Make It Known: Department of Public Instruction's Model Anti-Bullying Policy

In 2010, Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle signed Senate Bill 154 into law. This bill required the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to develop a model school policy on bullying by students. The bill stated that the model school policy must include:

1) A definition of bullying;

2) A prohibition on bullying;

3) A procedure for reporting bullying that permits reports to be made confidentiality;

4) A prohibition against pupil retaliation against another pupil for reporting an incident of bullying;

5) A procedure for investigating reports of bullying;

6) A requirement that school district officials and employees report incidents of bullying and identify the persons to whom the reports must be made;

7) A list of disciplinary alternatives for pupils that engage in bullying;

8) An identification of the school-related events to which the policy applies;

9) An identification of the property owned, leased, or used by the district on which the policy applies;

10) An identification of the vehicles used for pupil transportation on which the policy applies.

The bill also directed DPI to develop a model education and awareness program on bullying and to post the model policy and the model program on its website. Individual school districts had until August 15, 2010 to either adopt DPI's model policy or create a policy of their own.

One of the things that was really good about the model policy put forth by DPI is that it enumerated, or listed, protected classes of students. It included the same protected classes as Wisconsin's Pupil Nondiscrimination Law (s.118.13) with one important addition: gender identity. This means that if your school chose to adopt DPI's model policy word-for-word rather than creating its own policy, transgender and gender nonconforming students are now explicitly protected from bullying.

See DPI's model policy here: http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/safeschool.html

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