

Subject: [Character_education_network] CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK ALERT #7 - Addressing Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) in New Jersey Schools
From: Rebecca Sapora-Day <rsapora@rci.rutgers.edu>
Date: Tue, 04 Aug 2009 12:04:01 -0400
To: "CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK@EMAIL.RUTGERS.EDU" <CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK@EMAIL.RUTGERS.EDU>

CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK ALERT #7 - SUMMER 2009

Addressing Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) in New Jersey Schools

This Alert is a special announcement from the CHARACTER_EDUCATION_NETWORK online mail list. Alerts will periodically bring you information that is time sensitive. You will also continue to receive the monthly Character Education Network e-newsletter. Your name has been added to this list as a result of your completing the New Jersey Department of Education Character Education Network Online Listserv Form or because you have indicated an interest in receiving updates on character education efforts in New Jersey.

The Center for Social and Character Development at Rutgers University is funded under Title V, Part D, Subpart 3, Sec. 5431 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Funds for both the Developing Safe and Civil Schools : A Coordinated Approach for Social-Emotional and Character Development project and the Title IV-A and Unsafe School Choice Option Training and Technical Assistance Project were provided in full by a grant to the New Jersey Department of Education from the United States Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the New Jersey Department of Education. No official endorsement by the New Jersey Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned herein is intended or should be inferred.

Dear Colleagues:

I hope this short summer issue of the Network finds you engaged in pursuits that are personally rewarding and professionally invigorating. Please see the feature article on [Addressing Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying in New Jersey Schools](#) by Dr. Brad Lerman, the director of our Rutgers Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project, which is an excellent summary of the status of this important issue.

Share your best summer resource with your colleagues!

In addition to reading the HIB article, we have decided to ask something of you. Please consider sharing with us and the more than 5,500 Network subscribers your best summer reading or other resource in the area of social-emotional and character development. Depending on the response, we will feature your suggestions/contributions in the fall issue(s) of the Network so that other educators can tune into what is most vital and helpful to you and this work. Please submit the following information as indicated below:

1. Great read or helpful resource (Identify the book, website, article or other kind resource by title, author [if applicable] and source.)
2. What about this resource was helpful or useful to you? (Give us a sentence or two regarding why this resource caught you, or moved you and/or how it might be useful.)
3. Your name and title (e.g. Sally Smith, 5th grade teacher, Abington Middle School) or you may elect to remain anonymous if you wish.)
4. Send the above information to Rebecca Sapora-Day, at CSCD via email: rsapora@rci.rutgers.edu. (NOTE: Please put "NETWORK RESOURCE" in the subject of your email.)

The next issue of the Network will be the back-to-school issue, so take full advantage of the opportunity to relax and enjoy the summer until then.

Philip M. Brown, Ph.D.
Director
Center for Social and Character Development

Partner Article from the Rutgers Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project

Addressing Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) in New Jersey Schools

Bradford C. Lerman , Psy.D.
Director, SDFSC Project (<http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu>)

"School bullying affects the safety and social well-being of the entire school community." (National School Safety Center , http://www.schoolsafety.us/pubfiles/bullying_fact_sheets.pdf, p.4.) According to the materials provided through the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign of the Health Resources and Services Administration, "fifteen to twenty-five percent of U.S. students are bullied with some frequency, while fifteen to twenty percent report they bully others with some frequency." The children who bully are more likely to be truant, drop out of school, or engage in alcohol, tobacco, or other drug abuse (see <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/effects-of-bullying.aspx>), and children who are bullied are more likely to experience depression, low self-esteem, health problems, poor grades, and suicidal thoughts. (see <http://www.olweus.org/public/bullying.page>) It is estimated that as many as 160,000 students stay home from school on any given day because they are afraid of being bullied. (see <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/effects-of-bullying.aspx>)

While it is clear that bullying affects both the person who bullies (the aggressor) and the person who is bullied (the victim), bullying involves more than the aggressor and victim, and has a broader impact on overall school climate. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program proposes "The Bullying Circle" model, which demonstrates that a single bullying incident not only includes the bully/bullies and victim, but can also include additional roles with varying degrees of involvement, including active followers, supporters, onlookers, and defenders. In addition, the program indicates that schools with bullying issues may experience a climate where "the school develops an environment of fear and disrespect, students have difficulty learning, students feel insecure, students dislike school, and students perceive that teachers and staff have little control and don't care about them." (see <http://www.olweus.org/public/bullying.page>)

On September 6, 2002, legislation (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq.) was enacted which requires each school district in the state to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) on school property, at school-sponsored functions and on school buses. The New

Jersey State Board of Education adopted regulations on HIB (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9) on August 5, 2005, requiring that the HIB policy be a component of each school district's code of student conduct. Additionally, the New Jersey Department of Education has developed a model policy and guidance to aide local district boards of education in the development, establishment and implementation of policies, procedures and programs for the prevention, intervention and remediation of harassment, intimidation and bullying behavior in schools. (see <http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.pdf>).

While the legislation and regulations require specific policy components, each district board of education has local control over the development and implementation of its HIB policy. For example, each school district must develop its policy in consultation with comprehensive representation from the school and community, specify expected student behaviors consistent with its code of student conduct, develop a reporting procedure for acts of HIB, and include in its policy appropriate consequences and remedial actions for any person who violates the policy. Each district also must assess the extent and characteristics of HIB within the buildings throughout the district and develop programmatic or other responses, if determined appropriate by the district board of education. These responses may include strategies for addressing the issues that contribute to an environment where acts of HIB are more likely to occur.

Ensuring that HIB policies and practices are aligned with one another and with the code of student conduct will provide the framework for enabling school districts to effectively address HIB throughout their schools. The following questions should be considered in the development and implementation of HIB policies and programs:

Policy Issues

1. Is the district HIB policy compliant with the authorizing statute and regulations?
2. Has there been input into the HIB policy from a comprehensive representation of the school and community?
3. Is it evident that the district's policy prohibiting HIB is a component of or consistent with the district's code of student conduct?
4. Have students, parents, and school staff been made aware of the contents of the HIB policy and related practices? Is the policy available on the district's website?

Program Issues

1. Have the extent and characteristics of HIB behavior in each school building in the district been assessed?
2. Based on the assessed HIB behavior in each school building in the district, have locally determined programmatic or other responses been implemented?
3. What evidence-based approach or approaches are in place throughout the district to prevent and intervene with locally identified HIB needs? Are the approaches consistent with and aligned with the code of student conduct, and with other practices and programs in the district? What additional approach or approaches are needed to address the locally identified needs?
4. Have the training needs of district staff for the effective implementation of the HIB policy, procedures, and programs been assessed, and have locally determined staff development programs been implemented to address these needs?
5. In practice, does the range of responses to incidents of HIB include support for the victim(s) as well as responses to the individuals committing the acts? Are law enforcement officials involved when necessary?
6. Is HIB more serious than isolated incidents either at the classroom, school building, or district levels, and are responses matched to the nature of the HIB, whether individual acts or systemic HIB issues?

This summer, the Rutgers SDFSC Project has been providing regional workshops on reviewing and updating school district's HIB policies. Technical assistance sessions based on the findings from the Rutgers SDFSC Project review of all New Jersey school district's HIB policies also will be offered beginning this summer, coordinated through each County Office of Education. These sessions will be designed to help district staff improve specific policy issues and improve practices for the effective implementation of the policies. The sessions will be completed in preparation for a second statewide policy review to be conducted this coming school year by the Rutgers SDFSC Project staff. Additional information and resources on HIB can be found on the HIB resource page at: <http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu/page/hib/>, as well as through the new web portal for the Rutgers program partners' websites of the Center for Applied Psychology at <http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu>.

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