

**Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force**

**Thursday, October 7, 2010
Meeting Minutes**

At 9:15 a.m. the first meeting of the Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force was called to order by Darren Reisberg, the Deputy Superintendent/General Counsel at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). With one exception, all members were present or represented by a designee. A list of Task Force members appears on the final page of the minutes. There were ten members of the public present at the meeting. During public participation, one of these guests shared information about a bullying prevention program that he designed.

Mr. Reisberg welcomed the Task Force members and facilitated introductions. Shannon Sullivan, of the Safe Schools Alliance, welcomed the group to their offices for the first meeting. Mr. Reisberg noted that Learning Point Associates would be staffing and facilitating the Task Force at no cost to the state. He then reviewed the Open Meetings Act requirements, which apply to the Task Force, and will share a link to FAQs about the Act with the members of the Task Force. All agendas and minutes related to the Task Force meetings will be posted at: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/SBPTF/default.htm>. Mr. Reisberg further noted that all Task Force members will need to complete ethics training. He had packets of information available for the members. The certification can be returned to Mr. Reisberg. He pointed out that the on-line ethics training version for state and government workers is not sufficient.

During the introductions, Barbara Shaw, of the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA), noted that she would like to present about upcoming IVPA grant opportunities at the next meeting and gather feedback from the Task Force about the plans for those grants. She also mentioned the recently announced Neighborhood Recovery Initiative, which will fund a comprehensive range of supports for students and residents in 20 communities in Chicago. She looks forward to engaging the Task Force as this new initiative is launched in Illinois. Mr. Reisberg thanked Barbara for the information and encouraged the Task Force members to also inform ISBE of funding priorities as ISBE will be developing their budget for next year soon. ISBE welcomes the collaboration of stakeholders in the budget development process.

Before closing out the introductions, Mr. Reisberg asked the representatives from Carpentersville CUSD 300 and Rantoul School District 137 to describe the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system that is used in their school districts. When naming members to the Task Force, it was a priority of State Superintendent Chris Koch to invite school leaders and teachers who have successfully implemented PBIS. The school district members described PBIS as a systems approach to establish a school climate that is conducive to learning for all students. It is

not a pre-packaged curriculum, but rather a data-driven approach that can be tailored to the needs of each school. Students are explicitly taught what the schoolwide expectations for behavior are and those expectations are continually reinforced. The general design includes three levels. The universal level provides proactive support for all students. The second level, for 10-15% of students, includes more intensive supports and interventions for students who are at-risk for behavioral problems and educational failure. Finally, the tertiary level, for those students with the most complex and chronic needs, involves supports from outside agencies. Parents/guardians are involved throughout the process.

Mr. Reisberg closed out the introductions and then provided the Task Force members with some background about the laws related to bullying prevention in Illinois. The first anti-bullying law was passed in June 2006. It was a bare-boned statute that found that bullying has a negative effect on school climate and is linked to other forms of antisocial behavior. The law defined bullying prevention, but not bullying, and made it optional for school districts to implement bullying prevention policies or programs.

In 2007 the General Assembly strengthened the law by adding a requirement for school districts to develop a bullying prevention policy, but provided no detail about the recommended content for these policies. School districts were further required to communicate the policy to parents and file a copy with ISBE. However, ISBE was not provided with any enforcement authority.

During this time, many other states were moving forward faster than Illinois in the development of statewide bullying prevention laws. Several states included a great deal of detail in their laws about the requirements for school policies and for districts reporting data back to the state. Inspired by the movement in other states, several organizations in Illinois collaborated to encourage the legislature to align the 2007 law with model laws from other states. In the spring of 2010 a robust bill was proposed in the legislative session. Although the bill was modified and is not as strong as ISBE had hoped, the resulting new law, Public Act 096-0952, became effective on June 28, 2010. The law provides a detailed definition of bullying, enumerates classifications of bullying, describes where and when bullying is explicitly prohibited, and charges both public and non-public non-sectarian school districts with developing a bullying prevention policy, updating it every two years, and filing a copy with ISBE. Currently, most districts do not have a great deal of detail in their bullying prevention policies and simply adopt the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) model policies. To strengthen these policies statewide, the Safe Schools Alliance is working with IASB to incorporate bullying prevention into their model policies.

Mr. Reisberg continued his discussion of the context related to the law by noting that ISBE has strong working relationships with stakeholders in the state, but there are certainly areas of tension. For example, because of the current fiscal crisis and the sensitivity of school districts to

increased mandates without increased funding, there was some controversy about the breadth of the state's authority and the responsibility of the district with this law. Brooke Whitted, of the Leslie Shankman School Corporation, asked if there was an existing mechanism in state law that would enable ISBE to intervene in school buildings with toxic climates. Mr. Reisberg responded that there is not such a mechanism and that ISBE does not currently have the resources to support that type of intervention.

Finally, Mr. Reisberg highlighted how Public Act 096-0952 outlines the charge of the Task Force to: explore the causes and consequences of bullying in schools, identify promising practices that reduce incidences of bullying, highlight training and technical assistance opportunities for schools to effectively address bullying, and evaluate the effectiveness of schools' current anti-bullying policies and other bullying prevention programs. The first meeting is designed for Task Force members to get acquainted, place issues on the table, and solicit feedback from the members about topics that should be covered in the next three meetings, which will be more substantive. The second and third meetings will be devoted to the four objectives outlined by the legislature. A draft of the report will be circulated before the final meeting. Comments are welcome during that meeting and minority reports can also be drafted if there is disagreement about recommendations. By March 1, 2011, the Task Force will submit a final report to the Governor and the General Assembly and then the Task Force will be dissolved. Hopefully, Mr. Reisberg remarked, members will continue to be active to move the recommendations of the Task Force forward. Brooke Whitted expressed concern that three 2-hour meetings will not be enough to fulfill the Task Force's obligation. Mr. Reisberg responded that as the members of the Task Force are busy people, the goal will be to hold four meetings, which can be longer than 2 hours. If the Task Force decides that more meetings are necessary, scheduling additional time could be a possibility. Shannon Sullivan noted that the coalition, Prevent School Violence Illinois, was formed to pass the law, but still meets regularly and can support the work of the Task Force between meetings. Mr. Reisberg welcomed the offer, but offered a caveat that the coalition would need to be careful not to convene a majority of the members of the Task Force because this would constitute a Task Force meeting and would need to meet the requirements for public posting under the Open Meetings Act.

At this point, Rob Mayo, the Deputy Director of the National Charter School Resource Center at Learning Point Associates, who will be facilitating the Task Force, asked the Task Force members to share resources that could inform the work of the group. Task Force members recommended that the Task Force explore resources available from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority, the Safe Schools Alliance, and the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention. Brooke Whitted prepared spiral bound books with information that he has gathered, indicating that several of his articles noted how bullying dovetails with school shooters as victims who were bullied have in some cases become school shooters.

Professor Dorothy Espelage has been studying bullying for 17 years and would welcome the opportunity to deliver a presentation for the Task Force. To help the Task Force members review the highest quality of evidence that is currently available, she will share two recent meta-analyses that have been completed. She is also conducting a randomized controlled trial of a bullying prevention program in 32 schools in Illinois. As a result of her expertise in this area, she can provide the members with a sense of what the research says, what is working, and where gaps in the research still exist. She also noted that, despite the recent media attention to cyberbullying, school-based bullying is more prevalent and should be the main focus of the Task Force.

Kim Fornero, of the Illinois Department of Human Services, mentioned that the Illinois Youth Survey, which was administered in 2010, is a rich longitudinal data source that the Task Force can access. The survey includes county and statewide data for students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. She can ask her staff to pull data related to bullying prevention and describe how responses on those questions are correlated with student responses in other sections of the survey. The Task Force can also make recommendations for adding questions to the survey in the future.

Malik Nevels, Shannon Sullivan, Brooke Whitted and Sukari Stone agreed that it would be important to have youth speak to the issue of bullying because they are directly impacted. Anna Rangos added that many students do not report bullying at school because they do not think the administration will act on the report. Thus, it will also be important to examine this aspect of the issue. Julie Justicz, of Health and Disability Advocates, encouraged the Task Force to include youth voices from elementary and secondary school students. She mentioned that the Human Rights Campaign has developed an elementary curriculum that might be helpful for the Task Force to review. Josh Gray agreed that it would be valuable to hear from youth, but also urged the Task Force members to focus on the need for adults in school buildings to take responsibility for developing a school climate in which all students feel safe. Professor Espelage agreed and observed that there needs to be a stronger focus on bullying prevention, classroom management and assessing the school climate in teacher pre-service training programs. Mr. Reisberg responded that ISBE recently updated their rules to ensure that bullying prevention is included in pre-service training. It might be helpful to have ISBE staff present on these new rules and the plan for implementation.

Jen Nielsen, of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), mentioned that ADL is active in anti-bias initiatives which include helping students move from bystander to ally, delivering professional development for teachers, developing sample school policies for cyberbullying, and outlining the legal rights and responsibilities for victims. Mr. Whitted remarked that the focus on the bystander is critical. Programs like KiVa in Finland have found that it is effective to train bystanders to step up to the ally role. He recommended that the Task Force not be distracted by cyberbullying, but instead focus on school-based bullying. Ms. Nielsen acknowledge that school-

based bullying will be important to examine, but urged the Task Force not to discount cyberbullying because she has found that it is important to educate students about what cyberbullying is and how they can confront it.

Other Task Force members shared additional perspectives that the Task Force should consider. Abdi Maya observed that it would be important to examine the impact of language and culture on outreach. As larger percentages of Latinos and African-Americans are victims of bullying, the Task Force should pay particular attention to strategies that are effective both with students and with outreach to parents. Matthew John Rodriguez, of the Illinois Parent Teacher Association, mentioned that he is representing parents' perspective on the Task Force and recognizes the importance of engaging parents. Marc Kiehna, the Regional Superintendent of the Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education, commented that regional superintendents are interested in working with the Task Force on training for bus drivers and new teachers and principals to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in developing a school climate that is safe for all students.

Rob Mayo asked the Task Force members to join four small groups, related to the four objectives outlined in the legislation, and then brainstorm agenda items for future meetings that are related to each of those objectives. In future meetings, the causes and consequences group would like to analyze ignorance and intolerance as root causes, issues related to cultural context, and gaps in the research related to the causes of bullying. The evaluating effectiveness group would like to review bullying prevention policies in the 43 states where those policies currently exist, analyze district policies across the state of Illinois, which can be coded by graduate students from the University of Illinois, and monitor the existing system to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the policies, and that the policies are accessible for parents of different languages, cultures, and literacy levels. The promising practices group would like to review promising practices related to celebrating success (e.g. when a student moves from bystander to ally), diversity training for staff, what works in existing programs, and the youth perspective. The group on the phone would like to review promising practices related to community involvement and examine the existing system of compliance and monitoring. Marc Kiehna would be willing to lead the discussion related to compliance.

The Task Force members decided they would like to hold the remaining three meetings from 3-6 p.m. in the video conference spaces at the ISBE offices in both Chicago and Springfield. Learning Point Associates staff will request members' availability for the next three meetings to be held in early December, mid-January, and early to mid-February. Within the next two weeks, members will also receive the minutes from the first meeting and a draft agenda for the second meeting. Darren Reisberg thanked the members for attending. He adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

**Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force Members**

Representative	Organization	October 7, 2010 meeting
Darren Reisberg	Illinois State Board of Education	present
Barbara Shaw	Illinois Violence Prevention Authority	present
Rocco Claps	Illinois Department of Human Rights	represented by designee
Sarah Migas	Illinois Attorney General	present
Grace Hong Duffin	Illinois Department of Human Services	represented by designee
Shannon Sullivan	Safe Schools Alliance	present
Malik Nevels	African American Coalition	present
Lonnie Nasatir	Anti-Defamation League	represented by designee
Julie Justicz	Health and Disability Advocates	present
Peggy Thurow	Carpentersville CUSD 300	present
Lisa Brennan	Carpentersville CUSD 300	represented by designee
Mike Penicook	Rantoul School District 137	present
Maria McCarthy	Rantoul School District 137	present
Josh Gray	Chicago Public Schools	present
Kelly Keating	East Aurora District 131	present
Stacey Horn	University of Illinois Chicago	absent
Dorothy Espelage	University of Illinois	present
Anna Rangos	Student/ Maine South High School	present
Sukari Stone	Student/ Whitney Young College Prep	present
Marc Kiehna	Regional Superintendent Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education	present
Matthew John Rodriguez	Illinois Parent Teacher Association	present
Brooke Whitted	President, Leslie Shankman School Corporation	present
Susan Goodwin	President, Quincy Human Rights Commission	present