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October 17, 2011

TO: Deans and Alternate Route Directors of Educator Preparation Programs

FROM: Andrew Smarick
Deputy Commissioner

SUBJECT: Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights: Educator Preparation Program Requirements

I am writing to inform you of the new educator preparation program requirements resulting from the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (*P.L.2010, c.122*), enacted by the New Jersey Legislature in January 2011. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, all candidates for superintendent, principal and supervisor certification, as well as all candidates for teacher certification, must have satisfactorily completed a program on harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB).

The legislature, recognizing that HIB in school settings is a growing concern, noted that the chronic persistence of school HIB has led to student suicides across the country, including New Jersey. Reports of this kind prompted legislators to create additional statutory requirements to strengthen the pre-service training for educators, as well as structures in support of school districts' efforts to prevent HIB. The intent of the new legislation is to support New Jersey's school districts in addressing the policies and procedures needed to respond appropriately to incidents of HIB and to implement effective prevention measures in all schools.

The new legislation establishes clearer standards on the criteria for HIB and the procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of HIB that occur both in school and off school grounds. The standards expand upon the existing definition of bullying by requiring educators to respond to acts that create a "hostile environment at school" and to respond to acts outside school that "materially and substantially" impact the school environment. Further, existing anti-bullying policies must clearly describe appropriate student conduct, the consequences and remedial action for those committing HIB, and procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to all HIB incidents.

The department has worked with a task force to develop the attached guidance document, *Anti-Bullying Guidance for Educator Preparation Program on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying*, which outlines required curriculum topics in education programs for teachers and educational leaders. Please note that the department will be requiring all programs, including alternate route programs, to provide documentation demonstrating how the HIB information has

been integrated into both your teacher and educational leader programs. More information on the documentation process will be forthcoming.

Additional resources on HIB are available on the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/#si>. By Fall 2011, this website will also include a Power Point presentation explaining the school and district responsibilities under the law and best practices for HIB prevention and intervention (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/overview.shtml>) and a comprehensive guidance document in support of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.

If you have any questions related to the guidance that accompanies this memorandum, please contact Carol Albritton at 609.777.4482 or by emailing carol.albritton@doe.state.nj.us.

AS/CP/EAS/CA/L:\Anti-Bullying\Memo To Deans And Alternate Route Directors Of Educator Prep Programs.Doc

Attachment

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