

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on
Education
(SC-Ed)**

File Naming Example:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP
➤ 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01a
➤ 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01b
➤ 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt02

Published Documents

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

*Information Collected For Or
Against Proposal*

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

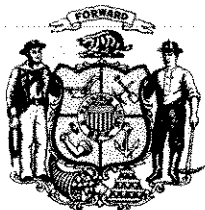
**

➤ Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)

➤ **05hr_sb0310_SC-Ed_pt01**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 2:00pm, November 7, 2005. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 310:

Relating to: school policies on bullying

Introduced by Senators Kedzie, Coggs, Carpenter, A. Lasee, Wirch, Brown, Zien, Roessler and Lassa; cosponsored by Representatives Jeskewitz, Lothian, Kerkman, Turner, Fields, Davis, Lehman, Ott, Townsend, Owens and Pope- Roberts.

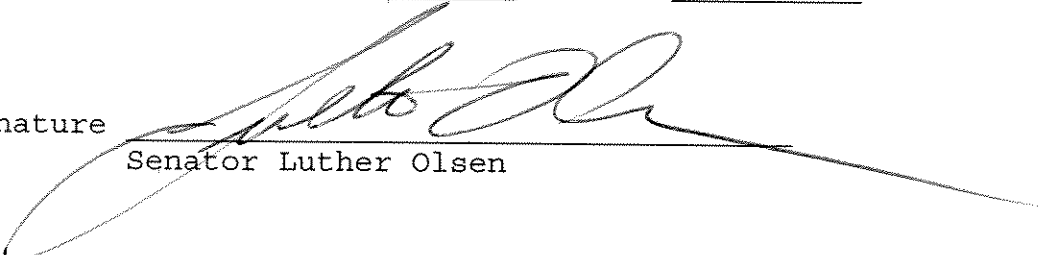
- Moved by Senator Olsen that ^{SB}SENATE AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

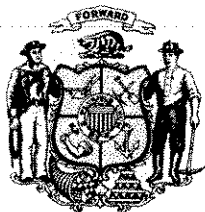
Aye X No

- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

Aye X No

Signature


Senator Luther Olsen



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Alberta Darling, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

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- Moved by Senator Olsen that ^{SWB}SENATE AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

Aye X No _____

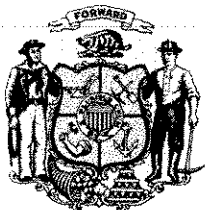
- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

Aye X No _____

Alberta Darling

Signature _____

Senator Alberta Darling



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Sheila Harsdorf, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

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- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE^{sub} AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

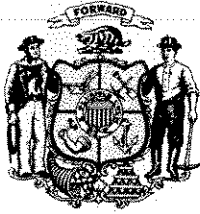
Aye X No _____

- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

Aye X No _____

Signature

Sheila Harsdorf
Senator Sheila Harsdorf



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Glenn Grothman, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

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- Moved by Senator Olsen that ^{SUB}SENATE AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

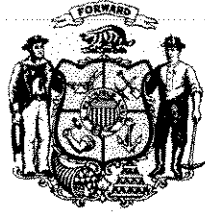
Aye No

- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

Aye No

Signature _____

Senator Glenn Grothman



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Robert Jauch, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

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- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE^{sub} AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

Aye X No _____

- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

Aye X No _____

Signature _____

Senator Robert Jauch



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Dave Hansen, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

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- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE ^{sub}AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

Aye No

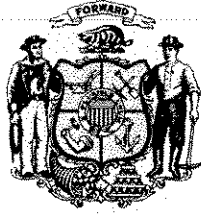
- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

Aye No

Signature

Dave Hansen

Senator Dave Hansen



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Jon Erpenbach, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: November 4, 2005
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 310

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- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE^{sub} AMENDMENT 1 be recommended for ADOPTION:

Aye X No _____

- Moved by Senator Olsen that SENATE BILL 310 be recommended for PASSAGE as amended:

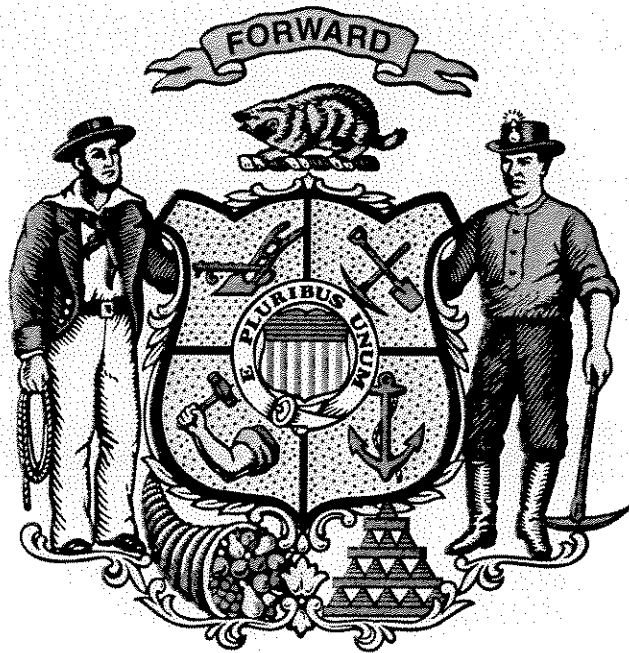
Aye X No _____

Signature _____

Jon Erpenbach
Senator Jon Erpenbach

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882



September 10, 2005

Dear Senator Kedzie,

In September of 2001 a bright, enthusiastic 7-year-old boy started 1st grade at Ixonia Elementary School in Ixonia, Wisconsin. He did well in his academic subjects. His teacher and other staff members told his parents that he was "endearing," with a "kind heart." His parents looked to his accomplishments with pride and dreamed of the potential he held.

3 years later, the boy's parents received a desperate phone call from the school's psychiatrist who said that the boy had been out on the playground with his hands around his own throat crying and saying that he wanted to die. The boy's parents rushed to the school and demanded to know the full story. The boy spoke to them, along with the school psychologist, the principal, and his teacher, about how he felt hated and abused by many of his peers at school. He told them that he felt the school staff did not listen to him. He did not trust them to protect him when things went wrong. He said that the students who caused problems for him were not deterred by any punishments they received. "They lose a recess!" he cried, "So what? The next recess they just come outside and pick on people all over again, and no one cares."

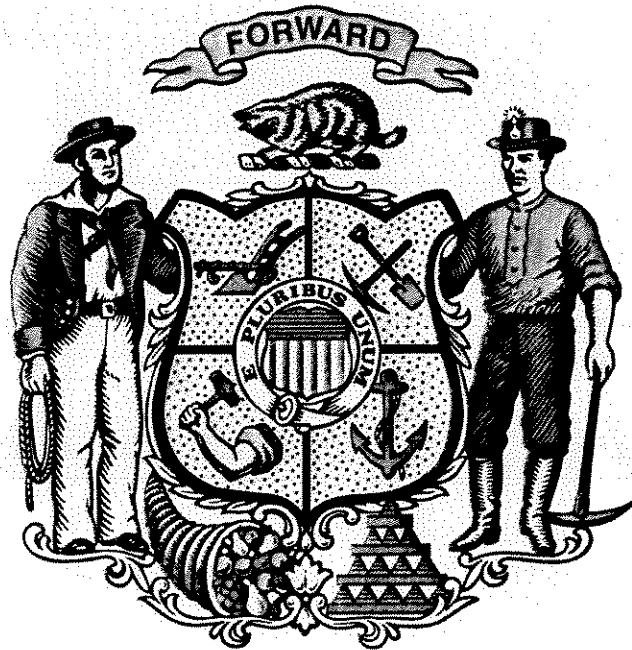
That boy is my son, Ian, currently in 5th grade at Ixonia. In grades 1-4 he suffered serious abuse at the hands of school bullies. Not only did they constantly taunt him and call him names, but he was threatened and physically attacked. He endured such daily torment that the idea of going to school made him ill. The thought of returning to school in 2004 had him so stricken with anxiety that a psychiatrist prescribed anti-depressants. At age 10 my child had to take Prozac just to get through the school year. Only through medication, counseling and, at the suggestion of his psychiatrist, martial arts training, did Ian make it through 4th grade.

For several years my child has suffered. As a 2nd grader, he was shoved to the floor of the bus by a 5th grader and repeatedly kicked—he came home sobbing with boot marks all over the back of his jacket and a bruise on his ribs. Nothing significant was done and the bullying continued. At the end of 3rd grade he was shoved onto the asphalt on the playground by one of his classmates and kicked in the leg. He came home with a 3" long cut above his ankle. The school claimed no knowledge of the event as it happened while the children were waiting for the bus home. When we phoned the parents of the boy who attacked him, their response was, "Why didn't the school call us to let us know there was a problem?" Why, indeed. I have spoken to other parents whose children were bullied. And yet my attempts to push the school and the district into adopting an official anti-bullying policy have resulted in next to nothing being done.

Senator, I would like to wholeheartedly express my gratitude to you for drafting the anti-bullying bill and bringing bullying to the attention of our state's legislature. I will do whatever I can to support you and this bill to see that it is drafted into law. I believe that such a bill will force schools to look at bullying and see that their efforts to manage and control the problem have been lax and ineffective. Our children are being emotionally and physically harmed, and this harm has the potential to follow and haunt them for the rest of their lives. I, for one, intend to be an advocate for my child and children everywhere who suffer because we adults have failed to protect them and stand up for their rights. Thank you, Senator, for standing up for Wisconsin children.

Sincerely,

Karen Hertzberg





Mental Health Association in Milwaukee County

Leading the way for Wisconsin's Mental Health

September 12, 2005

Sen. Neal Kedzie
State Capitol, Room 313-S
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Sen. Kedzie:

I am writing to express the enthusiastic support of the Mental Health Association in Milwaukee County (MHA) for SB 310.

The MHA has been involved with school mental health issues in a variety of ways. For the past two years we have provided grants to local schools and communities for youth suicide prevention. As part of a statewide anti-stigma coalition, Wisconsin United for Mental Health, we were also part of a federal anti-stigma program, the Eliminating Barriers Initiative (EBI). Through EBI we helped develop and provide training on a school-based anti-stigma curriculum. We have also done numerous trainings on red flags of children's mental disorders.

We know from our work and from the literature that bullying interferes with learning—the main job of schools. Therefore, addressing bullying is critical if kids are to be able to benefit from their school experience. This is a widespread problem. The Journal of the American Medical Association reported that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying either as a target or a perpetrator. One study by the National Education Association found that bullying or violence caused 160,000 children to miss one or more school days *each month*. Students who are gay hear slurs on an average of 26 times/day and 31% of gays youth have been threatened or injured in a one-year period. Many believe this is a significant contributor to a suicide rate among gay youth that is 2 to 3 times higher than for other youth.

The good news is that there are programs and policies that can address bullying and that when schools clearly communicate that they won't tolerate bullying, bullying decreases. 'Sticks and Stones' is a promising program that has been developed here in Wisconsin

Milwaukee Office
734 North 4th Street, Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53203-2102
Tel: (414) 276-3122 • Fax: (414) 276-3124
Email: mha@mhamilw.org

Office of Public Policy
133 South Butler Street, Lower Level
Madison, WI 53703
Tel: (608) 250-4368 • Fax: (608) 442-8036
Email: shelgross@tds.net

www.mhamilw.org
(877) 642-4630 (for information and resources only)
An affiliate of the National Mental Health Association



and has been promoted by the Department of Public Instruction. Policies don't need to focus solely on punishing—promoting pro-social behavior in kids who have demonstrated bullying behaviors can also reduce bullying.

We congratulate you on providing leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Shel Gross
Director of Public Policy

Attachment: Bullying and What You Can Do About It



Bullying and What To Do About It

Although it's always been around, bullying should never be accepted as normal behavior. The feelings experienced by victims of bullying are painful and lasting. Bullies, if not stopped, can progress to more serious, antisocial behavior. Recent incidents of school violence show that bullying can have tragic consequences for individuals, families, schools, and entire communities.

Recognize It (for what it is)

Bullying is aggressive behavior. A child is targeted by one or more youths with repeated negative actions over a period of time. These are intentional attempts to cause discomfort or injury and can include name-calling, making faces, obscene gesturing, malicious teasing, threats, rumors, physical hitting, kicking, pushing, and choking. More subtle is simply excluding a child from the group. Generally, bullying occurs when there's an imbalance of power favoring the bully. Victims usually feel they don't have the strength to defend themselves. Make no mistake, bullying is a form of violence that shouldn't be tolerated.

See the Scope of the Problem

- The *Journal of the American Medical Association* recently reported that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying, either as a target or a perpetrator.
- A high level of parents (47%) and teachers (77%) report children victimized by bullies.¹
- Bullying and violence cause 160,000 fearful children to miss one or more school days each month.²
- Only a small percentage of children believe that telling adults will help. Children generally feel that adult intervention is ineffective and will only bring more harassment.³

Spot the Bullies

- They are both boys and girls. Boys bully more often and more physically than girls. Girls are more likely to use rejection and slander.
- Bullies usually pick on others out of frustration with their own lives. They target other children because they need a victim who is weaker than them.
- While they may feel uneasy about it, many children tease their peers simply to go along with the crowd.
- Bullies sometimes suffer from depression.⁴ They're often from homes where harsh punishment and inconsistent discipline are used.⁵ Sixty percent of male bullies will be arrested by age 24.⁶

Know Their Targets

- Girls and boys alike are targeted.
- Those who are physically different in race, body size, or clothing. Those with disabilities or those who are dealing with sexual orientation issues. Both groups are kids who are typically anxious, insecure, and suffering from low self-esteem. This makes them good targets.
- There are few differences among racial and ethnic groups in the numbers of students being bullied. White and black students are more likely to report it than others.⁷

¹ National Parent Teachers Association, 2001

² National Education Association, 1993

³ Charach, Pepler & Ziegler, 1995

⁴ Pollock, 2002

⁵ Batche and Knoff, 1994

⁶ Olweus, 1993

⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, 2001



National Mental Health Association

- Three million U.S. teenagers have serious problems in school because they're taunted with anti-gay slurs.⁸ According to several surveys, four out of five gay and lesbian students say they don't know one supportive adult at school. They say teachers ignore harassment 97 percent of the time.⁹

Take Steps to Stop It

- **Start early.** Parent/child talks are critical. Teach kids to respect others before they start school and continue to talk about this topic on an ongoing basis. Even small acts of teasing should be stopped in their tracks. Don't fail to correct this kind of behavior due to a child's young age. This is exactly when to stop it.
- **Teach your children how to be assertive.** Encourage your children to express their feelings clearly, say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured, stand up for themselves without fighting, and walk away in dangerous situations. Bullies are less likely to intimidate children who are confident and resourceful.
- **Stop bullying when you see it.** Adults who remain silent when children are bullying others give permission to the behavior and thereby encourage it.
- **Tell your children to take action when they see bullying behavior.** Tell them to speak out against the bully and inform a teacher if the behavior doesn't stop. Bullying continues only when we allow it to.
- **Communicate clear policies and consequences.** Bullying is less likely in schools where adults are involved and firm about stopping bullying behaviors. Send out a clear message at your school that bullying will have negative consequences.
- **Team up.** Work with your PTA or local mental health association to make sure that schools treat bullying as violence. Help them develop programs to prevent bullying and promote safe school environments.

Other resources:

You can find more helpful information about bullying at the following websites:

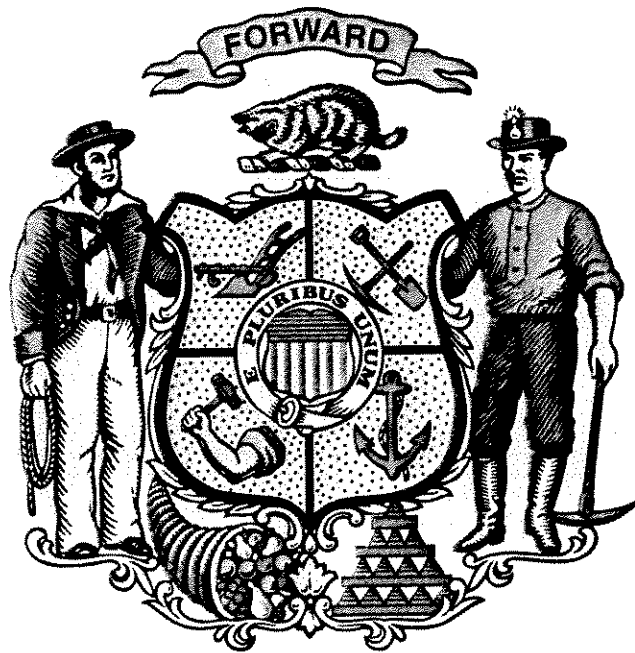
- KidsHealth for Parents: Bullying and Your Child –
<http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/bullies.html>
- National PTA: Safeguarding Your Child at School, Helping Children Deal with a School Bully,
www.pta.org/program/sytsch.htm

For more information on how to help children cope with school-related issues, contact your local mental health association or the National Mental Health Association at (800) 969-NMHA (6642), or www.nmha.org.

National Mental Health Association
2001 N. Beauregard Street, 12th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22311
Phone 703/684-7722
Fax 703/684-5968
800/969-NMHA
TTY Line 800/433-5959

⁸ Human Rights Watch report, 2001

⁹ College Board Review, 2001



Bruce, Cory

From: Phillips, Matt
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2005 2:47 PM
To: Bruce, Cory
Subject: FW: Sub Amendment to SB 310

This is what we are working on. The last item you can delete three months and insert "semester".

We are also working on on another change regarding whether DPI has to "develop" or "identify" the model education and awareness plan.

Our hope is that with these changes, DPI will be able to support the legislation.

From: Phillips, Matt
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2005 3:37 PM
To: Grant, Peter
Subject: Sub Amendment to SB 310

Peter:

Sen. Kedzie would like a substitute amendment drafted to SB 310.

Line 19 p.2 - ref. 118.46(1)(a) Number 3.

3. Include a procedure for reporting bullying that allows reports to be made ~~anonymously~~ confidentially.

Lines 12-15 p.3 - ref. 118.46(2)

Annually, the school board shall distribute and communicate the policy ~~separately from its code of conduct~~, to all pupils enrolled in the school district and to their parents or guardians.

Lines 18--21 p.2 - ref. 118.46(1)(a) Numbers 2 and 4.

Change to:

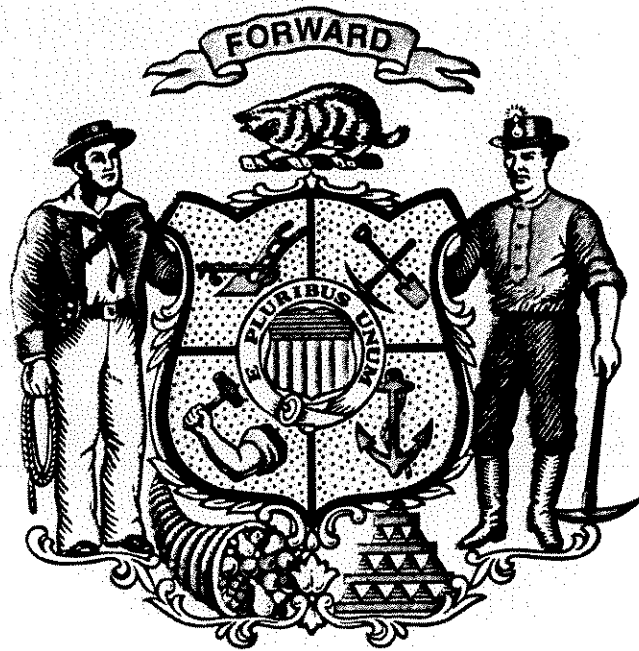
2. A prohibition on bullying.
4. A prohibition against pupils retaliating against pupils who report an incident of bullying.
8. A list of disciplinary alternatives for pupils that engage in an act of bullying or who retaliate against a pupil who reports an incident of bullying.

In addition, on page 2 line 15, change "do" to "include" and rework numbers 1 through 7 to make consistent.

Lines 12-15 p.3 - ref. 118.46(2)

Change to:

Upon the occurrence of a bullying incident, the school board shall distribute the policy to all pupils involved in the incident and to their parents or guardians, unless the student was involved in a previous bullying incident in the preceding three months and the student and the parents or guardians received a copy of the policy at that time.

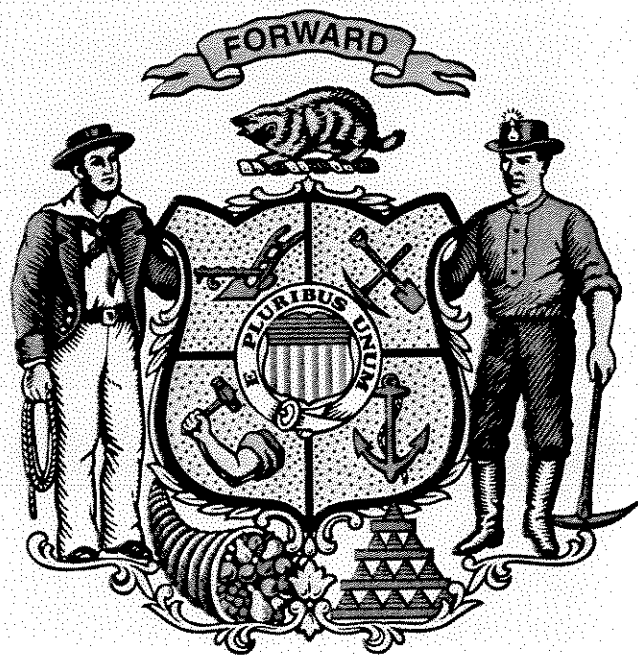


From: Ann Flegel [mailto:annflegel@excite.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 2:28 PM
To: Van Natta, Lori
Subject: SB310

As a parent advocate and member of the Children & Youth Mental Health Committee, I strongly urge the passage of SB 310. Children who are the target of bullies on the playground, on school buses and in classrooms experience deep psychological trauma. I have spoken to parents whose children are afraid to attend school. These children often isolate themselves and there is often a dramatic drop in their academic performance.

On a personal note, my son was the victim of bullies for many years. He attended a magnet school for the gifted, and the teachers found him a pleasure to have in class. He has a social learning disability, has an I.Q. in the 99th percentile, but needs accommodations for his disability. His friends told me what was occurring since he was so humiliated to tell me. This is often the case, with the student internalizing the abuse and also fearing that if they tell someone of authority things will become worse. This bill takes the responsibility off of the victim and gives it to the adults. There were classmates who daily called my son "stupid" and a "retard". He would often stand in a line to get to a class or for lunch and be poked with a pencil, hit on the back of his head or called names. He would position himself as far back in the classroom as he could to avoid the abuse. Children in middle and high school would put their foot out to trip him in the hallways. On the bus the children behind him would call him names and poke him to get a reaction. Let me note that most of his peers came from the upper middle class neighborhood that we live in. When we discussed this with his school, the staff seemed upset that he had not come to them. It is typical for the abused child to be silent. There were peer mediations that were not successful and seemed to only add to his feeling different.

If the above events would occur in any workplace to an adult I believe swift action would be taken. These are children in need of protection who are mandated to attend school. This bill allows them the protection that they need. Children who bully must be identified by schools so that their parents can seek treatment for them. Those who enter the criminal justice system often were identified as bullies. This bill gives them a chance for early treatment and a chance to recognize and change behavior. I appreciate your consideration. I do not believe mandating our school districts to follow more rules and regulations. However, this is a long needed bill which will allow all of our children to benefit fully from their public school education. Ann Flegel, Parent Advocate - Racine (262)639-8919



Bruce, Cory

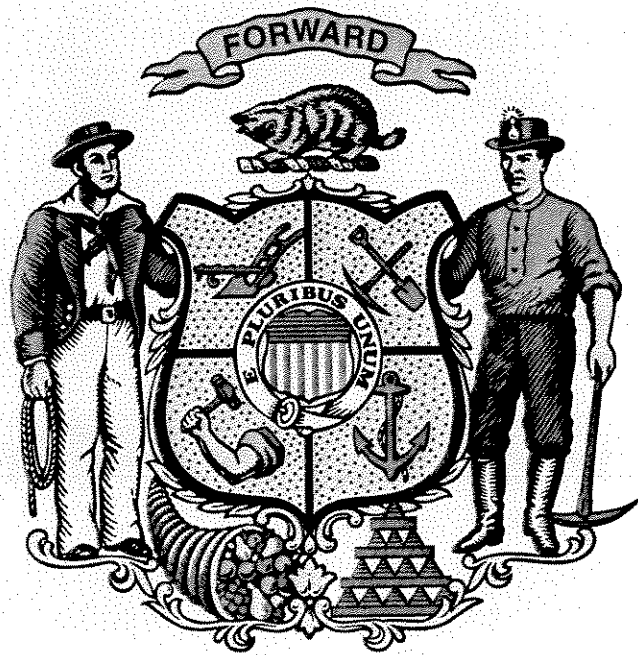
From: Coombs, Christy
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 8:58 AM
To: Bruce, Cory
Subject: FW: SB 310--another one for the bill folder

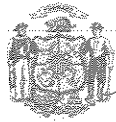
-----Original Message-----

From: maureen ryan [mailto:moryan@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2005 5:34 PM
To: Sen.Olsen; Sen.Harsdorf; Sen.Erpenbach; Sen.Hansen; se..grothman@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: SB 310

Please support the SB 310 against bullying in schools. As the registered lobbyist for WCILC, I know only too well how many young persons with disabilities are negatively affected by "bullies".

Maureen Ryan, Executive Director
Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers 6320 Monona Drive, Ste 408 Madison, WI 53716
608-819-1300 phone/tty
608-819-1301 fax
800-690-6665 tollfree
moryan@charter.net email





State Senator

Neal J. Kedzie

11th Senate District

**Senate Neal Kedzie - Testimony on Senate Bill 310
Senate Committee on Education
September 15, 2005**

Chairman Olsen, members of the Committee, thank you for holding a public hearing today on Senate Bill 310. I am joined today by my co-authors, Senator Coggs and Representative Jeskewitz.

A serious problem is occurring within our schools today as it relates to bullying and we believe the Legislature has an obligation to ensure this problem is being addressed. That is the intent of Senate Bill 310.

We hope this legislation would be viewed not as a mandate, but as a cooperative effort, giving schools and teachers the resources they need to address incidents of bullying. To those schools that are already addressing this issue – keep up the good work, and continue what you are doing. But for those schools that may need more assistance, Senate Bill 310 will provide guidance.

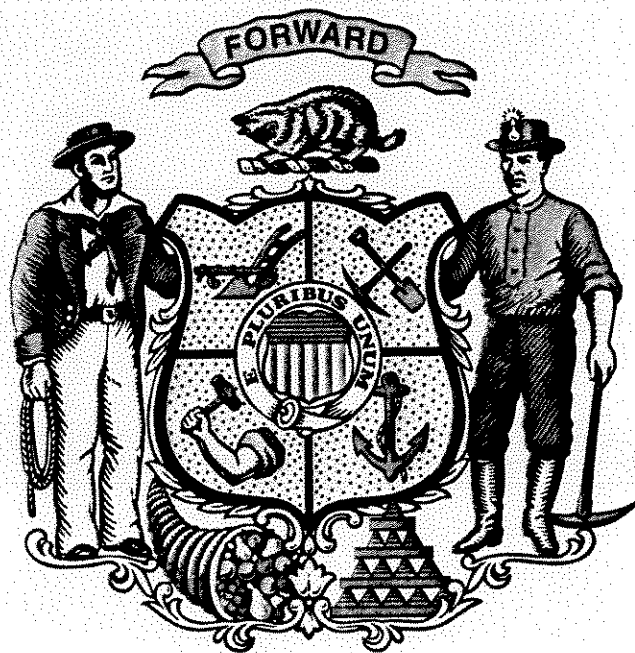
We are convinced that bullying today is more severe than ever before and that some school districts need to take steps to address this issue.

Thus, Senate Bill 310 will:

- Require the Department of Public Instruction to develop a model school policy on bullying, as well as a model education and awareness program.
- Require school districts to adopt a policy regarding bullying and to distribute this policy to students and parents annually and upon an occurrence of a bullying incident. (Schools districts are free to adopt the DPI model policy, modify the DPI policy, or craft one of their own.)
- Specify that the Wednesday of the 4th week of September is Bullying Awareness Day, and add it to the list of special observance days that school districts may observe.

I would like to state for the record that this bill was not introduced to single out any specific school district, or imply that school officials aren't doing their job, or that it will remove local control. And contrary to what some may believe, this is not about creating a "Nanny State."

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 310, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have after Rep. Jeskewitz and Senator Coggs have finished their testimony.



SUE JESKEWITZ

State Representative • 24th Assembly District

Senate Bill 310

Testimony before the Senate Committee on
Education

September 15, 2005

Good morning Chairperson Olsen and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 310. I am the author of the Assembly version of this bill, and the Assembly lead of the Senate Bill.

Bullying has severely escalated from what most of us think of as normal childhood challenges. Some experts say it is because compared to twenty years ago, violence is more prevalent in the media and possibly in homes. Others say it can be attributed to our grade structure now; we used to have Kindergarten through eighth grade in a school, but now we have middle schools as well, so older children aren't around to support or protect the young ones. And bullying today involves much more severe physical and emotional mistreatment than most of us recall.

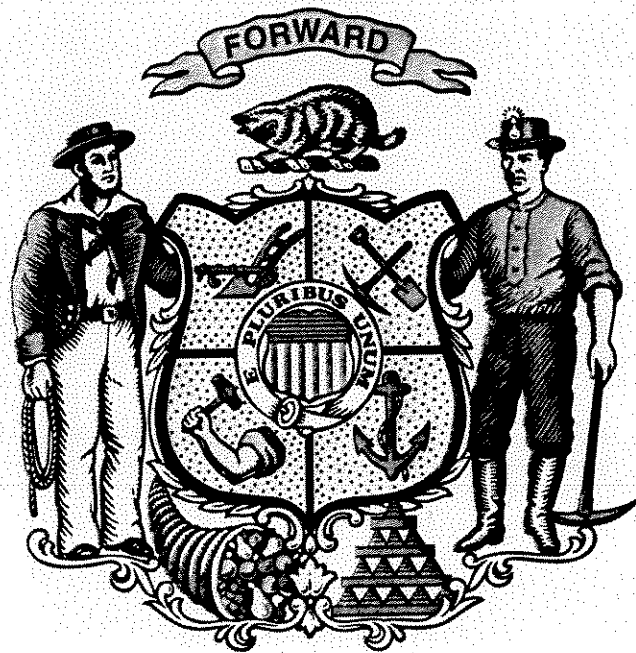
Regardless of the reasons, severe bullying is a growing crisis and frustrated teachers, students and parents are dealing with often dangerous situation, but have no solid policies or tools to enforce consequences. In this litigious society, teachers are limited in many ways in what they can do to enforce prohibitions. They simply don't have the latitude in discipline that was common years ago, and let's face it: many adults today are bullies themselves!

Terrorizing a student daily until she can't tolerate school or beating up a classmate out of sight of teachers are incidents that are only occasionally reported. Who knows how many missed school days, injuries, ulcers and decisions to drop out are caused by being bullied? Who knows how many of today's victims will become tomorrow's tormentors?

I know we cannot legislate responsibility. But sometimes we *can* legislate awareness, we *can* supply tools for addressing a situation, and we *can* help our teachers create an environment that makes bullying unacceptable for everyone.

Let's facilitate a culture within our schools that enforces respectful behavior and helps teachers work with students who choose to engage in destructive behavior. No child deserves to be injured, intimidated, teased or ignored anywhere, especially in the classroom.

Thank you.



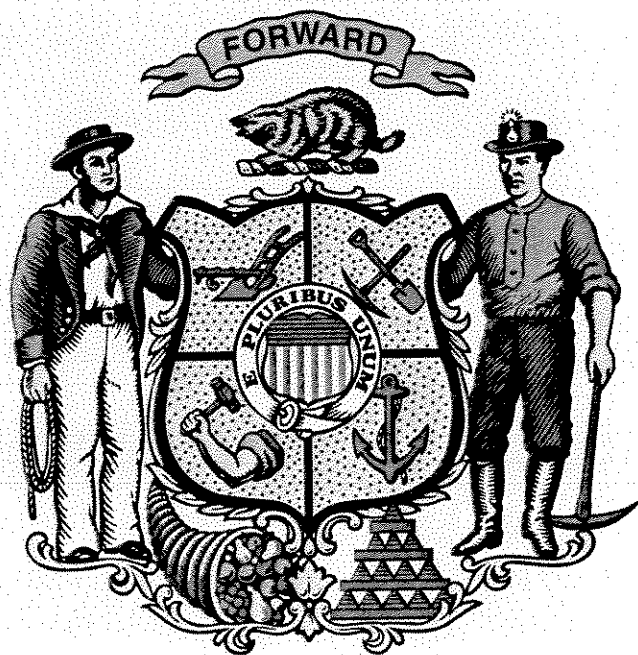
From: Bonnie Nordentoft [mailto:nordent@elknet.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2005 6:52 AM
To: Van Natta, Lori
Subject: Support for Bullying bill

Dear Senator Kedzie:

The Bullying Bill which you will be introducing to the Senate (SB 310) is sorely needed!! I have been in education as a regular education and special education teacher on and off while raising my children since 1962. I have been in special education full time since 1994 and I have seen bullying on the increase. The position I have held for the past eight years as a special education program support teacher has afforded me the opportunity to see first-hand, students pre-k through 12th grade, in all settings when I am doing an evaluation. I have been able to see bullying going on as I observe students in every aspect of school life, i.e. in the regular education classrooms, all specials (music, art, physical education, etc.), on the playground, in the lunch room, in the hallways, and on field trips. Bullying is incidiously sly and the kids that bully usually get away with it for years. In fact they grow up to be "bullies in the workplace". I can speak first-hand about this because I have been bullied to the point that per doctors orders I had to take a mental health leave. I was so depressed and filled with so much anxiety that it just about did me in. Thank God for good medical people that recognized I needed help. I still see my doctor, a therapist, and a psychiatrist on a regular basis. They have and continue to be my source of support. I could not be back at work if it wasn't for them. Unfortunately students do not have that opportunity for that kind of outside therapy and help. I have taken note for years how some students seem to "fit the mold". At times it is very difficult to see the bullying going on because it is a "sly" malady. Many students that bully have been bullied themselves. While this goes on, students of all ages are suffering greatly at the cruelty of the bullies. It may manifest itself in depression, anxiety, rebellion, and many other ways. For some kids the bullying may fester, very painfully, in them for years. They may be good students academically, but hate school and no one can figure out why because they don't know how to talk about it or tell what is happening to them. The little ones simply do not understand what is happening to them and they are just "sad". I pray that this bill will pass the senate. I will be more than willing to help in any way I can.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Nordentoft



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

**Written Testimony Submitted by
Wisconsin Education Association Council
Hearing of Senate Committee on Education
September 15, 2005**

WEAC Position on SB 310 Concerning School Policies on Bullying

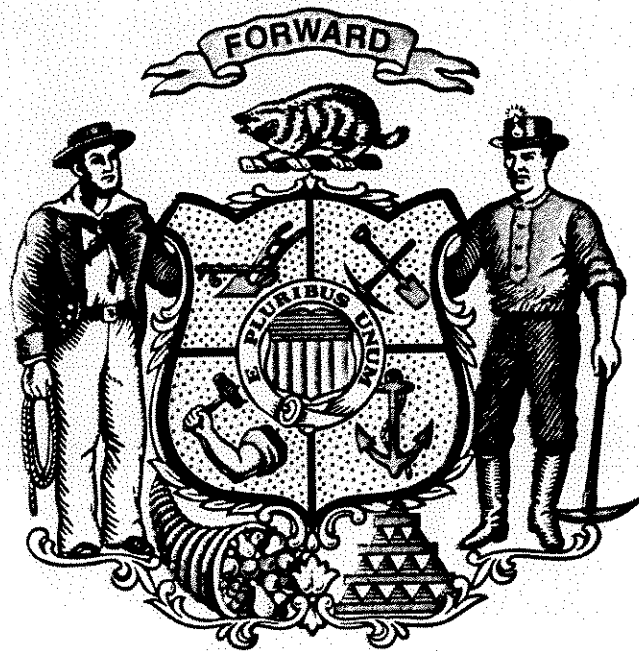
A working classroom is one in which students are safe and healthy. The Wisconsin Education Association Council supports schools providing instruction in anti-bullying behavior. WEAC has sought legislation to implement anti-bullying curriculum in schools as well as programs to promote peer mediation, both of which have been part of WEAC's Legislative Agenda since 2000.

WEAC supports SB 310 contingent on the changes to the bill requested by the Department of Public Instruction. The requested changes allow school districts the flexibility to deal with incidents and reports of bullying effectively within local codes of conduct. Additionally the requested changes allow school districts to choose an anti-bullying program that best suits the needs of students and staff of that school district.

For more information:

If you have any comments or questions regarding this statement, please contact Michael Walsh, WEAC Government Relations Specialist, at 800-362-8034 or 276-7711 or at walshm@weac.org.

Stan Johnson, President
Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director



Bruce, Cory

From: Coombs, Christy
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2005 8:19 AM
To: Bruce, Cory
Subject: FW: SB 310 Committee Action Today

From: Mary Ellen Havel-Lang [mailto:halati@charter.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2005 10:59 PM
To: Sen.Olsen
Subject: SB 310 Committee Action Today

Senator Olsen -

The Education Committee will take up SB 310 on Thursday, 9/15. I sent the e-mail below to Senator Kedzie and repeat it here for your review, and hope you share it with other members of the Education Committee. I have also included Senator Kedzie's response.

I understand Senator Kedzie's concern, based on his response, but I also believe that the parents involved in those incidents MUST hold their local school districts accountable. This should not result in additional requirements on those of us that are holding our administrators responsible for the activities (good and bad) taking place in our schools.

Thank you for your time and your common sense approach to state-wide educational bills.

"Senator Kedzie -

I read with interest your press release regarding the introduction of a bill that would specifically address the issue of bullying in schools. As a way of introduction, I was elected to and have served on my local school board for the past 10 years.

While I believe this is a laudable goal, I also believe this is an issue of local values and control. Further, bullying is an issue that is covered under boards' discrimination and harassment policies, and existing state and federal law. Allow me to quote from the legal references in our policies that govern discrimination and harassment:

"Wisconsin Statutes, 118.13 and 947.0125; Wisconsin Administrative Code, PI 9 and PI 41; Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972; Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 at seq)"

Harassment is defined in our local policy as: "'Harassment' means behavior toward or between students based on any personal characteristic...which substantially interferes with a student's school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive

environment. Harassment can arise from a broad range of physical or verbal behavior that can include, but not be limited to: physical or mental abuse, racial insults, ethnic or religious slurs, unwelcome sexual advances or touching, sexual comments or jokes, sexually explicit derogatory statements or discriminating remarks that are offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which cause the recipient discomfort, humiliation or which interfere with the recipient's academic performance."

Our policy has a clear cut procedure for reporting discrimination and/or harassment with timelines and appeal processes. In fact, we are currently revising both our student discrimination and harassment policy to tighten the language, and we have just completed the revisions to our staff discrimination and harassment policy. As a part of those revisions, we have identified specific staff in each building as the key person to whom such complaints should be made. They are named in the procedures given to students and their parents.

In addition, during the 2003-04 school year, the school district administration conducted a year long survey of parents, staff and students to identify the values that are important to our school community. As a result, we have developed a policy and are continuously incorporating into our school culture and curriculum a community-driven character education initiative. I have attached a copy for your use. We also have a procedure to accompany that policy describing how the policy will be implemented. I can forward that to you as well, if you are interested.

Do I believe that creating policies and procedures is enough to stop bullying? Absolutely not. Do we distribute these policies annually to our students and parents through our handbooks and website? Yes we do. Can we do more to educate our students and parents on how to report bullying and other forms of discrimination and harassment? Yes - on the local level. But the key here is that this must be a local decision and done with the local values in mind - not dictated by a model policy developed by the Department of Public Instruction.

Your release mentioned that several parents have contacted you regarding their child being bullied. My question is what did they do before they contacted you? Did they talk to the child's teacher, principal, director of curriculum and/or district administrator? If not, why not? Did they have follow-up discussions with their local school board members? If the people I mention did nothing to help the parents to whom you spoke, then that is a local issue and it should be reported to the DPI, who already has a complaint procedure in place.

We, as local officials, must insist on a school environment where a child feels free to report such instances. This is not accomplished by creating a new bill. It is, however, done by taking steps at the local level. We are doing that and will continue to improve the environment for all students - based on what we hear locally.

In closing, I believe a bullying initiative by the state legislature may raise awareness of the issue, but it will do nothing unless local school staff and local elected officials act and enforce their policies that already exist. Please do not put another duplicative policy requirements on school districts.

Mary Ellen Havel-Lang
710 Hanley Drive
Sun Prairie, WI 53590
(608) 837-6008

We must not be afraid of dreaming the seemingly impossible if we want the seemingly impossible to become a reality.
- Vaclav Havel (from The Other 90%)

Senator Kedzie's response:

"August 23, 2005

Dear Mary:

Thank you for taking time to share your concerns regarding a proposal I have offered to address bullying in public schools. I appreciate your input, as you are intimately involved in the day to day operations of the Sun Prairie School District as a representative of the School Board.

I am pleased to learn the Sun Prairie School District is addressing this important issue however my research indicates that enough problems exist in other school districts to warrant legislative action. As elected officials, you and I have a duty and obligation to respond to the needs of our constituents and I agree with you that a "one size fits all" approach may not necessarily be the best approach. For that reason, we have drafted the bill to provide school districts with the flexibility they need to craft their own policy, if necessary.

As you may know, the bill requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to create a model policy as well as a model education and awareness program. The bill also requires school districts to adopt a policy, which can either be the model policy created by DPI, a policy they have created on their own, or an amalgamation of the two. The bill also attempts to raise attention to the problem by creating a bully awareness day that school districts may choose to recognize, as well as ensuring that parents are provided with the appropriate information about a school's policy at the appropriate time.

While the bill does require schools to adopt a policy, it does not dictate what that policy has to be. We require DPI to create a model policy and education and awareness program because they have the tools and expertise to create an effective policy that would work in most school districts. That being said, if a school district already has an effective policy in place, or wishes to make changes to the model policy to accommodate the circumstances in their community, they are free to do so.

After reviewing news reports such as the Fox 6 News Bully Project, discussing this matter with parents of victimized children, and conferring with other concerned legislators, I introduced this bill and believe it is worthy of legislative review and hopefully enacted into law. Incidents of bullying are on the rise in public schools and we have an obligation to offer our assistance to local school districts to address those incidents. On a more personal note, I have spoken with a parent in my district whose daughter was beaten by bullies so bad she suffered two concussions. Another

09/15/2005

constituent shared the unfortunate details of her daughters' bullying experience and how it may have led to the child taking her own life. I do believe both parents discussed these matters with local school officials, but received little to no response. These are events that can no longer be ignored and I trust we share a mutual goal of ensuring such incidents are not repeated.

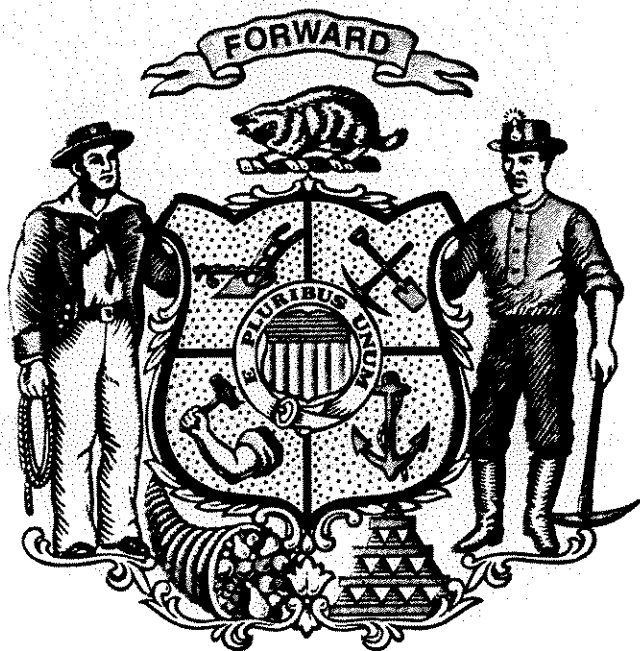
Again, I appreciate the time you have dedicated to share your concerns with me, and I will certainly take them into consideration as the legislation moves forward. For your review, I have attached a draft of the bill, which provides additional details. If you have any specific concerns regarding the language, please feel free to share them with my office. Thank you again for contacting me on this matter.

Sincerely,

Neal Kedzie
State Senator
11th Senate District

NJK: mp

Cc: Senator Mark Miller, 16th Senate District
Representative Gary Hebl, 46th Assembly District
State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster, Department of Public Instruction
Superintendent Tim Culver"





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Testimony of Julaine K. Appling, Executive Director
The Family Research Institute of Wisconsin
Hearing of Senate Committee on Education
Senate Bill 310
Thursday, September 15, 2005, 10:00 a.m.

Thank you, Chairman Olsen and other committee members, for the opportunity to speak to you today about Senate Bill 310, a bill that addresses a serious problem in our schools. My name is Julaine Appling. I am speaking today as the executive director of The Family Research Institute of Wisconsin.

At the point, The Family Research Institute of Wisconsin is opposed to this so-called "bullying bill." Bullying is by anyone's standards wrong. As a former school board member, I know that schools continue to struggle with bullying, on the playgrounds, in the halls, at lunch. This certainly is not a new problem. Quite frankly, I'm not sure that I think it is worse than it ever has been or if we are just much more aware of bullying because the culture is "tolerance" saturated. Regardless, it is the responsibility of schools to provide a safe environment for students—at least as much as humanly possible. I believe that is likely what motivated this bill.

However, we are not convinced that this bill is the answer. In fact, this bill may create some unintended negative consequences.

First, requiring the Department of Public Instruction to develop a model policy and to define bullying and requiring that the definition include "harassment" and "intimidation" is problematic. While the DPI policy is only a "model" for the 426 school districts in Wisconsin, because it is from DPI, many districts will adopt it or use it as a basis for their policies. The definition of bullying is key and as is what is meant by "harassment" and "intimidation." Does verbally or in writing disagreeing with another person on an issue or on personal behavior choice constitute "harassment" or "intimidation"? Unless these terms are very carefully defined, schools could become a place where free speech is virtually silenced if it is seen as expressing an opinion that indicates disapproval of or disagreement with another person and his/her beliefs or choices. As it stands, this bill lacks any safeguards in this area.

It is highly possible that in the process of developing the model policy and when school districts actually adopt a policy, that certain groups will be given special protection while other groups will be unfairly discriminated against.

What is Bullying?

Because the bill does not authorize DPI to issue a rule or procedure, the definition of bullying and "harassment" and "intimidation," and other items within the model policy are not subject to legislative review. That means, DPI will basically be determining what bullying is in Wisconsin schools.

Secondly, any school district I'm familiar with already has rules and policies that cover bullying. Requiring a separate policy seems unnecessary and redundant. Instead of allowing the local school district to handle the issue, the state is bordering on usurping local control.

Lastly, I think about the last thing that public schools need is yet another addition to the ever-growing "special observance days." As of today, there are already some 20 "special observance days" required by state law. These required observance days mean less time to give to the core areas.

It would be our recommendation, if the legislature is intent on doing something at the state level in this area of student behavior, that they direct the Department of Public Instruction to develop a model policy on character development and require every school district to give instruction in that area. Giving students regular, systematic instruction in kindness, sharing, honesty, punctuality, reliability, common courtesy and respect and other character traits would go a long ways in curbing bullying.

We urge the committee members to oppose SB 310 and to give serious consideration to some of the problems that we have presented today.

Thank you for your time.





Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education

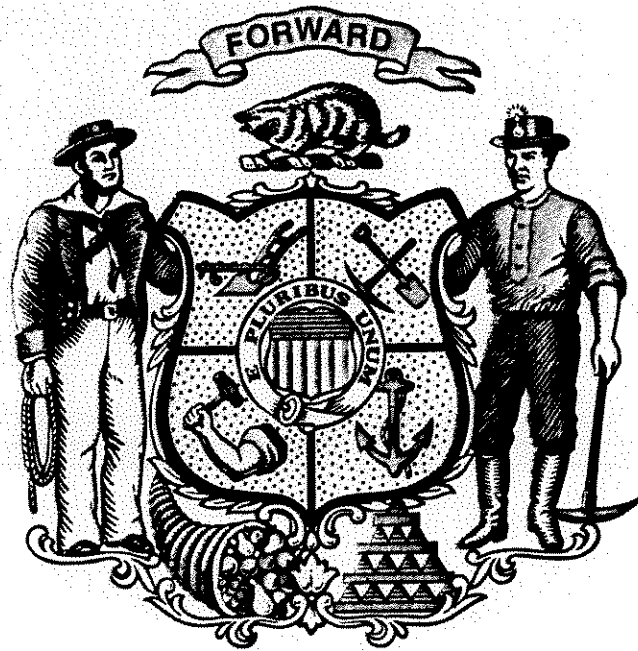
Re: Substitute Amendment to Senate Bill 310

Senate Kedzie has introduced Senate Substitute Amendment 1 (LRB 0202/2) to Senate Bill 310, relating to school policies on bullying. The amendment was drafted to address concerns raised by the Department of Public Instruction.

The substitute amendment does the following:

- Specifies that the model policy must include a procedure for reporting bullying that allows reports to be made confidentially. The original bill specified anonymously.
- Modifies the language of the model policy requirements to replace references of "provide penalties" with "a list of disciplinary alternatives." This allows the model policy to provide a range of disciplinary actions for school districts to incorporate into their policy.
- Under the bill, schools are required to provide a copy of the school policy to all students involved in bullying incidents, as well as their parents. The amendment clarifies that a school only needs to do this if the student was not involved in a previous incident within the current school semester.

Please feel free to contact my office or Senator Kedzie's office if you have any questions regarding this amendment.



SUCCESS DUE TO SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING STRATEGIES

"My son Mike has seen many challenges over the years caused by his ADHD. From a very early age he was hyperactive, irritable and did not interact well with other children. His pre-school staff said that he talked incessantly and did not want to be part of the group.

He started in Special Education in first grade but had to transfer to another school, as those services were not available at our grade school. His peer relations were terrible and his grades were poor due to inability to concentrate, stay on task and complete assignments. This led to a very low self-esteem and at times he just "wanted to be dead".

We found a wonderful child psychiatrist and fine-tuned his medications, which helped immensely with the concentration and impulsivity, however, by that time he was "Marked" by his classmates and either not chosen to be on teams or picked on and harassed.

He has been mainstreamed since Middle School with only a support period consisting of social skills and guided study in Special Education, which continues in high school.

He has been unable to take the bus since 7th grade because of the harassment. He either had a bad day because of what happened on the bus in the morning or did not want to go to school because of what happened on the way home. It was preventing him from being successful in school.

His freshman year was a disaster. While he passed all of the classes, his grades were between D's and B's. There were many incidents of bullying during the year, most of which he reported to the staff. He felt that the perpetrators were not being punished and the bullying continued. At one point during that year I considered hospitalization due to his remarks about killing himself. The last day of his freshman year when I picked him up from school he told me "I successfully completed my freshman year as being the MOST PICKED ON KID IN THE SCHOOL."

I immediately emailed the school superintendent, psychologist, principal and anyone else who had contact with my son and told them that something had to change and if they needed help with anti-bullying material I would be glad to assist them. I also requested that the superintendent stop at our home before the start of the next year to listen to my son's description of the things that happened to him.

She did come and made sure he understood that EVERY time there is an incident he needed to tell an adult or they could not help him. She also purchased some videos and books about bullying for the school staff and had a meeting with the principal and Special Education instructor regarding this issue.

Two weeks into sophomore year some students were teasing him and he went right to his Special Ed teacher. She had the school liaison officer involved and was incredibly firm with the students and outlined severe consequences.

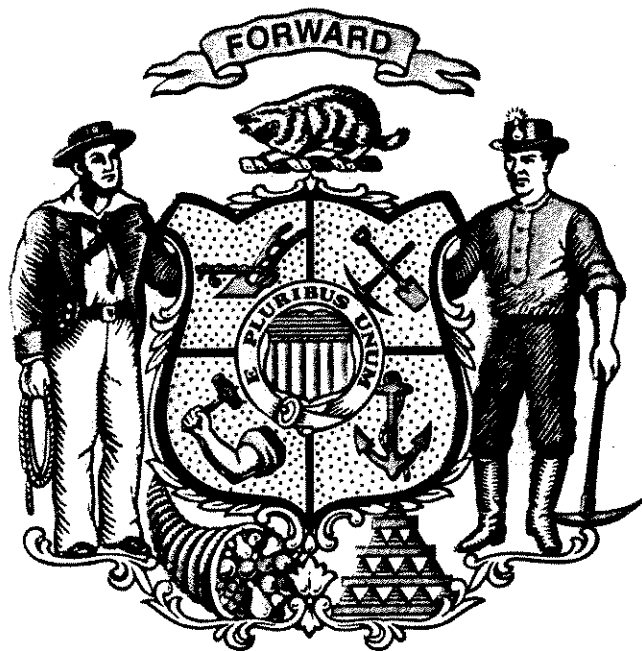
After that, the harassment seemed to stop and gradually he was able to feel better about going to school and picked his grades up. His final report card of sophomore year was all "A's including Algebra which he barely passed in freshman year.

I keep in very close contact with the school personnel. The week before each medication check appointment I email them asking for any changes in his mood, behavior, homework completion, and class participation. The last emails from his teachers read something like this: Mike's been working like a dog in here during guided study...His attitude has been impeccable. He's been a pleasure to be around. Another teacher wrote, "He is studious, insightful, dependable and hard-working. I wouldn't change a thing! ☺" A third teacher wrote, "He is doing really well and seems to be learning quite a bit about personal finance. His behavior etc. has remained constant. He is a pleasure to have in class, asks great questions and never is anything close to a discipline problem. He always has great control of himself. I only regret that I can't have him in class again because he has taken every class that I teach."

I firmly believe that Mike's success is mostly due to the Elimination of the Barrier of bullying! His self-esteem is much improved and he is confident and determined to do the best he can. All children deserve this success and I believe we can change the school environment. It takes hard work from school personnel and a change in attitude. It is not ok to humiliate, make fun of or be cruel in any way shape or form. It is not acceptable because "this is the age that kids get picked on the most", or to believe "teasing is a part of growing up" or that the victim needs to develop thicker skin".

Words can hurt and can negatively impact how children or teenagers perceive themselves and their abilities. And that's a tragedy we should not allow to happen."

Jackie Baldwin
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Teen takes issue with bill on abstinence Bill wants it taught as preferred practice

By Judith Davidoff
September 16, 2005

When Denisse Guadalupe was 14, a friend confided that she was having oral sex with her boyfriend, but not sexual intercourse.

The friend called herself a virgin.

Guadalupe didn't know any better.

One day Guadalupe noticed her friend, then 15, had sores on her lips. Neither girl had a clue what they were, but Guadalupe suggested that her friend see a doctor.

The tests came back positive for herpes.

Guadalupe testified Thursday before the Senate Education Committee against a proposal that would elevate the teaching of abstinence in public school sex education courses.

She said her friend's plight could have been avoided had there been any sex education classes at the schools they attended in Chicago.

"The only thing I knew of abstinence was not to have sex until you got married," Guadalupe said in an interview. "I didn't know what sex really meant."

Now 18 and in high school in Milwaukee, Guadalupe told committee members she feels good about her work with Planned Parenthood, counseling teenagers on comprehensive sex education - which includes information about different expressions of sexuality, birth control and sexually transmitted diseases.

"I'm giving them the opportunity to make healthier decisions in their lives," Guadalupe said.

Sen. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin, introduced a bill earlier this month that would require school districts that offer human growth and development curriculum to "present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred

choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried pupils."

(School districts are not mandated by state law to offer sex education.)

The bill would also require school districts to devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other activity and emphasize that abstinence before marriage is the best way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

During the hearing, committee members and people testifying on both sides of the issue expressed concern that the language in the bill was vague.

Sen. Luther S. Olsen, R-Ripon, committee chairman, wondered how school districts would determine just how much time to devote to abstinence teachings.

And Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, worried that "sexual activity" wasn't defined in the bill.

The main supporters of the bill are the Wisconsin Abstinence Coalition and the Family Research Council.

Cleo Phippen, executive director of the Wisconsin Abstinence Coalition, said she has been working with Lazich on this legislation since her group formed in 1997.

She said the bill was not introduced before now because former state Sen. Chuck Chvala, a Madison Democrat and majority leader, would have opposed it.

Now that Chvala is out and Republicans control both houses of the Legislature, the timing is right, Phippen said.

With a myriad of bills already proposed dealing with abortion, birth control, gay marriage and stem cell research, abstinence is one of the last of the hot-button social issues left for conservative lawmakers to advance in the state.

Phippen said Lazich's bill was necessary because the state law on human growth and development curriculum was poorly worded.

Phippen's colleague, Sally Ladky, said the legislation would merely set a "a standard of behavior that will keep children safe."

But when pressed by Olsen, Phippen and Ladky conceded that they think the bill would force wholesale changes in how sex education is taught in Wisconsin.

Olsen said that gave him pause.

Julaine Appling, executive director of the Family Research Institute of Wisconsin, said she supports the bill as a good first step but stated in written testimony she hoped to soon see "even stronger abstinence-only education language in our state laws."

NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin and Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin testified against the bill.

Kelda Helen Roys, executive director of NARAL, charged that abstinence programs are ineffective and have been for the most part discredited - a charge denied by supporters of the bill.

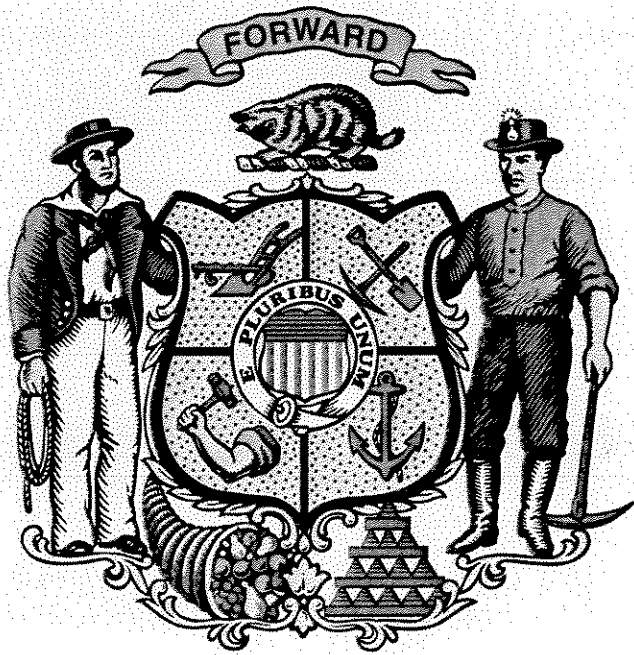
Molly Lancelot, a school-based educator with Planned Parenthood, argued that making abstinence the "preferred choice" of behavior amounts to a value judgment that would likely drive away youth who are already sexually active.

"I'm convinced we're trying to reinvent a wheel we know is flat," Lancelot said.

The committee took no action on the bill.

[Return to story](#)

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[Back](#)

Bullies may meet their match

P-C panel sheds light on how we can fight back

By Kathy Walsh Nufer

Post-Crescent staff writer November 2, 2005

School bullies have been around a long time, and while monitoring bullying and harassment is a challenge, schools handle it pretty well, according to The Post-Crescent's education advisory panel.

Even so, teachers, students, parents and administrators on the panel agree creating a school culture that does not tolerate the behavior also means giving students the tools to stand up for themselves and how adults manage that isn't always easy.

Consider U.S. Bureau of Justice School Crime and Safety statistics on playground safety, which national school safety specialist Robert Kipper quoted recently at a conference of the Wisconsin Juvenile Officers Association. According to the bureau, a child is bullied every seven minutes on the playground, 85 percent of the time with no one intervening.

"Are those statistics a reflection of our community? I don't know," said Sally Radke, Hortonville High School associate principal who attended that conference. She noted that most schools have policies on harassment that include bullying.

Bullying is in the forefront now because parents are finally taking schools to court because of it and they are winning the lawsuits," said Diane Moreau, special education teacher at Sunrise Elementary School in Kimberly.

Another reason, she said, is that "85 percent of school shooters were bullied and they didn't know what to do, like Columbine ... Those two issues have really pushed it to the forefront, as it should be."

"Why are there bullies in schools?" asked Menasha parent Remedios Aguirre- Sullivan. "Did students learn to behave like that at home? On TV? I believe we have to understand the root of the problem before we start looking at a solution. In my eyes, bullying is not a problem to be solved by educators, but by all members of society."

Schools, parents and society cannot turn their heads to such behavior, said Kelli Antoine, principal of Victor Haen Elementary School in Kaukauna. "I think in the past, it was just brushed under the carpet. I don't believe the number of bullies is probably any different than it ever was, but I do believe the awareness and responsibility for aggressively dealing with the behavior has increased."

Defining bullying difficult

Students on the panel said they see bullying behavior in and out of school but many classmates don't recognize it as such.

"I think bullying is a really prevalent issue," said Ann Weyers, Little Chute High School senior. "It happens all the time and I think most high school students feel if bullying isn't physical, like abuse or violence, it's not considered bullying and they just brush it off. Most people don't do something about comments that are made. They don't realize it's the same as hitting somebody."

Because her high school is small and not that diverse, she thinks students tend to ignore racist remarks. "They aren't as willing to stand up for minorities. I've been taught to do something about it."

"In my school, it's a lot of harassment and teasing comments," said Alex Molitor, Appleton West High School senior. "I've seen a couple fights break out. It usually starts with calling each other names and becomes more physical, but teachers always step in right away. I've seen, particularly in high school, there's people who will do bullying and people who are a lot more mature who will say something and stop it and stand up for people — more than people did in middle school."

Middle school was difficult, recalled Weyers. "Kids are vicious and mean to each other in middle school. There are cliques of popular people, and normally they'd ignore us. In middle school, that hurt when people talked in front of you like you weren't even there. That was the issue I faced — being ignored."

Bridget Kramer, religion teacher at Seton Catholic Middle School, has noticed that ignoring and isolating students, such as shutting out someone from sitting at the same cafeteria table, can have a big impact, especially since the "major goal in middle school is to try and fit in."

There also is the growing problem of cyberbullying, she said. "Parent will call to say, 'You would not believe my son was crying because of an instant message.' You've got it right there, printed out. I don't know that kids, especially in middle school, quite get the consequences of that immediate word out there."

Weyers and Molitor said there have been issues with students writing potentially libelous things on Xanga, a major blogging site and online diary. "I don't think people realize what they are writing down," said Molitor. "A lot of harsh things are said on Xanga."

"We need to continue to talk to each other about what are the laws around this, and where are the lines," Radke said.

Spotting bullies difficult

Teachers and administrators know what to do to deal with a black-and-white case of bullying, but getting all sides of a story isn't easy, they said.

"It's very hard as a teacher to catch it if someone would come to me and say so-and-so is bullying me," said Kramer. "Even if I'm standing outside the door, I could be looking at it and

not even recognize the little comments said at the lockers."

"I think it looks so different in girls than boys," said Moreau. "With girls, it's social isolation. For boys, it's issues of fairness in football and soccer."

Neenah High School speech and English teacher Nancy Ernst said she has found that "often with a student with a behavioral disability or emotional disorder, a big part of that is his or her inability to interact with people in a reasonable way. They are socially inept and it usually results in a kind of meanness."

"My frustration is when students won't report it," said Radke. "I understand their reasons for not reporting it, but they can't come in and say this is the 10th time this child has done this to me and I have no record. I need a record."

Various ways to fight bullies

"I believe that elementary schools have a huge responsibility to help students learn appropriate boundaries of behavior when they interact with each other," said Antoine. "Using terms such as bullying and harassment are critical when dealing with students who exhibit these behaviors so they know what they are doing and the consequences for such behavior. Respect is a key component and so is educating children on the merits of diversity."

"A bully is not just somebody who wakes up a bully some morning," said Moreau. "When we see how some parents react with a child, you know why this child talks the way they do. They are a product of their environment."

"We spend a lot of time on bullying, said Madison Middle School Principal Chris VanderHeyden, who also thinks students should seek help. "We tell kids, 'You need to let us do our job, tell us what's going on and get us involved so we can help out. Don't wait until you decide to smack him in the nose. Come and get us before you get to that point so we can intervene. And then it's key for us to intervene.'"

There are repercussions, however. "I have parents complain, 'I want you to do something about it but don't bring up my child's name.' We've ended up doing nothing because parents say, 'No, no we'll take care of it.'"

He and others mentioned programs that deal with teaching respect for others and new initiatives that link upperclassmen and freshmen to ease the younger students' fears about high school.

Ernst said high expectations work, something she has tried with problem students. "My way is to treat them like a prince among men, and with a great deal of respect and really nice manners, and I find they do too."

Radke said adult interaction helps as well, and she and other administrators like to be "out and about at lunch time. "It's a great connection time with kids."

Empowerment the key

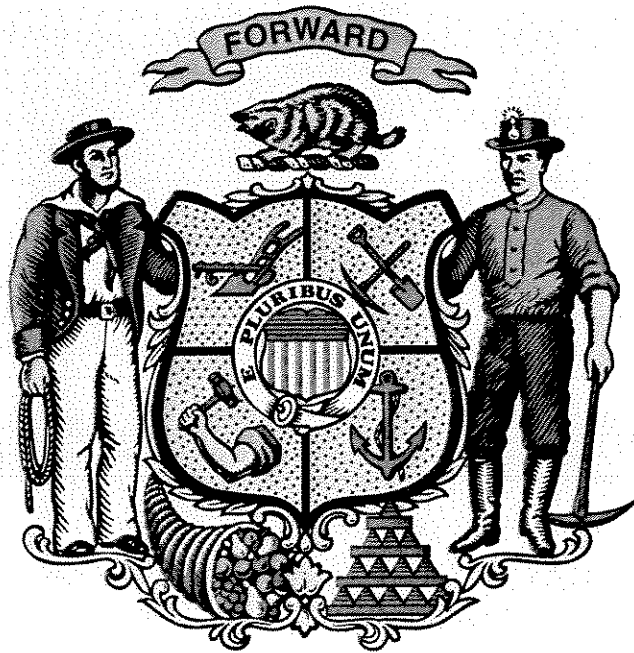
The adults said they wrestle with their responses at times. Should they tell the child or teen to find other friends and stay away from the bullies, or intervene and make a scene?

Sullivan cited the statistic on adult intervention.

"If we understand 'adult intervention' as 'close supervision to children's behavior' and regard having more adult intervention as a solution, I believe we are far from solving the issue as a whole. To me, what children do when they are not under adult supervision is many times more important than what they do when they are in the presence of adults. Do we want students to stop bullying because of fear of the consequences inflicted by adult supervisors, or do we want them to make a good choice between right and wrong when they are unsupervised?"

"The person who usually gets bullied is usually not this strong advocate for themselves," said Moreau. "We're asking kids who are bullied and don't have confidence to begin with to stand up for themselves. So it's kind of a Catch-22."

Building that confidence is so important, said Radke. "By empowering our students, they can say that was inappropriate. Peer to peer means way more than me."



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Legislature tries to bully districts into new policy

Baraboo News Republic Editorial

The state Legislature will consider a bill requiring school districts adopt a policy on bullying defining it, prohibiting students from bullying and providing penalties for bullying. The Legislature is again being asked to substitute law for common sense.

The bill introduced Tuesday by Sen. Neal Kedzie, R-Elkhorn, and Sen. Spencer Coggs, D-Milwaukee, directs the Department of Public Instruction to develop a model school policy on bullying. In addition to defining what bullying is, providing penalties for it and prohibiting bullying, the policy must include procedures for reporting bullying and for investigating reports of it. The bill would give districts the option of implementing the model policy or coming up with one of their own.

Kedzie maintains that one of the major problems facing pupils who are bullied and their parents is that many school districts don't have clear-cut procedures for reporting bullying. Kedzie's bill, which has been referred to the Senate Education Committee, would require districts to notify the students and parents once a year of the policy and the parties involved when an incident of bullying is reported.

Kedzie claims his bill would not require any money on the part of the school district so its not an unfunded mandate. That may be wishful thinking on his part. Someone in the district will have to write the policy or even review the model one and make a presentation to the school board. That will take someone's time which costs money. Plus, the district will have printing and distribution costs associated with contacting parents with the bullying information, and surely the DPI will step in and require someone in the district to keep records of incidents and how they were handled. Again, that will cost money and time.

In addition to those hidden costs, the district will probably bring in a consultant to train teachers in what bullying is and how to spot it. A cadre of consultants sipping from the public trough will develop to ensure that psychobabble on bullying gets inoculated into teachers.

The main problem with the bill is not its cost. It lies with the need for this bill.

Teachers, parents and school administrators have the common sense to know what bullying is. If a child calls another child names, threatens them, teases them, isolates them or gets physical, that's bullying.

Some of what is considered bullying is against the law. Threats and physical assaults are prohibited by law, and teachers can get the backing of law enforcement for that.

A press release from Kedzie describing the bill reports that a recent survey of 600 Wisconsin teachers and counselors showed that half of them "do not believe their school is doing a good job of preventing or stopping bullying." That's shocking. If teachers and counselors don't think their school is doing a good job why aren't they doing something? Instead of turning to the Legislature, teachers and counselors should be working within their own school districts in educating their administrators and school boards on what bullying is and the harm it can cause.

School teachers, administrators and counselors are the caretakers of children when they are not with their parents. Children and parents have a right to expect a safe environment at school, and teachers have an obligation to look into bullying instances whether or not there is a specific policy that prohibits it.

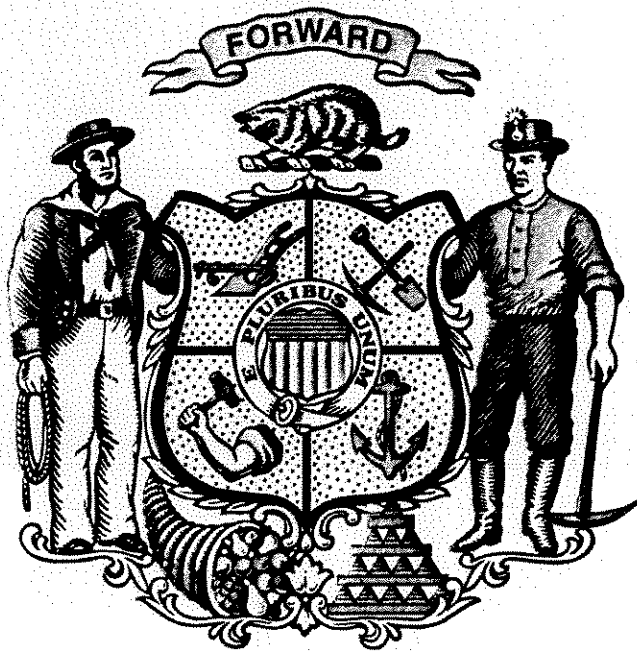
Parents also have a responsibility to teach their children not to be bullies and to discipline them when they do so. Parents should inform their children to tell them or another adult if they are being bullied. That training should start long before a child reaches school age.

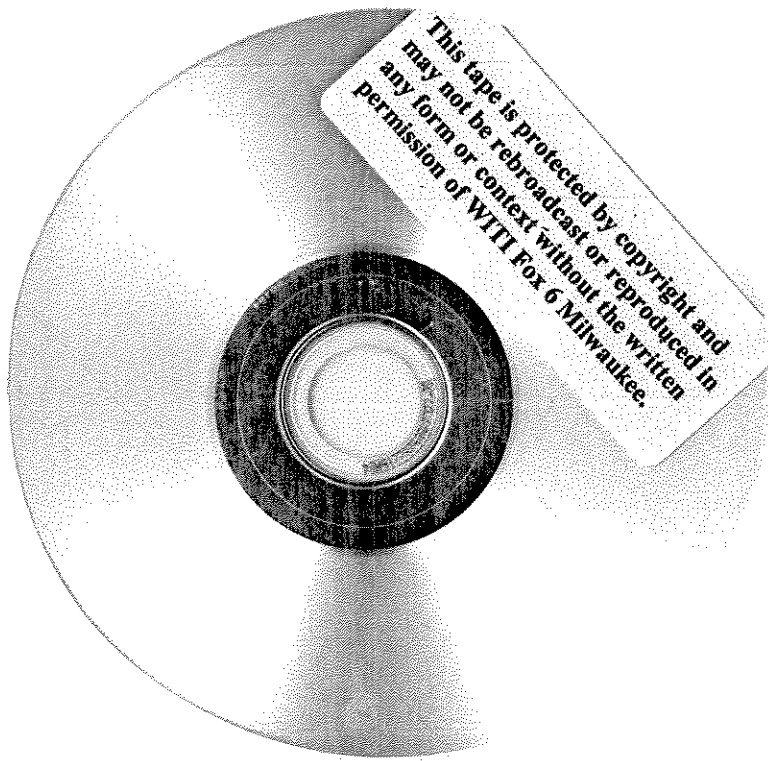
Kedzie doesn't think children know to report bullying. He cites a study which says that 65 percent of those who have been bullied said they did not tell a school official and 43 percent of those said they also did not tell a parent. That

speaks more to a problem of communicating than with bullying per se.

Some parents, and Kedzie too, may be overprotective, and the law should not encourage or require that. Children can't be wrapped in a cocoon and protected from every discouraging word. Part of growing up is learning to take care of yourself.

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