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Guidance for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act 2025-26 School Year

The Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is required by state law to grade each public school and school district's efforts to implement the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* (ABR) (N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46). This guidance document has been developed to help the School Safety/School Climate Team (SS/SCT) fulfill its responsibility to complete the School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the ABR (Self-Assessment), and to help the chief school administrator (CSA), charter school lead person and renaissance school project lead person to fulfill their required responsibilities. For the purpose of this guidance, the term CSA includes charter school lead persons and renaissance school project lead persons, and references to the Board of Education (BOE) include the charter school and renaissance school governing authority.

Conducting the School Self-Assessment

Each school, through its SS/SCT, is required to evaluate its implementation of the ABR from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 by using the Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment tool includes eight core elements that address the ABR requirements for schools. The SS/SCT must assign a rating for each indicator based on the criteria and available documentation.

Samples of documentation that could be used to substantiate the ratings are provided for each indicator. It is essential for school staff to maintain sufficient documentation that will substantiate its ratings on each indicator. The maximum grade a school may receive is 78.

Each school's Self-Assessment must be consistent with associated information and data collected by the district and data reports submitted to the NJDOE. In selecting a rating category on the Self-Assessment, each school must consider, at a minimum, the following information to verify its status regarding the indicators under each of the core elements:

- Data submitted by schools in the Student Safety Data System and the County District School System;
- The findings from monitoring under the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC);
- The findings from investigations of complaints of noncompliance conducted by the NJDOE's county offices of education or the Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance; and
- Other sources of information (e.g., student conduct referrals and dispositions, student and staff attendance, student suspensions, school climate surveys, at-risk student behavior surveys).

Schools are not permitted to assign a rating of "exceeds the requirements" for any indicator that has not been corrected after there has been documentation of non-compliance during the period of July 1, 2025 through June

30, 2026. The NJDOE reserves the right to adjust the school’s selected rating for any indicator, if the rating is inconsistent with data or information available to the NJDOE.

Changes to the 2025-2026 Self-Assessment

There have been no substantive revisions to the 2025-2026 Self-Assessment. The maximum score a school may receive remains 78.

As a reminder, all schools must indicate whether the school district’s HIB policy permits the use of the preliminary determination. If applicable, the school must then report the number of times a preliminary determination was made that a report of HIB was outside the scope of the definition of HIB and therefore not investigated as HIB. While the information entered in this section does not affect the school’s grade, this information must be entered in order to submit the Self-Assessment.

To complete this section, school teams will need to refer to their school district’s HIB policy to determine if their policy permits the use of a preliminary determination for reports of HIB and follow the steps below.

Does your school district’s HIB policy allow for the use of a preliminary determination?

<i>If you answer “yes” to this question:</i>	<i>If you answer “no” to this question:</i>
Select “Yes.”	Select “No.”
Enter the number of times the principal or designee in your school made the preliminary determination that a report of HIB was outside the scope of HIB and did not need to be investigated as HIB during the 2025-2026 school year. Note: The school’s total number of preliminary determinations made to not investigate an allegation as HIB may be different from the district’s total number.	You will not need to provide any further information in this section.

Entering, Certifying, and Submitting the Self-Assessment Data

Once the Self-Assessment is completed, a school-level user must enter the school’s ratings into the NJDOE’s online system that is accessed by selecting the “HIB Grades” link found on the [NJDOE Homeroom](#) webpage. After the school-level user enters the ratings, he/she will be prompted to send the data to the CSA. At any time, the school-level user can print a Summary Report of the ratings. The CSA (district-level user) will have the ability to review the Self-Assessment, print a Summary Report and request the school make any necessary changes prior to officially submitting the data to the NJDOE.

The CSA is responsible for presenting the completed Self-Assessment at a public BOE meeting in order to obtain public comment and BOE approval. Once the BOE approval is granted, the CSA will formally submit the ratings. The system will not permit the user to submit the Self-Assessment prior to the date of the BOE meeting. The formal submission includes the CSA’s certification of the school’s electronically submitted ratings and the Statement of Assurances.

The district-level user will be able to print a receipt of the submission. The **due date** for completing, certifying and submitting the Self-Assessment is **October 31, 2026**.

The ratings may not be changed once submitted. Instructions for completing the online form will be available after logging into the system.

Support Resources

The NJDOE’s [Guidance for Determining Grades under the ABR webpage](#) contains a number of resources, including the “Activities Checklist” and other resources to support schools in successfully completing the Self-Assessment program. Should you have any questions, please email HIBGrades@doe.nj.gov