

Progress Report and Update on Bully Prevention to the MBOE

October 25, 2010

At Parkview School Mrs. Pinnella has a bully prevention period in her schedule every week to review the bully forms, incidents, and consequences to ensure that all the record keeping is clear and that all incidents have been dealt with using progressive discipline. She also determines whether the incident reported was “normal conflict” or “bullying” based on the NJ Law Center Bully Prevention guidelines.

At Joyce Kilmer School Janet Ferlazzo is responsible for monitoring the bully reports in much the same way as Mrs. Pinnella does. Mrs. Gerhart assists by monitoring the record book weekly.

The bully report form and tracking sheet was revised on September 15, 2010 and a meeting was held on September 16th at 8 am for all lunch supervisory staff at PV School to explain the form and demonstrate how it is to be used. The tracking form is the first page in the bully report binder that is monitored by Mrs. Pinnella weekly. When a bully report is filed, Mrs. Pinnella follows up and routes incidents as needed to the principal for discipline. The report is placed in the binder and the names of both the bully and victim are tracked on the top sheet. The same forms were instituted at Joyce Kilmer at the same time and are in use there. When a bully form is filled out it goes either in Mrs. Ferlazzo’s mailbox in the office or in Mrs. Murray’s mailbox. Either way Mrs. Murray screens the report within 24 hours to determine if it is bullying or normal conflict. If it is bullying she gives the report to Mrs. Ferlazzo for investigation and discipline. If it is normal conflict she either handles it herself or routes it to Mrs. Gerhart to work with the students to resolve the conflict. Mrs. Ferlazzo reviewed all the forms at the October Faculty Meeting and met with the lunch aides to make sure they understand how to use the forms. The Bully Prevention committee will determine if another drop off location should be added.

Two Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were created this year to study the incidents of bullying in our schools and develop strategies for prevention, processing, interventions, and discipline. The two PLC’s are active and involve a total of 16 teachers and the 2 principals. One PLC is located at JK, they will discuss conflict resolution, cyberbullying, and other bully related topics (see below) in grades 5-8 and one is located at PV, they will discuss conflict resolution, bully prevention strategies, and responsive classroom in grades K-4. Both PLC’s have a teacher who Chairs the committee and both PLC’s also focus on the continuation of the positive behavior support (PBS) program e.g. Bullying Prevention through Positive Behavior Support - to give students the tools to reduce bullying behavior through the lessons and principles that are being used in our school-wide positive behavior support program.

The following lessons have been created by the PLC:

Facilitated by the JK - homeroom teachers taught to students:

Lessons 1 and 2 will cover teaching social responsibility skills- (3 steps for responding to problem behavior- STOP-WALK-TALK)

Lesson 3 “Gossip”

Lesson 4 will address inappropriate remarks

Lesson 5 will address Cyber-bullying

The following lessons are designed for staff to participate in:

Lesson 6 will address supervising behavior- pre-correction, rewarding, and responding to reports of problem behavior

Lesson 7 will address follow-up surveys and effectiveness

The PBS PLC will be creating lesson plans on all the above topics for the HR teachers. It is our hope that both staff and students will speak the same language and be on the same page regarding this serious issue of bullying and at the same time keep it in a positive light when teaching the curriculum.

Both PLC's elected to remain active for the whole school year with meetings scheduled until May rather than to complete their PLC work by January. The afterschool meeting dates are Oct 11, Nov 22, Jan 31, March 14, and May 16.

Both schools have a teacher who has had specialized training in peer mediation to assist students with resolving conflicts. This is another preventative measure to create a caring environment and staff who is willing and able to work with students to resolve their conflicts amicably. Mrs. Gerhart is the teacher for mediation at JK and Mrs. Giglio is available at PV. Other teachers who are also trained to provide support to children and mediate issues are at JK - Mrs. Moskovich and at PV- Mrs. Pinnella. Signs at JK are posted to remind students about the importance of resolving conflicts non-violently, where they can go for help, and that bullying is not acceptable. At PV Mrs. Pinnella continues to provide a 10 minute mini-lesson on bully prevention strategies and conflict resolution at the beginning of every music lesson.

In mid-September 2 brochures from the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office were e-blasted to all parents and posted on the district website about bullying and harassment and what could be done if this occurs.

In late August and late September Dr. Madison and Mrs. Ferlazzo participated in bully prevention webinars offered by the National School Board Association.

The Red Ribbon Week/School Violence Awareness Week activities (October 24-29) include specific lessons each day related to drug, alcohol, and tobacco resistance strategies; review of the "golden rule" along with a "No Bully Promise"; a reminder lesson on what it means to take responsibility for your own actions; a lesson on safety by not harming one's self or others with high risk behaviors; and a pledge to be drug-free. These are in addition to the monthly bully prevention lesson that is distributed by the school social worker to each teacher to remind students about how to make good choices and treat others with respect. In addition, as the year progresses, both schools try to schedule at least one assembly to reinforce the no bully message. One such assembly was already held at JK facilitated by Mrs. Csaszar, Mrs. Murray, and Mrs. Ferlazzo related to the recent cyberbullying incident at Rutgers University.

At the October 11th professional development day for teachers, all lunch aides, instructional aides, custodians, secretaries, administration, and teachers attended a workshop about the current district policy and procedures regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying. I provided babysitting for all aides who might need it for their children so that they would be able to attend the training as planned. There was almost 100% attendance.

Mrs. Ferlazzo attended a Planned Parenthood presentation last year on cyber bullying and later in the year had the presentation given to the children in grade 6-8. She is scheduled to attend the NJ Law Center training for administrators on Bully Prevention Strategies on Thursday, October 28.

To date we have had 27 of our 63 teachers trained at the NJ Law Center in Bully Prevention Strategies. The goal is to have 100% of teachers attend this full-day training. We have had others trained in the past, but teachers who are no longer employed with us are not included on this list. Our recent practice has been to send all newly hired teaching and CST staff, with a second priority being those who are part of the PBS team or have lunchtime responsibilities, in an effort to move toward all teachers being trained.

These trainings were all at the NJ Law Center in New Brunswick. Some additional teachers are scheduled to be trained later this year at the law center. On 11/17/10 4 teachers will attend a training sponsored by the Middlesex County prosecutor's office through the Professional Development Academy in Piscataway.

