G.S. 10-222h, to approve in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), and disseminate to all public schools grade-level appropriate school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, to be used by Boards of Education for the purpose of collecting information pertaining to a district's "prevention and intervention strategy" in order to enable the Department to monitor bullying efforts over time and to compare each district's progress to state trends.*

A safe school climate resource network is to be established by the Department of Education, in consultation with the State Education Resource Center, the Governor's Prevention Partnership and the Commission on Children, within available appropriations, for the identification, prevention, and education of school bullying in the state. This network will make available to all schools, information, training opportunities and resource materials to improve school climate to diminish bullying.

The Board of Education shall, by July 1, 2021, publish on the District's website the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under C.G.S. 10-4a and C.G.S. 10-4b.

The Board of Education, in consultation with the State Department of Education (SDE) and the social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative, shall provide on the SBE's website training materials to school administrators regarding bullying prevention and intervention.

Optional language:

A bullying prevention program shall be implemented which strives to develop a school and home environment:

- * characterized by warmth, positive interest and involvement by adults;
- * firm limits to unacceptable behavior;
- * where non-hostile, non-physical negative consequences are consistently applied in cases of violations of rules and other unacceptable behaviors;
- * where adults act as authorities and positive role models; and
- * where students are included in efforts to improve school climate.

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Safe School Climate Assessment (continued)

The Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures, which carry out the provisions of this policy. *[In designing administrative regulations, the Superintendent should consult with the greater school community, including students.]* In addition, the Superintendent shall provide that students and parents of students are notified of this prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks. ***[Alternate language: this policy shall be included in all student and faculty handbooks and shall be disseminated to the public in a manner to be determined by the Superintendent.]***

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

- (cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
- (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
- (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.21 – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.8 – Out-of-School Misconduct)
- (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
- (cf. 5131.91 – Hazing)
- (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, P.A. 11-232, P.A. 14-172, PA 18-15 and PA 19-166.

P.A. 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.

Students

Hazing

Bullying

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)

P.A. 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.

P.A. 13-3 An Act Concerning Gun Violence Protection and Safety.

P.A. 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates.

P.A. 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

P.A. 19-166 An Act Concerning School Climates.

Policy adopted:

rev 6/19

Disciplinary Sanctions for Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

The following has been adapted from the Policy on Bullying.

Disciplinary Policy Regarding Civil Rights Issues

The District prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment, as defined below, based on the following protected categories: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.

The District also prohibits bullying and teen dating violence, as defined below.

The District will not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this disciplinary policy.

The prohibition against bullying, teen dating violence, discrimination, harassment and retaliation applies to all students on all sites and activities the District supervises, controls, or where it has jurisdiction under the law, including on school premises and school-sponsored functions, events or activities, including field trips, athletic activities, school-related transportation and in production and work-based learning sites.

The District may also take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action for misuse of electronic devices or technology where it occurs on campus or if it takes place off campus if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

Reports or complaints of bullying, teen dating violence, discrimination, harassment or retaliation will be investigated.

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation

Disciplinary sanctions and corrective actions may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

1. a written warning;
2. classroom or school transfer;

Disciplinary Sanctions for Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation (continued)

3. short-term or long-term suspension;
4. exclusion or expulsion;
5. exclusion from participation in school-sponsored functions, after school programs and/or extracurricular activities;
6. limiting or denying student access to a part or area of a school;
7. parent conferences;
8. adult supervision on school premises;
9. a voluntary apology to the victim;
10. awareness training (to help student perpetrators understand the impact of their behavior);
11. participation in empathy development, cultural diversity, anti-harassment, anti-bullying or intergroup relations programs;
12. mandatory counseling; and/or
13. any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or school disciplinary code.

Protection Against Retaliation

The District will take appropriate steps to protect students from retaliation when they report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of the bullying policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action, including long-term suspension, exclusion or expulsion.

False Charges

Any student who knowingly makes false charges or brings a malicious complaint may be subject to any of the disciplinary and/or corrective action(s) detailed above.

Student Responsibilities

Each student is responsible for:

1. complying with the Policy on bullying and teen dating violence;
2. ensuring that (s)he does not discriminate against another or harass another person because of that person's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws;
3. ensuring that (s)he does not bully another person; and
4. ensuring that (s)he does not retaliate against any other person.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation (continued)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BULLYING means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive which:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,
- B. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or
- C. infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.

~~the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:~~

- ~~A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,~~
- ~~B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,~~
- ~~C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,~~
- ~~D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or~~
- ~~E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.~~

Bullying shall include, but **need** not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (*The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.*)

DISCRIMINATION: Treating a student or group of students less favorably, or interfering with or preventing a student from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study of a school, including in a production or work-based learning site, because of that student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws;

HARASSMENT: Unwelcome comments or conduct (oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religious creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status), that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to unreasonably interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's programs or activities or by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment.

HARASSMENT: Also means any unwelcome comment or conduct (oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical) relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religious creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability that does not involve severe, persistent or pervasive behavior, but if it persists, will likely create a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational environment.

RETALIATION: Threatening to or retaliating against any other person for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, or for cooperating in an investigation of harassment or discrimination. Retaliation includes threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties. It also includes overt or covert acts of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination or harassment against an individual or group for exercising rights under the District Policy on Bullying or the Student Grievance Procedures for Alleged Discrimination and Harassment.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE: means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

MODEL ANNUAL BULLYING NOTICE

[State Law requires that boards of education notify students annually of the process by which they may anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. We suggest that this notice be included in a student handbook.]

Bullying behavior by any student in the _____ Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive which:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,
- B. Places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or
- C. Infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.

~~the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:~~

- ~~A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,~~
- ~~B. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,~~
- ~~C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,~~
- ~~D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or~~
- ~~E. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.~~

Bullying shall include, but **need** not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Teen dating violence means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

Students who engage in any act of bullying or teen dating violence, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

5131.911
Appendix C
(continued)

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying or teen dating violence behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying or teen dating violence behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.