

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2801

C 239 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding antiharassment strategies in public schools.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Liias, Johnson, Pedersen, Hunt, Orwall, Maxwell, Quall, Moeller, Chase, Williams, Nelson and Simpson).

House Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

A law enacted in 2002 required each school district, by August 1, 2003, to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" was defined to include any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that:

- physically harms a student or damages a student's property;
- has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
- is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The legislation required the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop a model prevention policy and training materials to assist school districts and make these available in a variety of ways. Although not required under the law, the OSPI also developed a model procedure for how school districts could address alleged or known acts that violated the policy.

A September 2008 report by Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) entitled *Bullying in Washington Schools: Update 2008* found that although districts have responded to the statutory requirement to have anti-bullying policies, bullying has not declined significantly in Washington public schools since 2002. The SESRC also found that districts do not address the problem uniformly, and students and parents continue to seek assistance against bullying. A report prepared by the Office of the Education Ombudsman (OEO) in 2008 found that 28 percent of all interventions by the OEO

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involved student bullying or harassment, and bullying was part of 21 percent of special education intervention cases.

Summary:

The OSPI, in consultation with the OEO and other interested parties, must revise and update the model harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention policy and procedure by August 1, 2010. The OSPI is also tasked with adopting rules regarding district communication of the policy and procedure to parents, students, employees, and volunteers.

By August 1, 2011, school districts are required to adopt or amend their policies to, at a minimum, incorporate the OSPI's model policy and procedure. Each district must also designate one person as the primary contact regarding the policy. The primary contact receives copies of all formal and informal complaints, has responsibility for assuring implementation of the policy and procedure, and serves as primary liaison with the OSPI and the OEO.

Each school district must provide to the OSPI a summary of its policies, procedures, and training materials to be posted on the school safety center website, along with a link to the district's website for further information. The district primary contact must annually update and verify the accuracy of the information.

The OEO is designated as the lead agency to provide resources and tools to parents and families about anti-harassment policies and strategies.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	48	0	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2010