



February 10, 2015

Mr. Mike Bartlett
Kentucky Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force
Office of the Governor
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Task Force Members:

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators' (KASA) School Safety Council recognizes the need to address the issues of bullying within our schools and our communities, organizations, and everyday life activities. Legislation has been passed, HB 91/KRS. 158.156 (Golden Rule/Anti Bullying Bill), requiring that local school administrators deal with students who bully, harass, or intimidate other students.

As school administrators, we all recognize the need for our counseling programs to be proactive in teaching coping skills to students who encounter negative issues with other students and the need to promote a change in the attitude of the offender. The advent of social and electronic media has taken bullying and intimidation to a new level, resulting in negative and sometimes dire consequences for our schools and the students we serve. Administrators and counselors alike are searching for practical strategies that can help them create a positive school culture and be both effective and affective in dealing with the aggressors and victims.

The School Safety Council believes current laws must be revised to offer assistance to both the victims and the administrators who deal with the issues of bullying, intimidation, and harassment. Knowing that Governor Beshear has created a task force to address this issue across the Commonwealth, the School Safety Council believes that KASA, with its substantial networking capabilities, should strive to add to the work of the task force in a mutually positive collaboration.

The School Safety Council appreciates the work done by our legislators with the anti-bullying legislation. We urge them to expand their efforts through targeted funding to enhance current school prevention efforts, using research-based prevention programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), Parent Advocacy Coalition for Education Rights (PACER), and Rachel's Challenge that have proven effective. This support is critical in the effort to help school districts develop comprehensive strategies to combat this pervasive community-based problem.

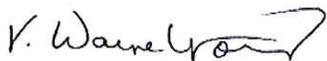
The Safety Council submits that KASA and the Task Force will need support across the state in dealing with this issue. Organizations such as the Prichard Committee, Kentucky School Boards Association, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Association of School Councils, Kentucky Parent Teacher Association, Kentucky Center for School Safety, and others must be included in this discussion to offer their support and recommendations to provide impetus toward a solution.

Several steps could be implemented at this time, to include:

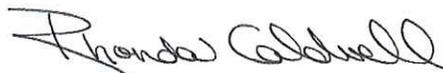
1. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) requires Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP) include a School Culture Plan that contains an anti-bullying component. The plan is reviewed annually by the school's staff and school council. KDE, after a vetting process, could provide districts with a step-by-step process on how to deal with bullying issues in the building as a component of the CSIP document.
2. Targeted funding for school districts to provide therapeutic counselors (at all schools) who spend their time dealing only with the emotional and social needs of students.
3. Creation of a state-wide campaign seeking community support through schools, businesses, chambers of commerce, local churches, YMCA/YWCA, and Rotary and other civic organizations to join forces to work against bullying.
4. Legislation shielding educators from frivolous claims, allowing them to effectively and efficiently identify threats in their building and remove those threats if necessary.
5. Assistance to local schools to create peer mentoring, mediation, and support groups.
6. Development of a blue ribbon award process for school districts that successfully tackle this serious issue, to bring positive light to school districts rather than focusing exclusively on problems and tragedies.
7. Develop a community of First Responders, trained to deal with children who have been impacted, to offer support and build rapport with identified bullying victims.

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment are not exclusively a school problem, but rather a community-wide problem. KASA's School Safety Council supports the work of the Governor's Anti Bullying Task Force and wishes to be an ongoing resource for the Task Force and all interested organizations and individuals. The adage, "It takes a village to raise a child," has never been clearer. Schools, families, and entire communities must work together in a movement of solidarity if we have any hope of protecting our greatest asset—our children.

Respectfully Submitted,



V. Wayne Young
Executive Director/General Counsel



Rhonda Caldwell, CAE
Deputy Director

Members of KASA's School Safety Council

Rick Lasley, Hancock County Schools, Chairperson	Don Martin, Kentucky Center for School Safety
Jon Akers, Kentucky Center for School Safety	Shawn Moore, Russell Independent Schools
Jason Detre, LaRue County Schools	Ron Murrell, RossTarrant Architects
Jim Evans, EdD, Lee County Schools	Tim Parson, EdD, Cumberland County Schools
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