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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: August 2, 2013

SUBJECT: Additional Requirements for District Policies Prohibiting Bullying and Harassment

Contact Information:

Brooks Rumenik

850-245-0749

Brooks.Rumenik@fldoe.org

DPS: 2013-99

In the 2013 Legislative Session, the Florida legislature passed, and Governor Scott signed into law, changes to s. 1006.147, F. S., effective July 1, 2013, related to bullying. This section includes new requirements to address cyberbullying, broadening the scope to include:

“...the use of data or computer software that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the bullying substantially interferes with or limits the victim’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.”

The law specifically states that although bullying or harassment is prohibited, schools are not required to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function or program. Additionally, the new law adds cyberbullying and private humiliation to the definition of bullying and adds a detailed definition of cyberbullying to the existing statute. Finally, the law requires that investigations of cyberbullying complaints must be conducted on computers without web-filtering software and that training required by the original statute must include instruction on recognizing behaviors that lead to bullying and on appropriate preventive measures.

PAM STEWART
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To view the text of the new law, please visit: <http://laws.flrules.org/2013/87>.

To assist districts with the implementation of this new law, the Office of Safe Schools has amended the department's Model Anti-Bullying Policy, incorporating the statutory changes. To view the revised policy, please visit: <http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/bullying.asp>.

Each district will be required to submit its revised Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy to the department via email to Brooks Rumenik, Director of the Office of Safe Schools at Brooks.Rumenik@fldoe.org on or before January 31, 2014.

For questions and technical assistance, please contact Brooks Rumenik via the email address above or by telephone at 850-245-0416.

PS/br

cc: School District Bullying Prevention Contacts
School District Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinators
School District Student Support Services Contacts