



Noecker Parents' Meeting: Promoting a Positive School Climate

Preventing
Harassment, Intimidation
& Bullying

October 8, 2014

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Welcome & Background

- On January 5, 2011 (& later amended March 2012), Governor Chris Christie signed Public Law 2010, Chapter 122, which is also known as the: *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR)*
- The ABR Act, required amendments to NJ School Districts' policies and procedures (*N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13 et seq*) that address prevention and intervention of HIB on and off school grounds, at school-sponsored functions and on school buses.
- The basis of the ABR Act is related to United States Federal anti-discrimination law which defines a **protected class** as a characteristic of a person which cannot be targeted for discrimination.
- In New Jersey (NJSA 18A:37-14) the following characteristics are considered "Protected Classes":

Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or



Amongst many of the required components of the policy, several were key:

1. A statement prohibiting harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) of a student.
2. A definition of HIB.
3. A procedure for reporting an act of HIB, including an avenue for anonymous reporting.
4. A procedure for prompt investigation of reports of HIB policy violations and complaints.
5. The range of ways in which a school will respond once an incident of HIB is founded.
6. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of retaliation or as a means of HIB.
7. A requirement that a link to the HIB policy be prominently posted on the home page of the school district's Website.



School Districts were also required to adopt New District Staff Functions

- Anti-Bullying Coordinator (District)
- Anti-Bullying Specialist (School)
- School Climate & Safety Team (School)



Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Principal Dacosta, is responsible for:

- Coordinating and strengthening the district's policies to prevent, identify, and address HIB
- Collaboration with school anti-bullying specialist in the district, the board of education, and the superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to HIB
- Providing data, in collaboration with the superintendent of schools, to the Department of Education regarding HIB



The School Anti-Bullying Specialist, Mrs. Dahn, shall:

- Chair the School Climate and Safety Team;
- Lead the investigation of incidents of HIB;
- Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and addressing incidents of HIB.

What is the purpose of a School Climate & Safety Team?

To develop, foster, and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the on-going, systemic process and practices in the school and to address school climate issues such as harassment, intimidation, or bullying.



HIB as defined by NJSA 18A:37-14

“Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in NJSA 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:



HIB must include all 3...

- Is reasonably perceived as motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic
- AND, that takes place on school property at any school function or off school grounds
- AND, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students



and 1 of the following...

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging their property (or placing the student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or property):
- OR has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students;
- OR creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.



School Responsibilities for complaints of HIB:

1. Principal receives HIB report.

2. Principal notifies parents of suspected student offenders and victims.

3. Principal receives written report from staff who first reported.

4. Anti-bullying specialist investigates the report.
- Started within 1 day of the first report -
- Completed within 10 days of the written report -

5. Investigation results reported to the superintendent.



District Responsibilities for complaints of HIB:

1. Superintendent may decide to take other actions based on the investigation report.


2. Superintendent reports results to board of education (BOE) at its meeting after the investigation is completed.

3. Superintendent provides parents with information from the investigation.
- Within 5 days of the report to BOE -

4. Parent may request BOE hearing.
- Held within 10 days of request -

5. BOE issues written decision to support, disagree or change the superintendent's decision.
- At the meeting after the superintendent's report -

6. Parents have 90 days from date of BOE Decision to appeal to the Commissioner of Education. Parents can further Appeal Commissioner decision to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court. Parents may also file a complaint with the Division of Civil Rights within 180 days of the occurrence of HIB based on membership in a protected group.



**How does the
Roseland School District
respond if an incident is not
within a protected class as
defined by the Federal Anti-
Discrimination laws?**



If it is determined that the incident did not meet the criteria for HIB as defined by NJSA 18A:37-14...

but that...

...the child's actions constituted a violation of the Roseland School District's code of student conduct.

Then...

...a disciplinary action or remediation takes place as determined by the Principal or Superintendent.



Are there any patterns of HIB at Noecker?

- A review of HIB Data from initiation of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights (2011) to present, 2014:
- Over the last 3 years there have been very few instances in which an investigation resulting from an alleged incident of HIB, constituted a violation of rights.
- *There continues to be no pattern of HIB at Noecker School and there were NO (0) HIB incidents for the 2013-2014 School Year.*



So, now comes the fun part! How does the SCST promote a positive school climate?

Despite the fact that Noecker School has no pattern of bullying, we nevertheless, each year survey the school community and develop goals based on the survey results. School Climate and Safety Team determined that it could work on:

2013-2014 Goals were:

- Promoting positive statements between students
- To further educate students about the difference between Conflict and Bullying



Differences Between Bullying and Conflict

Conflict

- Often happens where everyone can see what is happening.
- Usually has lots of people around or involved.
- May involve fighting or yelling by both parties. Each party shares in the altercation equally.
- Afterward, usually the problem is solved and people are friends again.
- There is no imbalance of power.


Important Note: Conflicts can be avoided through the use of Peer Mediation.

NEVER attempt a mediation in the case of bullying. Students who bully and their victims should never be counseled together!

Bullying

- Happens in secrecy or out of the way places.
- A person or group of people are targeting one person.
- Threats are used, either through words or actions.
- They are not friends with targets.
- There is a definite imbalance of power (big/small, older/younger, popular/unpopular).
- It happens more than once.
- Most importantly, the target feels in danger in some way.

Source: Creating a Bully-Free Classroom
Carol S. McMullen



Videos that promote discussions about Bullying vs. Conflict

Example appropriate for upper grades:

- The Bully Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K02OxmV3-0>

Example of a video appropriate for lower grades:

- Sesame Street's The Good Bird's Club

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/topics/bullying>



➤ ***In 2013-2014 Teachers and Students Supported the efforts of the School Climate & Safety Team***

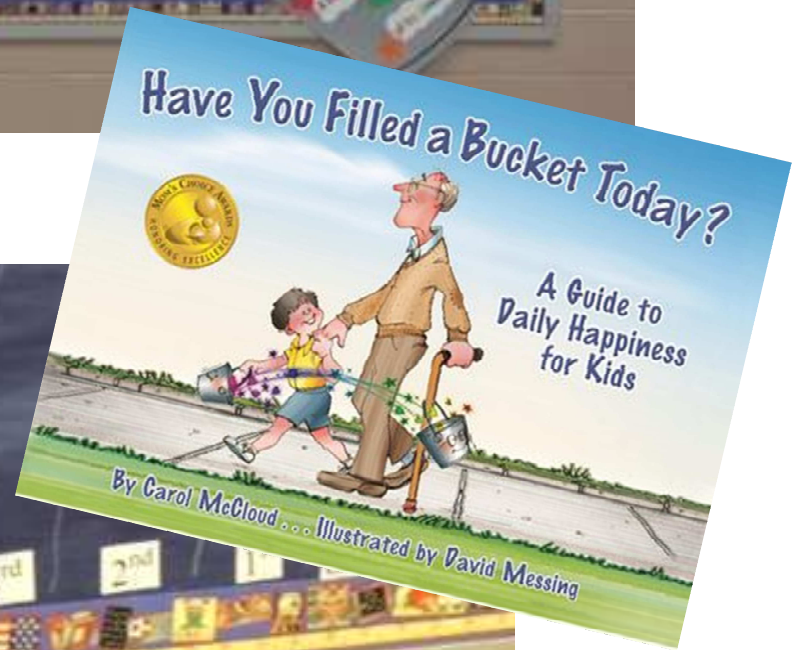
- Participated in October Week of Respect
- Upper grades attended Jill Brown's Generation Text assemblies
- Lower Grades attended the Student Council led an Anti-Bullying Assembly with skits about Conflict vs. Bullying
- We observed "No Name Calling Week"
- And ran school-wide projects

Over the Rainbow with Resolutions & Positivity

The School Climate & Safety Team came up with this school-wide project to help promote Positive Statements at Noecker School:

- *Goal: By increasing positive goals and positive statements, this will at the same time reduce the opportunity for negative statements that may contribute to HIB.*
- *For “Over the Rainbow”, Students focused on positive resolutions & statements and record them on sticky notes – each grade represents a color of the rainbow.*





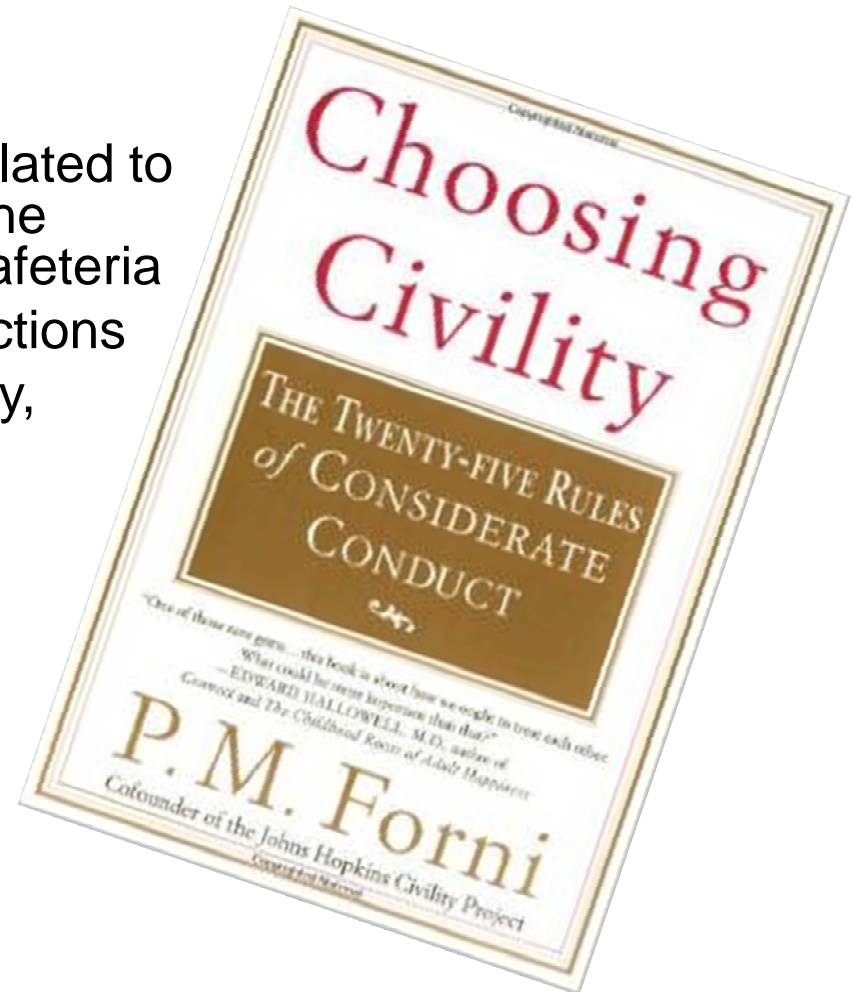
Project based on Carol McCloud's Philosophy

2014-2015 Goals:



Based on Survey Results – Our Theme “Manners Matter”

- Hallway behavior
- Student responsibility related to School Cleanliness on the playground and in the cafeteria
- Polite statements and actions
- Sportsmanship, Empathy, Respect
- Overall, Respect to Self, Respect to Others, Respect to Environment





4 Strategies the SCST plans to implement:

- Positive Message at the School Entry
- Positive Message in Daily Announcements
- Classical Music in the Hallways
- Brain Breaks – fun physical activity

And within School Curriculum:

Mrs. Cummings is infusing the Manners Matter Theme via a series of lessons with students using

P. M. Forni's *Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct*.

Week of Respect: October 6 - 10, 2014

Day	Event/Activity
Monday	Two Student Assemblies with Josh Dreaan "Defeat Bullying Positively" Josh is recognized as one of the most entertaining and prolific up-and-coming youth speakers in the nation.
Tuesday	Wear Gold to symbolize that we treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves.
Wednesday	A.M. - Special visit by Assemblywoman Mila Jasey who will recognize Noecker's Anti-Bullying Efforts, address our students and visit classrooms. P.M. - Parent Presentation - "Promoting a Positive School Climate"
Thursday	"Manners Matter - Lend a Hand"
Friday	R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Flash Mob!

Josh
Dreaan



Assemblywoman
Mila Jasey



What can Teachers and Community Members do to create a positive climate and prevent HIB?



- *Support the HIB educational efforts and themes at Noecker*
- *Recognize Bullying and Normal Conflict*
- *Recognize Passive, Aggressive and Assertive Behavior*
- *Teach children to own their feelings and use “I” Messages rather than blaming*
- *Teach Telling vs Tattling*
- *Be a positive Bystander – stand up for others*
- *Work to resolve conflicts: The Win/Win Guidelines*
- *Teach HIB Prevention Strategies to students*
- *Use curriculum materials such as the 6 Essential Lessons by the NJ State Bar Foundation, Carol McCloud’s Bucket-filling Philosophy and Choosing Civility*





References

- NJSA 18A:37-14
- Bully-Busting Curriculum, Six Essential Lessons for Grades K-12 by the NJ State Bar Foundation
- Bully Guide, Prevention & Intervention Tool by Michael L. Lujan, M. Ed.
- A Guide for Teachers To Make the Classroom A Bully Free Zone, By NJ Catholic Charities
- NJEA.org Anti-Bullying Resources
- <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>
- Creating a Bully Free Classroom by Carol McMullen, referenced in Polk County Florida Public Schools 2008 Standing Tall Newsletter
- *Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct* by P.M. Forni
- *Have you Filled a Bucket Today? A guide to Daily Happiness for Kids*, by Carol McCloud
- Definition of Protected Class,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protected_class

Closing Q&A

