

# Brockton Public Schools

## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

June 7, 2016

The Brockton Public Schools are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber bullying. The commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. The district will take specific steps to create a safe and, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community. We will provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to identify, prevent, report, and respond to bullying, harassment, or retaliation.

### I. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O [amended and signed into law in 2014], is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Bystander is a student who witnesses or becomes aware of an incident or the results of an incident of bullying or cyber-bullying.

## **II. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION:**

The following statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation is included in the parent-student handbook in the district. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(b) and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

### III. REPORTING

#### Procedures for reporting bullying or retaliation:

##### A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously using the form found on [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com). Bullying Information Link (Appendix E). Parents and students attending the middle schools, K-8 schools, high school and alternative schools can also access the **Text a Tip** program at each of the respective schools to anonymously report a bullying, or retaliation incident. This tip line is monitored by school administration and law enforcement (Appendix C). As outlined in the student handbook, making false allegations, providing discriminatory statements, and making defamatory statements is prohibited. People engaging in such activity will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

The district will make the Incident Report of Potential Bullying or Retaliation Form available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and will be post on [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com), Bullying Information Link. The Incident Report of Potential Bullying or Retaliation Form will also be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians. (Appendix D)

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources will be posted on [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com), Bullying Information Link and information about the Plan will be made available to parents or guardians.

##### 1. Reporting by Staff

Staff will report all instances of conduct that it witnesses or becomes made aware of that may be bullying or retaliation immediately. Such report will be made to the Principal or designee. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. All elementary and middle school staff will document any report of alleged bullying incident received from a student using the revised office referral forms. Staff at Brockton High School and at alternative education sites will use the "bullying" selection on the behavior menu located on Infinite Campus. Principals /Administration upon receiving an alleged bullying incident report will then utilize the district Bullying Investigation form to determine if bullying has occurred and complete each of the sections. (Appendix B) Use of this form will secure the appropriate steps of a thorough investigation, contacts with parents of the target and aggressor, disciplinary action taken, safety plans and follow up. Disciplinary action to be taken will be consistent with current practices and will be outlined in each of the student handbooks. School adjustment counselors will work directly with the school administration to create safety plans for the target and provide intervention strategies for the aggressor. At the conclusion of the investigation, the completed report will be forwarded to the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel. This method of documenting the reporting of incidents will allow the district to develop a tracking system for both aggressors and targets and ensure timely investigation of any alleged incidents. The Investigation Reporting Form will provide for uniformity throughout the investigation process.

## **2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Parents can report bullying through multiple sources. Reports can be made to the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, adjustment counselor, nurse or administrator in person, by phone or in writing or email. Reports may be made anonymously via [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com), Bullying Information Link, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee. Students may verbally report bullying through a guidance counselor, an adjustment counselor, a teacher, a staff member, bus driver, a nurse or through a parent.

### **B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.**

#### **1. Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. The principal and or designee will follow the established district safety protocol is followed for each student.

### **Brockton Public School Report Process**

When bullying is alleged the school will follow the procedures from the chart below as a checklist when investigating any alleged bullying incident.

#### **Step One: Complete Incident Report Form**

##### **If a staff member or other adult witnesses or reports incident:**

- Staff member completes incident report and gives to designated administrative staff member

##### **If a student reports incident to a staff member:**

- Acknowledge student’s feelings
- Determine if there are safety issues that must be addressed immediately
- Staff members completes incident report and gives to designated administrative staff member

## **Step Two: Conduct Investigation**

### **Interview Target of Bullying:**

- Interview Target first, then Aggressor using the Bullying Investigation Form
- Target and alleged aggressor will be separated and interviewed separately
- Do not ask to see Target in the alleged Aggressor's presence
- Mediation should not be used with bullying situation
- Make the alleged aggressor aware of consequences of retaliation against target and reporter
- Interview witnesses/bystanders if necessary

**Contact parent of Target and alleged Aggressor and law enforcement (if necessary)**

### **Step Three: Assign Consequences if needed**

- Assign appropriate consequences
- If the alleged Aggressor denies the incident, and there is insufficient evidence, tell the alleged Aggressor that we will continue to closely monitor behavior
- Contact Adjustment Counselor in building to create safety plan for Target and monitor safety of Target

### **Step Four: document Incident and Consequences/Follow Up**

- Document outcome of investigation on the Investigation Form
- Follow up: provide update to appropriate Staff
- Monitor behavior of Target and alleged Aggressor
- Notify teachers who have contact with Target and Aggressor

## **2. Obligations to Notify Others**

**Notice to parents or guardians.** Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

**Notice to Another School or District.** If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

**Notice to Law Enforcement.** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or

district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

Investigation. The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations.

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

## **Responses to Bullying**

### **1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building**

Upon the Principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, a wide range of responses will be provided that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that may be considered to be included:

- Offering individualized skill-building based on the use of tier one curriculum identified by the district
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- Implement a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help student understand a pro social ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- Adopting behavior plans to include a focus of developing specific social skills and
- Make a referral for evaluation

### **2. Taking Disciplinary Action**

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. All disciplinary actions will be outlined in each of the student handbooks distributed yearly.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbooks for each level.

### **3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others**

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

#### IV. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels has played a critical role in developing and implementing Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Teachers have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership is provided at the building level by principals and assistant principals. Leadership is provided at the district level by the wellness teachers, adjustment counselors, and school resources officers, Brockton School Police, the Dept. Head of Wellness, K-8 and the Executive Director of Operations. This leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.

A. Public involvement in developing the Plan. The Brockton Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed by an established steering committee initially convened on June 29, 2010. This plan as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians during a series of meetings held between June and November 2010. An overview presentation was made on October 5, 2010 outlining the components of the plan to the School Committee. The first official reading of the plan by School Committee took place on November 16, 2010 followed by a period of public comment prior to the final reading and adoption on December 7, 2010. A policy prohibiting Bullying & Cyberbullying was passed also at this meeting. (Appendix A) Copies of the plan and policy are available on [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com), Bullying Information Link.

B. Planning and oversight. District wide bullying prevention efforts are coordinated by the Department Head of Wellness, K-8 in collaboration with Principals, Assistant Principals, Deputy Superintendent, Executive Director of Operations, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, K-8, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel, Director of Special Education, School Police, BPS Communications Officer, and the Parent Outreach Coordinator. The following is a list of responsibilities:

Responsibilities of the Executive Director of Operations will include:

- Reviewing and updating the Plan each year
- Communicating to all stakeholders
- Coordinate with the Exec. Director of Teaching and Learning, K-8 regarding curriculum implementation
- Planning for ongoing professional development
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy
- Developing amendments for student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct based on school committee policy

Responsibilities of the Principal or their designee will include:

- Receiving reports on student interactions incidents
- Investigating reports of alleged bullying in a timely manner and making

- determination of the finding
- Developing a safety plan where appropriate and communicating the results of the investigation to stakeholders
- Plans supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
- Documenting and tracking student interaction incidents

Responsible of the Department Head of Wellness K-8 (Chairperson of the Steering Committee)

- Collaborate with the Executive Director of Operations to review and update the Plan each year
- Coordinate the implementation of the curricula that the district will implement
- Assist with planning of ongoing professional development on social skill competencies as well as bullying, cyberbullying, internet safety programs
- Collaborate with the Parent Outreach Coordinator to lead parent or family engagement efforts
- Convene the district steering committee when needed to ensure the sustainability of plan components and programs
- Correspond with Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education on any revision or reporting required associated with this plan.

#### C. Priority statement:

The Brockton Public Schools maintains a safe and supportive learning environment and requires all of the school community to behave in a courteous and civil manner while showing respect for differences. The Brockton Public schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. The school or district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. We will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, and take prompt action to address the behavior so that our schools remain safe and secure centers of learning.

## V. **TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### A. Annual Staff Training

The Brockton Public Schools will provide annual staff training regarding the Brockton Public Schools Anti- Bullying Policy and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to all school staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, safety specialist, substitute teachers, school counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school volunteers, athletic coaches, parent liaisons, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals. All parties will be provided information regarding their requirement to report potential incidents of bullying on the first day of school.

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate

participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

#### B. Ongoing Professional Development.

Ongoing professional development trainings will build on the skills of staff members to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. As required by in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school wide and district professional development will be informed by research and will include information on: but not limited to:

- Developmentally(or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents
- Developmentally (or age)appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witness to the bullying
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment (including students who do not conform to stereotypical gender norms and students with special needs)
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.

The Brockton Public Schools will continue to support staff training in Second Step, Steps to Respect and the Responsible to Intervention Model as a way to support classroom and school wide practices that help student build academic and social – emotional competencies. Staff members working with Special Education students will receive training throughout the school year on strategies to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities with a special focus on factors that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disabilities affects social skills development.

#### C. Written notice to staff.

The Brockton Public Schools will provide all staff with an annual notice of this Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties in the school district's employee handbook and on the BPS intranet, on the districts Cyber-bullying wiki and through electronic communications.

### **VI. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

The Brockton Public Schools works to ensure that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, bystanders, families and other are addressed.

Identifying resources. The Brockton Public Schools identifies students who are at risk through each school's Instructional Strategy Team and referral process. The Instructional Support Teams include but are not limited to the following school staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselors, Adjustment Counselors, School Psychologists, School Nurse, Special Education Teachers, and regular Education Teachers.

- a. School staffs are asked to complete a student referral form when they are concerned about a student in one or more of the following areas: academic, attendance, behavioral, emotional,

- physical, social concern.
- b. The Instructional Strategy Team then meets and discusses the student and an action plan is created. The action plan may include one or many of the following interventions; a call home to parent, administrative referral, school adjustment counselor/psychologist referral, nurse referral, guidance referral, parent meeting, consult with special education, meeting with teachers, and safety assessment/tracking. A case manager from the team is assigned to oversee that the interventions take place
  - c. The Instructional Strategy Team then reconvenes eight weeks later or sooner if warranted and discusses how the interventions have been implemented and the status of the student.

The Department Heads of Guidance along with school adjustment counselors will continue to map resources for identifying its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. School adjustment counselors will continue to conduct individualized skill building, anger management and support sessions for students in each school as needed.

#### Counseling and other services.

*The Integrating Schools and Mental Health: An Educators Guide* developed through the efforts of the Brockton Mental Health Collaborative, provides all staff a comprehensive protocol to help understand the impact of mental and emotional health issues faced by their students. This resources guide serves as an outline of the District's approach to early identification, intervention and referral of students experiencing mental health issues, including collaboration with parent/guardians, community partners and providers. This resources guide includes multiple local community resources include: local emergency information, crisis hotlines, family support programs, recreation departments, social services, public school districts, local area mental health providers, and after-school programs/summer camps. The teaching staff along with guidance counselors, adjustment counselors in the district can identify linkages with community based organizations, including Community Service Agencies (CSA's) for Medicaid eligible students. The adjustment counselors and other designated staff will assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behavior. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula. Collaborations with community partners will be ongoing to secure cultural and linguistic outside services for students and families should they be needed.

#### Students with disabilities.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. The Special Education department recognizes that it is imperative that specific steps need to be taken to create a safe, supportive environment for students who may be more vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing. To address this need, all IEP team evaluations will include discussion regarding whether or not a student's disability affects social skills development or when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. If this is determined to be the case, the IEP will include interventions that will address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP team will document interventions to be taken to specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bully, harassment, or teasing. Special education teachers and guidance staff will utilize the districts identified prevention

curriculum as well as be provided additional skill development resources to assist students identified with social skill deficiency.

#### Referral to outside services.

The School Adjustment Counselors and Psychologists have the role of identifying and referring students and families to outside resources. School adjustment counselors have a running, updated list of resources that are specific to the Brockton community that they network with and refer to on an as needed basis. Counselors will use the *Integrating Schools and Mental Health: Counselor Guide* to follow the established mental health referral and linkage protocol established by the district. These clear protocols have been established to help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols will be evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

## **VII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

The Brockton Public Schools are working to implement a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to promoting positive behavior and school climate. All prevention curriculum will be culturally sensitive, focus on multi skill level development, be adaptable to diverse learning needs and support and empower students to understand the dynamics of bullying and to take appropriate action when necessary. Through the Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) frameworks, tier one social competencies will be met through the implementation of Second Step, and Steps to Respect curricula K-8 by classroom teachers. Students enrolled in Freshman Wellness at BHS and at alternative education sites will participate in lessons designed to address social competence, bullying, and cyber-bullying. All teachers can access additional lessons and resources through the BPS Cyber-bullying Wiki developed by the Instructional Technology Department for the district. School Resource Officers will be utilized by any and all teaching staff to present additional information in classrooms on the legal ramifications of bullying and cyber-bullying. All curriculums will be available to parents by contacting the school principal. The following approaches will be integral to the establishment of a safe and supportive school environment and support bullying prevention efforts made by teachers, administrators and school personnel:

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline
- Using positive behavioral supports
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy and respectful behaviors
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development
- Using the internet safely
- Supporting students interest and participation in no-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in the areas of strength

Implementation of specific bullying prevention and cyber-bullying prevention curricula will be implemented by the Wellness Teachers district wide. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which among other things emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance

- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance
- Emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference

Implementation of interventions for students identified as being at risk due to their disability will be provided curricula specifically addressing the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment and or teasing. Special education teachers along with guidance staff will utilize the districts identified tier one prevention curriculum as well as provide additional skill development resources to assist students identified with social skill deficiency.

## VIII. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

### A. Parent education and resources.

The Parent Academy workshops scheduled to be conducted for this school year are: Bullies, Targets and Bystanders, Building Children's Confidence & Competence: Understanding & Fostering Self-Esteem and Internet Safety: What We All Need To Know to Keep our Children Safe. .Parent information tables currently have resource information available as well as information posted on the Parent page of the web site. Parent Academy workshops for the 2011-2012 school year will include presentations focusing on reinforcing the prevention curricula at home, online safety/cyber-bullying strategies parents can take. As additional resources become available, the Parent Information Specialist will coordinate the distribution of those resources for the district. To date, Information presentations regarding this plan have been made on the local *School Scene Program* on Channel 98, at PTO, PAC, and Comprehensive Health Advisory meetings, Brockton Promise Community meetings and Special Education Parent Advisory Councils. All information regarding this plan and related information will be made available in the various languages and posted on [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com) Bullying Information Link.

### B. Notification requirements.

Communicating with families and providing resources are essential aspects of effective collaboration to prevent and respond to bullying. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will publish written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy via the student handbook. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The district will post the Plan and related information on [www.brocktonpublicschools.com](http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com) Bullying Information Link.

## **IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.