

House Bill 1942 – Preventing, Identifying, Responding to, and Reporting Incidents of Bullying

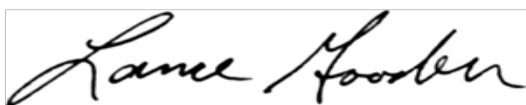
The tragedies caused by bullying have dominated the news headlines. **House Bill 1942**, which goes into effect for the 2012-2013 school year, amends several provisions of the Texas Education Code in order to address this issue. The changes specify that staff development may include training in “preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.” It also allows the transfer of students who have engaged in bullying to another classroom or campus in the district. It also provides that health curriculum will include, “essential knowledge and skills that include evidence-based practices that will effectively address awareness, prevention, identification, self-defense in response to, and resolution of and intervention in bullying and harassment.”

Under this bill, school boards are required to adopt policies, including any necessary procedures, that:

- Prohibit bullying of a student
- Prohibit retaliation against any person, including a victim, witness, or another person, who reports bullying.
- Establish a procedure for providing notice to a parent or guardian of the victim regarding an incident of bullying within a reasonable amount of time.
- Establish the actions a student should take to obtain assistance and intervention in response to bullying.
- Set out the available counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying or who engages in bullying.
- Establish procedures for reporting an incident of bullying.
- Prohibit the imposition of a disciplinary measure on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, and employed reasonable self-defense.

As a graduate of Terrell schools, I am proud of the initiatives the district has taken, in advance of this legislation, to combat bullying on its campuses. “**Stand by Me**” is one of those initiatives. Developed by Dr. Cohen and implemented by Terrell ISD since 2008, the program has had significant success in teaching student bystanders **how** to help the victims of bullying and harassment. Dr. Cohen’s data suggests that, once students are taught how to help, they do -- frequently and enthusiastically! Recent data from the Spring semester of 2011 and Fall semester of 2012, shows that students have accomplished close to 1,400 interventions, i.e. have either helped a student or alerted adults to an incident.

It will continue to take all of us -- parents, kids, neighbors, and community members -- working together to eliminate behavior that has claimed too many lives. Please join with me in supporting our schools in their use of effective, data-based programming that helps us provide a safer environment conducive to learning.



Lance Gooden
Texas State Representative

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