



Questions and Answers
Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act
P.L.2010, c.122

Implementing the new Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR) Law requires additional knowledge and training for the anti-bullying coordinators (ABC), the anti-bullying specialists (ABS), the school safety teams (SST), board of education members, chief school administrators (CSA), principals, staff, parents and students. As school staff implement these requirements, it is important to know that you are not alone; resources, in addition to this Question and Answer document, exist on the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) Website

(<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/#si>) and other Websites.

Q1. Which resources exist to conduct an assessment of school climate?

- A. A list of assessment tools is included in the *Model Policy and Guidance for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on School Property, at School-Sponsored Functions and on School Buses* on pp. 35-38 (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm>). You also can download free, easy-to-administer staff, student and parent surveys of school culture from the Website of the Positive Behavior Support in Schools (PBSIS) program (<http://www.njpbs.org/resources/>).

Q2. Where can additional information be found on the ABR, particularly information on differences from the original law and the explicit requirements for the ABS, the ABC and the SST?

- A. The NJDOE Keeping Our Kids, Safe, Healthy & in School Website (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/#si>) is a source of information. For example, at this location you can find the following resources:
- *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* – The law provides explicit descriptions of the new requirements, including for the ABS, the ABC and the SST. (http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/122_.PDF)
 - *Model Policy and Guidance for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on School Property, at School-Sponsored Functions and on School Buses* – This resource provides comprehensive information on the ABR and in particular for developing the district's harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) policy. (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm>)
 - *An Overview of Amendments to Laws on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying* – This PowerPoint presentation, which includes versions with supportive documentation and presenter narratives, provides an easy-to-follow summary of the changes in the law. (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.pdf>)

- *Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Compliance Checklist* – This checklist is designed to help school staff determine the degree of the district’s compliance with the HIB policy and other requirements under the ABR. (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/checklist.pdf>)
- *HIB Guidance Document* – This document, not available at this printing, will explain the implementation of the ABR, the process of resolving HIB complaints, and identify best practices for HIB prevention, intervention & remediation. (URL to be posted)

Q3. Parents continue to ask questions about the ABR, and a PTA meeting has been scheduled to explain the law, but is there any “easy” place to which I can direct them for information.

A. The guidance document mentioned above and the on-line tutorial, both to be posted on the NJDOE’s Website, will have special sections for parents, as well as for students, administrators, and staff. Additionally, each of the resources identified in Q2 provide helpful information on the law.

Q4. Is there a way to check whether school and district activities are in compliance with the ABR?

A. Use the *Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Compliance Checklist*, on the NJDOE’s Website to determine the degree of the district’s and school’s compliance (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/checklist.pdf>).

Q5. Who must perform the role of the school anti-bullying specialist (ABS)? May the principal perform this role?

A. The ABS must be a guidance counselor, school psychologist or other person trained to be the ABS from among the currently employed staff in the school. Since the principal is the one who must appoint school staff to this role, the legislative language and intent is for this to be someone other than a school administrator (e.g., someone with a student support services or student advocacy point of view and function) to counter-balance the administrative, including disciplinary, point of view.

Additionally, the principal must serve on the School Safety Team, while the ABS chairs the team. The intent is for the ABS to have this leadership role, rather than the principal. This same dynamic exists in other areas of the law (e.g., the ABS acts as the primary person for preventing HIB, etc., the ABS leads HIB investigations in consultation with the principal), which requires someone other than the school administrator to perform these functions.

Q6. Must staff assume the new role of school anti-bullying specialist? Are there contractual obligations that could interfere with this role?

A. Each school district would determine whether there are contractual obligations that affect the appointment of the school-anti-bullying specialist or his or her ability to perform this role. The principal has latitude in the person he or she

chooses to appoint to this role. It is advisable that a principal appoint an individual who he or she believes can and will perform the ABS functions. That being said, the performance of the role is a school responsibility under state law. In addition, see the responses under Q5.

Q7. What resources exist to help ABSs’ fulfill their statutory responsibilities, and, in particular, to help with the activities of the School Safety Team?

A. A host of publically available tools, templates and suggestions are available from Positive Behavior Support in Schools Website (<http://www.njpbs.org/resources/>). Topics range from a meeting agenda format, tips on facilitating a meeting, conducting a school self-assessment, and a checklist for an effective building walkthrough.

Q8. Must the CSA appoint a school employee to perform the role of the district anti-bullying coordinator (ABC)?

A. The CSA is encouraged, but not required, to appoint a school district employee to perform the district anti-bullying coordinator role.

Q9. Districts are required to train school staff, which could take place at faculty meetings after school. What resources exist to help develop and deliver an efficient and effective presentation, particularly if there is limited time available to prepare or to conduct a full in-service?

A. Consider using sections of the NJDOE’s PowerPoint slides (*An Overview of Amendments to Laws on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying*) to serve as a springboard for discussion and action plans. For example, there are slides that concentrate on legal requirements, school culture and developing “upstanders,” and cyberbullying.
(<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.pdf>)

Q10. If the purchase of a commercial program is being considered as part of a comprehensive HIB prevention initiative, are there resources available to obtain information on the program or similar programs?

A. A searchable data base to help identify evidence-based HIB prevention and intervention programs can be found at the SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-based Programs (<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>).

Q11. Are there other New Jersey schools that can be contacted to share some strategies for improving school climate and culture and addressing bullying?

A. Eight schools in New Jersey have been named National Schools of Character this year (<http://www.character.org>), and they all have a proven track record in improving school culture and addressing bullying. Three examples are provided below:

Elementary School – Brigantine Elementary has two programs: 1) The local police department, the school video department and the middle school students work together to create documentary videos clips about character-based topics, including bullying, to present to the elementary students; and 2) the school implements the “No More Bullies, No More Victims,” a program sponsored by

New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (NJ CAP). Contact: Principal Donald Marrandino, dmarrandino@brigantine.atinet.org.

Middle School – Lake Riviera Middle School in Brick uses a “See it, Say It, Stop It” approach. Students also “put up a wall of compliments” about each other to counteract the put downs that are characteristic of students at this age. Contact: Assistant Principal Janet Czarnecki, jczarnecki@brickschools.org.

High School – South Brunswick High School in Monmouth Junctions holds focus groups in which students air their feelings about issues, such as bullying. Also, the Theatre Arts students create skits about bullying and perform them in the lower grades. Contact: Activities Coordinator Gina Welsh, gina.welsh@sbschools.org.

Q12. What suggestions do you have for a school safety team that would like to do a book study about bullying?

- A. Review the NJDOE’s *Model Policy and Guidance for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on School Property, at School-Sponsored Functions and on School Buses* for lists of resources (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/bully.htm>). Pages 29 through 32 provide a list of books and articles to help you understand the bullying issue and policy. For prevention and intervention strategies, try pages 32-35. Also, become familiar with the *Stop Bullying Now* Website (<http://www.stopbullying.gov>), which offers articles on special topics, short videos, and Webisodes for different grade levels

Q13. What resources exist for videos that could be shown to staff, students or parents?

- A. Edutopia (<http://www.edutopia.org/groups/social-emotional-learning/stop-bullying>) is a source for articles, strategies and videos. A video that has received over 30,000 “hits” was made by students at Long Branch Middle School, New Jersey in response to the suicide of a Rutgers student. The eighth graders changed the lyrics of Enrique Iglesias’ hit song titled “I Like It” to tell the story of a girl bullied in school. The video is titled “Bullying We’ll Stop It” and can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f76MRNpRedI>.

Q14. Where can information be found on specific best practices in character education that have been successfully implemented in New Jersey schools?

- A. The Character Education Partnership recognizes outstanding practices that have been implemented in schools across the nation. Descriptions of individual practices as well as the contacts for New Jersey schools can be found on its Website (<http://www.character.org/promisingpractices>).

Q15. Where can information be obtained on preventing and intervening with cyberbullying?

- A. The *Stop Bullying Now* Website (<http://www.stopbullying.gov>) provides helpful information on this and other harassment, intimidation and bullying subjects. The Cyberbullying Research Center (<http://www.cyberbullying.us>) is another source

for research articles, effective strategies and the use of student-inspired and implemented service-learning projects to prevent and intervene with cyberbullying.