

Springfield Public Schools



BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Approved by School Committee

December 2, 2010

Amended December 5, 2014

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan Springfield Public Schools, Springfield, Massachusetts

Strategic Priority: Strengthen social, emotional and academic safety nets and supports for all students and families.

PRIORITY STATEMENT

This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan (the “Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The district is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, was signed into law on May 3, 2010 and took effect immediately. On May 13, 2010, Springfield Public Schools (SPS) and the School Committee approved a revised Bullying Policy (Appendix A) in an effort to maintain a learning environment free of bullying.

Springfield Public Schools has developed this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan as required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, in consultation with local government agencies, community agencies, school personnel, advocacy organizations, families, and other interested parties. The district has chosen to adhere to the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to provide a comprehensive approach to bullying. Please note that in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan we use the word “target” instead of “victim” and “aggressor” instead of “perpetrator,” as they are more specific to bullying behaviors.

To comply with amendments to the statute in 2013 and 2014, the Bullying Policy and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan has been amended.

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I. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels has played a critical role in the development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan (the “Plan”) in the context of other school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. District leaders, including the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Leadership Team and school-based leaders will champion this initiative by focusing on Springfield Public Schools Strategic Priority stated above.

The district takes responsibility for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. Representatives from the greater school community and local community have participated in the development and implementation of the Plan.

- A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan must be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, and families. Consultation must include, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the Plan is adopted by the school committee or equivalent authority. Springfield Public Schools has actively engaged with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, and families in the development of the Plan.

Constituency	Strategy for Engagement	Responsible Person
Community-based Organizations (Council of Churches, YMCA, Behavioral Health Network, Western Massachusetts Healthy Communities, Gandara Center of Springfield)	SPS Home Page/Survey Monkey; Input from listed organizations via committee and individual meetings	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Web Administrator Chief Information Officer Chief of Parent and Community Engagement
Local Government Offices (District Attorney’s Office, Sheriff’s Office, Mayor’s Violence Prevention Task Force)	SPS Home Page/Survey Monkey; Input from listed organizations via committee and individual meetings	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Information Officer Web Administrator
Local Law Enforcement Agencies (Springfield Police Department/Quebec Unit, Probation)	SPS Home Page/Survey Monkey; Input from listed organizations via committee and individual meetings	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Communications Officer Web Administrator

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Constituency	Strategy for Engagement	Responsible Person
School Volunteers	SPS Home page/Survey Monkey	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Springfield Schools Volunteers
Students	SPS Home page/Survey Monkey; Announcement to Principals via Principal Agenda Notebook (PAN) to share SPS Home page/Survey Monkey with school community	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Principals/designee Chief Communications Officer
Parents/Guardians	SPS Home page/Survey Monkey; Announcement to Principals via Principal Agenda Notebook (PAN) to share SPS Home page/Survey Monkey with school community; DRAFT Plan available to families at Springfield Public Library	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Communications Officer Web Administrator
Administrators	Principal’s Advisory Sub- committee; District Instructional Leadership Team; Senior Leadership Team; Announcement to Administrators via Principal Agenda Notebook (PAN); SPS Home page/Survey Monkey	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Communications Officer Web Administrator
Professional Support Staff	Announcement to Principals via Principal Agenda Notebook (PAN) to share SPS Home page/Survey Monkey with school community; SPS Home page/Survey Monkey;	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Communications Officer Web Administrator
Teachers	Announcement to Principals via Principal Agenda Notebook (PAN) to share SPS Home page/Survey Monkey with school community; SPS Home page/Survey Monkey;	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Communications Officer Web Administrator

B. Assessing needs and resources. The Plan serves as the district’s blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of our existing healthy school climate initiatives and/or programs. These include:

1. School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
2. Responsive Classroom (Social/Emotional/Academic Approach to Teaching and Learning); grades K-5
3. Second Step (A Violence Prevention Curriculum); grades K-2 and 6-8
4. Steps to Respect (A Bullying Prevention Program); grades 3-5

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5. Talking About Touching (A Personal Safety Curriculum); grades PK-3
6. The Michigan Model Comprehensive School Health Education; grades K-12 district-wide
7. All Stars (Drug-Prevention Program); grades 6-8 district-wide
8. Comprehensive School Counseling Program; K-12 district-wide

At least once every four years beginning with the 2015/2016 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary (“DESE”) developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in the district’s schools. The principal or his or her designee shall verify the completion of the student surveys. Additionally, the district shall annually report bullying incident data to DESE in a form and manner established by DESE.

Action Plan	Responsible Person	Completed
Assess adequacy of current programs; revise or develop as necessary	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services, Director of Health, Director of Student Support Services	10/2010
Review current policies and procedures; revise or develop as necessary (Code of Conduct, Bullying Policy 2006 and revised Bullying	Principal Advisory Committee	10/2010
Review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; revise or develop as necessary	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Information Officer	10/20/10
Assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services; revise or develop as necessary	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Director of Health Director of Social Studies Director of Student Support Services	10/2010
Review results of initial needs assessments on district-wide and school- based school climate (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Harris Poll, KEYS, Organizational Health Inventory, School STAT)	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Chief Information Officer Principals Chief Grants Management	10/2010

C. Planning and oversight. See SPS Bullying Incident Reporting Process (Appendix A, flowchart) for comprehensive reporting process. The following school/district leaders will be responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

Tasks	Leader	Consideration
Receiving reports on bullying	Building principal/designee	Bullying Policy p.6
Collecting and analyzing improved outcomes	Building-based and district-based Instructional Leadership Teams	

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Tasks	Leader	Consideration
Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors	District Instructional Leadership Team, Chief Information Officer, Director of Office of Safety and Security, Principals of schools with PBIS (SWIS™ Software)	Approved Office Referral Form, Power School, SWIS™ Software
Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services, Senior Administrator for Curriculum, Instruction and Development	
Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors	District PBIS Supervisor Chief of Parent and Community Engagement Chief of Grants Management Chief of Pupil Services Director of Prevention and Intervention Services	Comprehensive School Counseling Program, Responsive Classroom strategies, Springfield Parent Academy
Amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct	The District will update the handbooks annually; The Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the district and the Chief Schools Officers.	District handbook has been updated with the revised Bullying Policy (_____, 2014); Code of Conduct reviewed annually (June 2014)
Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use	District Instructional Leadership Team Director of Prevention and Intervention Services, Chief Instructional Officer, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Social Studies, Director of Physical Education and Health, Director of Student Services	

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Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an internet safety policy	The District, including the Director of Prevention and Intervention Services, Human Resources, Chief of Parent and Community Engagement, Principals Instructional Leadership Team, School Committee, Senior Leadership Team	Internet Safety Policy
Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials	Chief of Parent and Community Engagement Director of Prevention and Intervention Services	
Reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan Team Instructional Leadership Team	

D. Priority Statements.

The district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. **The district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.**

The district has separate discrimination or harassment policies that include these or other categories of students. Nothing in this section shall alter the obligations of the district to remediate any discrimination or harassment based on a person’s membership in a legally protected category under local, state or federal law.

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The district will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in district buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. The district will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the sense of safety of the student targeted. The district will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, the district has established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or the assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Plan provides ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

A. Annual Staff Training.

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district.

Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

Action Plan	Responsible Party
Power Point Presentation will be provided to all schools	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services
Suggestion: agendas and handouts from all extended day professional development will be kept in a binder for all new staff to review	Principal or teacher mentor

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B. Ongoing professional development. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The law lists six topics that must be included in professional development. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

1. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
2. developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
3. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
4. research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
5. information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
6. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development includes:

1. promoting and modeling the use of respectful language (Responsive Classroom, PBIS, Second Step, Steps to Respect);
2. fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
3. building relationships and communicating with families;
4. constructively managing classroom behaviors (Best Practices in Behavior Management 1 and 2);
5. using positive behavioral intervention strategies (PBIS);
6. applying constructive disciplinary practices;
7. teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others (Second Step, Steps to Respect, Comprehensive School Counseling Program);
8. engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

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STAFF	CONTENT	FREQUENCY	ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT deadline	SCHOOL-BASED or DISTRICT - BASED
Teachers	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
Para-professionals	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
Support Staff	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
Administrators	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	District-based
Counselors	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
School Nurses	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based

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STAFF	CONTENT	FREQUENCY	ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT deadline	SCHOOL-BASED or DISTRICT-BASED
Cafeteria Workers	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
Custodians	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
Bus Drivers	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	District-based
Athletic Coaches	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based
Advisors to Extra-curricular Activities	Bullying and Cyber-bullying; Staff Overview of Steps to Respect or Second Step	Annually	9/30	School-based

- C. Written notice to staff. In accordance with the district’s Bullying Policy, (Appendix A; Section D. Notice p. 6), all staff will be provided annual written notice of the Plan in the district employee handbook and the Code of Conduct, including sections related to staff duties.

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Action	Deadline	Responsible Person
Written notice of Plan in employee handbook	July	The District
Written notice of Plan in Code of Conduct	July	Chief School Officers
Posted on SPS Website under Plans & Policies	July	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services; Web Administrator

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. In order to enhance the district’s capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, these services are available that reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets, aggressors and families.

Counselors are provided with an updated contact list annually for referring students and families to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

- A. Identifying resources. The Plan includes the school’s or district’s process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This includes a review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services.

Action	Process	Department
The district’s process for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families is described in the Comprehensive School Counseling Program	Counseling and other services will be provided by counselors, School Psychologists, Behavior Specialists, Referral to outside agencies and services	Director of Student Services

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Action	Process	Department
Review of current staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments by focusing on early interventions and intensive services.	The following staff and initiatives support positive school environments: Counselors, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Responsive Classroom, School – based and classroom-based strategies, Small groups; individual sessions, Safety planning, and Behavior Interventions Plans.	Director of Student Services; Director of Prevention and Intervention Services
Local processes for identifying existing and needed resources.	Mapping activity including local stakeholders	Director of Prevention and Intervention Services; City Connects; Chief of Pupil Services; Director of Student Services

- B. Counseling and other services. Culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district are available for staff and families. In addition, the Plan identifies staff and service providers who assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying by aggressors and interventions by bystanders, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors.

Action	Department
Culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district are available for staff and families.	Director of Student Services
Counselors, Behavior Specialists, Teachers, Evaluation Team Leaders, Support Staff, and Administrators and service providers assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying by aggressors and interventions by bystanders or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Some tools include behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.	Chief of Pupil Services; Director of Prevention and Intervention Services

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- C. Students with disabilities. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying for aggressors, harassment, or teasing.
- D. Referral to outside services. School staff will provide a current list of local counseling centers to families as needed. An approved Release of Information form will be given to families at that time.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The law requires each school or district to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the district's curricula. As curricula must be evidence-based, the district will use *Second Step* (grades PreK-2 and 6-8) and *Steps to Respect* (grades 3 through 5), and spiral review lessons of *Steps to Respect* (grades 9-12). Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

One of the four strategic priorities, regarding raising student achievement is strengthen social, emotional and academic safety nets and supports for all students and families.

GRADE	PROGRAM/CURRICULUM	
K-12	Spiral Review of <i>Michigan Model Health Curriculum, Steps to Respect, Second Step, All Stars</i> with age-appropriate role plays	Integrate programs throughout Physical Education Curriculum (in collaboration with counseling staff)

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A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

1. using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
2. empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
3. helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
4. emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
5. enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
6. engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

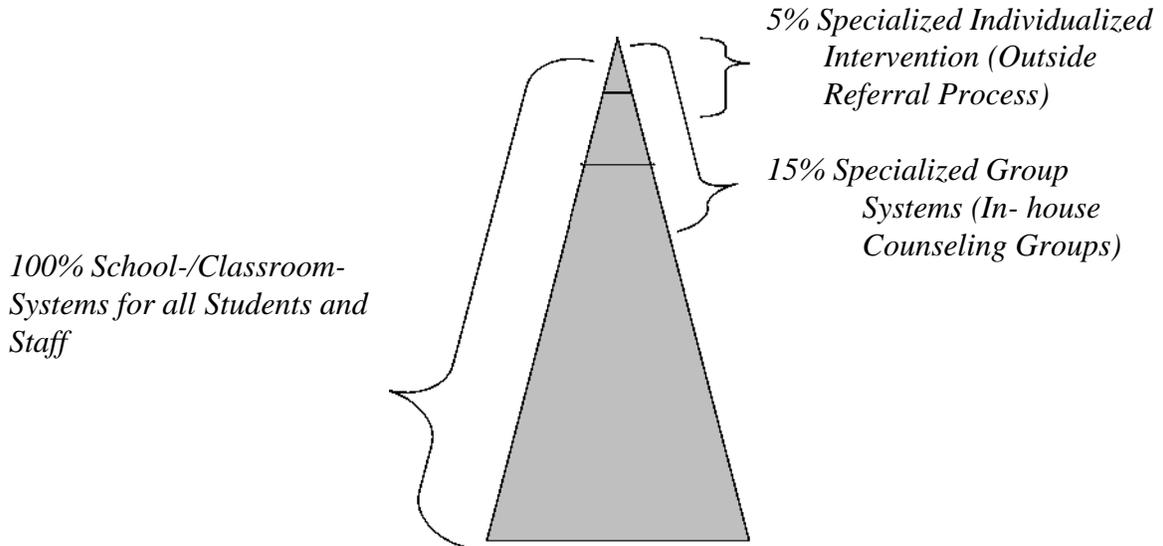
Staff will also teach students about the student -related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Student-related sections of the Plan will be shared with students annually during the appropriate lessons.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

1. setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
2. creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
3. using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
4. using positive behavioral supports;
5. encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
6. modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
7. using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
8. using the Internet safely; and
9. supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

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**Continuum of School-
wide Academic and Non-
Academic Activities**



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V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the district has put in place a policy (Appendix A) and procedures (Appendix A Flowchart) for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. This policy and these procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, families, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur. The district has described detailed procedures for staff reporting of incidents (See Bullying Incident Report Appendix B), processes for communicating to students and families how reports can be made (including anonymous reports)(See Sample to Families Appendix C), and procedures to be followed by the principal or designee once a report is made.

In accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, and Springfield Public Schools Bullying Policy, we submit the following reporting procedures:

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.

1. School staff, including but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, or paraprofessional, will immediately, but no later than the end of the regular school day, report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or to the school official identified in the *bullying prevention and intervention plan* as responsible for receiving such reports or both. Failure to report may subject the staff member to disciplinary action.
2. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying or retaliation, or who has witnessed or learned about the bullying or retaliation of a student, has the right to file a complaint with the Springfield Public Schools. (See Appendix B for Bullying Incident Report). This may be done in writing or orally by informing the building principal as soon as possible. If the individual does not wish to discuss the issue with the building principal, or if the principal does not address the problem in an effective manner, the individual should inform the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee.
3. The district urges all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns of bullying or retaliation to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue.
4. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Each school has a designated drop box for anonymous reports.
5. All reasonable efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality and protect privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

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6. Bullying will be added to the district's Disciplinary/Referral Form as one of the reasons for referral to the assistant principal/principal.

In September of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra curricular activities, paraprofessionals, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. (See Appendix C Sample Letter to Families). A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it.
- b. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" (p. 8 H. Resolution 1.c, d)

- c. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved

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private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" (p. 8 H. Resolution 2).

- d. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the Springfield Police Department/Quebec Unit. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" (p. 8 H. Resolution 1a)

C. Investigation.

1. Upon receipt of such a report there shall be a prompt investigation by the school principal or the principal's designee or, if reported to the superintendent, the superintendent or superintendent's designee.
2. In general, the complaint should be investigated as soon as practicable. Complaints involving violence should be investigated immediately. The nature and duration of the investigation will depend on the circumstances of the complaint, including the type, severity and frequency of the alleged bullying and whether the perpetrator is a student or an adult. If the alleged perpetrator is a district employee, the principal or designee may request assistance in the investigation from the district's human resources department.
3. The complaint should be investigated in a fair and expeditious manner, in a way that maintains confidentiality to the extent practicable.
4. The investigation should generally include interviews of the victim, the alleged perpetrator, witnesses, individuals whom any of the foregoing identify as having

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knowledge of potential relevance to the allegations, and anyone else whom the investigator believes may have such knowledge. To the extent practicable, the investigator may take notes during interviews, or soon thereafter, for the purpose of maintaining accurate records.

5. The investigation should also include a review of any documents, including in electronic format or otherwise, photographs, voice mails, e-mails, telephone records, or other items that may be relevant to the allegations of bullying or retaliation and to which the investigator has access.
6. To the extent practicable, the investigator may create and maintain a confidential investigative file. The file may include any materials relevant to the investigation, including but not limited to interview notes, relevant documents, photographs, voice mails, e-mails, telephone records, or other items pertaining to the allegations or the investigation into them.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" (p. 7 G. Investigation)

D. Resolution – Allegation of Bullying by a Student.

1. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will:
 - a. immediately notify the local law enforcement agency if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator;
 - b. take appropriate disciplinary action consistent with district policy and the Code of Conduct; and take whatever other appropriate action to end the bullying;
 - c. notify the parents or guardians of the perpetrator and the perpetrator;
 - d. notify the victim and the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation (the victim, parent or guardian is not precluded from seeking redress under any other available law, either civil or criminal); and
 - e. if suitable, provide information concerning counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of said students.
2. If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, if Springfield Public Schools is first informed of the bullying or retaliation, Springfield Public Schools will notify the appropriate administrator of the other district or school so that appropriate action may be taken.
3. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Conduct.
4. This policy should not be interpreted as to prevent a victim or accused from seeking redress under any other available law, either civil or criminal.

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See Appendix A, “Bullying Policy” (p. 8 H. Resolution)

E. Resolution – allegations of bullying by district employee.

1. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will:
 - a. immediately notify the local law enforcement agency if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator;
 - b. take appropriate disciplinary action consistent with district policy; and take whatever other appropriate action to end the bullying;
 - c. notify the victim and the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation (the victim, parent or guardian is not precluded from seeking redress under any other available law, either civil or criminal); and
 - d. if suitable, provide information concerning counseling or referral to appropriate services for victims and for appropriate family members of said students.
2. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Conduct.
3. This policy should not be interpreted as to prevent a victim or accused from seeking redress under any other available law, either civil or criminal.

F. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building.

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

M.G.L. c. 71, §37O(d)(2)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- a. offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the district’s anti-bullying curricula; providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- b. implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- c. meeting with families to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- d. adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills.

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2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the district's Code of Conduct.

See SPS Code of Conduct (Group III p. 22)

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

See SPS Code of Conduct (p. 21)

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student shall be subject to disciplinary action.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" (p. 8 H. Resolution 2)

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" and Flowchart

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

The Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. The law requires the district Plan to include provisions for informing families about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including: (i) how families can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyber-bullying.

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Families will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School-specific and district-specific approaches to collaboration will take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the families.

- A. Parent education and resources. The district will offer education programs for families that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Parent and Community Engagement Department, Springfield Parent Academy, PTO, School Centered Decision Making Teams, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and similar organizations.
- B. Notification requirements. The district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the district's Internet Safety Policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The law requires each Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The statement must be included in the Plan and included in the student Code of Conduct, the student handbook, and the staff handbook. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to 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 school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

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As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern regarding a bullying investigation or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

IX. DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. The district has not altered their meaning or scope.

Aggressor, perpetrator of bullying or retaliation as defined in G.L. c. 71, §37O.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include but not limited to, 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, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

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Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

X. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H^{1/2}, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

See Appendix A, "Bullying Policy" (p. 8 H. Resolution 4)

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Appendix C

[On School Letterhead]

Dear (School Name) Families,

The Springfield School Committee approved the amended Bullying Policy on March 6, 2014 and the Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan (The Plan) for Springfield Public Schools on December 2, 2010. The Plan is comprehensive and designed to address the issues of bullying on a variety of levels. Professional development for all staff persons, educating students and families, a protocol for reporting and investigating and a process to make referrals to necessary agencies and departments are the key components of The Plan.

Reports of bullying can be made by anyone, including you and your child. The Bullying Incident Reporting Process form is attached, including whom to contact to submit a report. If you need to report an incident of bullying please contact (principal or designee) at (phone number). Reports can be made over the telephone or in person at the school, although it is best to make a report in writing. All schools have designated a place to submit anonymous reports. (Site location of your school's drop box here.) We will conduct an investigation of all reports. If the results indicate that bullying has taken place, communication will occur between the school and the families of the students involved. When appropriate, the Code of Conduct will be followed, and if necessary we will make a referral to the Springfield Police Department.

If you have questions about The Plan or would like to view it in its entirety, please visit the Springfield Public Schools' website at www.sps.springfield.ma.us under Plans and Policies or contact me directly at (phone number).

Sincerely,

Principal