

MARIN COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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MARY JANE BURKE
MARIN COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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November 18, 2016

The Honorable Kelly V. Simmons
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Jay Hamilton-Roth, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Simmons and Mr. Hamilton-Roth:

Enclosed please find a six-month status update from the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) related to the findings and recommendations of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury's report *Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies*. The updates pertain to Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 which required further analysis as stated in the response dated August 10, 2016.

Since August, MCOE has held, promoted or participated in programs focused on bullying prevention and education. These include:

- The Reed Union School District Superintendent presented research and proven methods to prevent and educate the school community about bullying. Materials and resources were shared and are available to the public on the Reed USD website. <http://www.reedschools.org/>
- In response to a student homicide in Novato, a "Newcomers" support program was established in collaboration with the Novato Unified School District and Marin Community Foundation. This effort is designed to promote cultural awareness and help families new to our community/country assimilate and feel welcome in our community.
- On September 29 and 30, Mill Valley Middle School students had an opportunity to view *Love at Second Sight*, a documentary about acceptance and overcoming adversity. The movie is scheduled to be shown in additional schools throughout Marin and nationwide. (see enclosed information)
- On October 21, Marin County schools joined more than 600 schools nationwide for National Know your Classmates Day promoted by Beyond Differences, a local non-profit designed to prevent social isolation and nurture healthy relationships. (see enclosed information)
- On November 18, the 21st annual Peer Summit was held at the College of Marin in partnership with Health Teens Marin. This event is a peer to peer leadership workshop for 7th and 8th grade students to learn about healthy relationships, diversity and inclusion, and teen rights and responsibilities, among other topics.

- We are in receipt of and will distribute a documentary film developed by Lifehouse, a Marin-based non-profit agency dedicated to providing support services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The film, *Being Seen*, is a documentary about the lives, challenges and victories of the people Lifehouse supports. It has been accepted into two film festivals around the country and will be a good companion to any bullying prevention message. (DVD enclosed)
- On December 5-7, a group of teachers from Marin will be participating in a professional development opportunity called "Capturing Kids Hearts" which focuses on positive cultural and behavioral changes within the classroom. (see enclosed flyer)
- Also enclosed is a listing of professional development opportunities and workshops that have been held in last few months that relate to the topic of bullying prevention.

Given the detrimental effects of bullying, Marin schools have worked diligently to educate, prevent, and address the issue to ensure that ALL students feel safe and secure at school. To that end, I am proud to report that the *2015-16 California Healthy Kids Survey: Marin County Secondary Main Report* shows progress related to students who experience bullying. The report shows a 3% decline in grades 7 and 9, and a 2% decline in grade 11 compared to the 2013-14 report. In addition, the *2015-16 California Healthy Kids Survey: Marin County Elementary Main Report* shows that 88% of students in grade 5 feel safe at school, and 90% of students feel that they are treated with respect. While the ultimate goal is to have 100% of students feel safe and respected, these numbers are encouraging.

I am confident that we will continue to see positive results in the coming years as a result of our schools' efforts to educate and prevent bullying. Thank you for being our partner in supporting the safety of the students in our schools.

Sincerely,



MARY JANE BURKE
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Enclosures

Response to the 2015-16 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies
Marin County Office of Education
Six Month Follow-Up

- R3:** Each school in the district should adequately publicize its anti-bullying policies and procedures through its website, including a direct link on the website's home page to the information (not simply linking to a lengthy student handbook, but directly to the anti-bullying policy and procedures themselves).

August Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis and we will respond with our findings in December. In the meantime, Marin County Board Policies are currently available on the MarinSchools.org website.

Schools must consider the capabilities of their websites and feasibility for posting a direct link on the home page. Having a direct link on the home page may only serve to get lost in the abundance of information that schools try to post online. Consideration should be given to website organization that is clear and readily available and searchable for all stakeholders.

It is equally important that the information be available in other forms to all students and families, including those who lack access to technology at home. Use of student handbooks and parent handbooks are examples of such alternative ways of providing the information.

Status:

The Marin County Office of Education is in the process of reconstructing its website (www.marinschools.org). As a part of this process, this recommendation will be implemented in order to ensure that anti-bullying policies are readily available.

- R4:** All procedures and forms for filing a bullying complaint, including an anonymous complaint, should be available on the school's website.

August Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis and we will respond with our findings in December. See additional comments in response to R3.

Status:

The Marin County Board of Education has a Board policy in place to address "Hate Motivated Behavior and Bullying Prevention" (Policy 5203). A copy of the policy is enclosed. The policy is accessible on the MCOE website on the Board of Education page under the link "Board Policies."

R5: Each school in the district's website should provide the option to complete and submit bullying complaints online.

August Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis and we will respond with our findings in December. See additional comments in response to R3.

Additionally, submitting the form online may require additional technology support and staff maintenance that may not be available to all districts and could risk confidentiality.

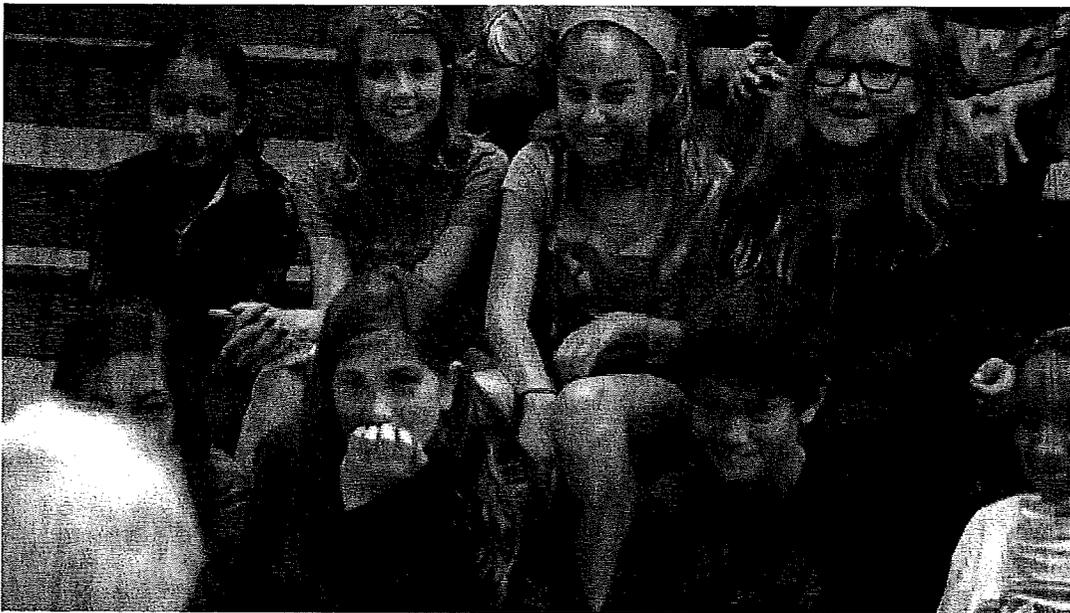
Status: Due to limited staffing, technological capabilities, and concerns about maintaining confidentiality, this recommendation was determined to be unfeasible for the MCOE.

HOME PREMIERES THE VIDEO FROM THE KIDS OUR TEAM WALL OF APPRECIATION
CONTACT

LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT

THE VIDEO

In *Love At Second Sight*, lively middle schoolers are transformed by a performance that challenges and changes their perceptions about appearance and acceptance.



WHY THIS FILM IS IMPORTANT

For people of all ages, feelings about personal appearance shape our self-image and affect how we relate to others. *Love At Second Sight* encourages viewers to take the vital second look that can cut through superficial judgments and establish a deeper sense of what true beauty is.

ABOUT THE VIDEO

With simple honesty and engaging humor, husband and wife David Roche and Marlena Blavin establish a warm, personal connection with students as they share stories from their lives. They confront head-on the issues of appearance and acceptability – concerns that especially affect young people on the verge of puberty.



David encourages everyone to ask in unison ...

“What happened to your face?”

After satisfying their curiosity, he tells stories about his own school days that help the students relate to the experience of feeling different – like the time that 7th grade “cute girl” Patty rudely rejected him during a game of spin the bottle, the embarrassment of showing up at his first boy/girl party in full clown regalia, and what happened when he worked up the courage to ask Marlena for their first kiss (you might be surprised!). David conveys the emotional impact of experiences that brought him joy and pain, while demonstrating empathy for those who reacted to him out of fear or ignorance.

Marlena speaks candidly about hearing David’s voice before she saw his face. She imagined him to be her tall, dark and handsome ideal man. Shocked when she actually saw him, she turned and walked away, but soon followed her heart back to him. Marlena explores her own initial confusion with openness and gentle humor. She models dealing with the judgments of others while not going along with the crowd.

The full impact of the film is enhanced with stunningly beautiful and poignant shots of the reactions of the young people as they change.

The live presentation has won spontaneous standing ovations from students, teachers and parents across the U.S. and Canada. Now it

is time to capture this experience on film so that many others can be similarly inspired to look differently at others – and themselves.

NEXT STEPS

Now that the video and trailer are complete, we are focusing on developing teacher support materials. Several principals and teachers have agreed to work with us to develop the curriculum and teaching materials. And, our friends from the world-renowned Center for Accessible Technology will provide captioning and general accessibility advice.



We will continue to keep you informed of our progress on this website and on our **Facebook page**.

© 2015-2016, David Roche and Marlena Blavin

Website by Intuitive Leaps Creative Services



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[Home](#) | [Menu](#)

Know Your Classmates - <http://www.knowyourclassmates.org>

About Know Your Classmates

The idea to create a curriculum entitled Know Your Classmates grew from the national ING-led Know Your Neighbor: Multifaith Encounters project, which was launched at the White House late last year. Know Your Classmates is an exciting back-to-school initiative brought to you by Beyond Differences -- and free of charge -- for any school across the country to use this school year.

Know Your Classmates is designed to support you and your students, primarily middle schoolers, as they explore issues of self-identity, stereotypes and embracing differences among one another.

With conviction and passion, Beyond Differences believes fears are being recklessly stirred up in the United States among children, in particular, children of multi-faith and multi-ethnic backgrounds.

Our students deserve to acquire the tools they need to combat this fear. They deserve to live in a country that respects their identity, and students should not have to be terrified that they are different or feel as though they somehow do not belong to the United States.

We know you are the teacher who gets it: four lesson plans, one national awareness day, and a million ways for children to joyfully open up and get to know one another.

Bring Know Your Classmates to your school this year. We're so thrilled that over 600 schools participated in Know Your Classmates Day on October 21, 2016! But the campaign to embrace differences is more than a one-day event. We encourage you to plan and host your own Know Your Classmates activity day. Sign up here to receive your free downloadable version of the Know Your Classmates Activity Kit that can be used any time throughout the school year.

About Beyond Differences

Beyond Differences was founded by the parents of Lili Smith who was born with a cranial facial syndrome and was socially isolated during her middle school years. After Lili died at the age of 15 due to medical complications from her syndrome, a group of teens from the local community banded together to bring change to their local schools. They had not realized that they had been leaving Lili out from all the fun social get-togethers. But upon hearing about Lili's feelings of being left out, they were determined to never let anyone feel that way again!

Beyond Difference's core principle is to inspire and empower students to end social isolation in middle school through online and campus programs. We work directly with students – with the support of their teachers and administrators – because they are the real activists who can ensure acceptance and inclusion of one another. We are passionately focused on supporting youth in this process of making their middle schools more socially inclusive and less socially isolating.

We are thrilled that you are joining Beyond Differences in this mission. Thank you!

Latest Updates



Healthy Teens
Marin Presents

**The
Marin
County
21st Annual
Peer
Summit**



PEER SUMMIT XXI

Friday, November 18, 2016

College of Marin, Kentfield

8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**7th and 8th grade students are
invited to:**

- ⊙ An inspirational peer-to-peer leadership workshop designed by youth and adults working together.
- ⊙ Fun, interactive and educational workshops including (but not limited to):
 - ⊙ Nutrition
 - ⊙ Healthy Relationships
 - ⊙ Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco Use Prevention
 - ⊙ Teen Legal Rights & Responsibilities
 - ⊙ Diversity and Inclusion
- ⊙ All workshops led by youth & community agencies.
- ⊙ A chance to meet with other middle school students and receive great resources to share with their classmates.

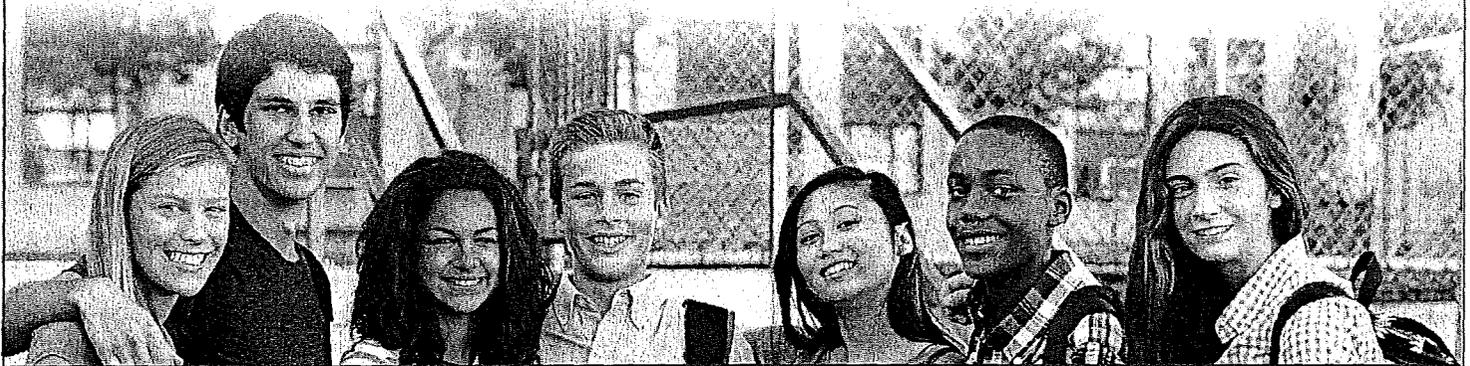
Delicious Lunch provided!

Registration forms will be sent to
schools in October.

PEER SUMMIT XXI



Capturing Kids' Hearts® | 1



"If you have a child's heart . . . you have their mind." - Flip Flippen

Capturing Kids' Hearts 1 Overview

Transforming Classrooms Into High-Achieving Centers Of Learning

***Capturing Kids' Hearts 1* has already dramatically elevated the academic and behavioral standards for millions of students in thousands of classrooms.**

Teachers face a formidable challenge: they must raise the bar on student performance, all the while competing against social, environmental, and outside pressures as never before. While researchers and district personnel work to determine the most effective curricula, teachers struggle to manage classrooms.

Teachers can't always control what comes into their classrooms, but *Capturing Kids' Hearts 1* shows them how to create high-achieving centers of learning by strengthening students' connectedness to others through enhancing healthy bonds with their teachers and establishing collaborative agreements of acceptable behavior.

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a process that is working in thousands of classrooms across the country to provide the strategy and training for teachers and administrators to achieve success in today's classrooms.

Give us a teacher who's passionate about their subject, a teacher who cares for the welfare and success of their students, and we'll give that teacher the tools they need to engage and challenge students, and raise them to a higher level of performance.

Participant Outcomes:

Our research-based processes improve the five key indicators of school performance: fewer discipline referrals, improved attendance, higher student achievement, lower dropout rates, and higher teacher satisfaction.

The widespread impact of *Capturing Kids' Hearts* reads like a wish list for school administrators. Schools that implement our processes report:

- Strengthened student connectedness to others by enhancing healthy bonds with teachers.
- Consistent rules of conduct, with reduced disciplinary escalations and referrals.
- Dramatic reduction in truancy and dropouts.
- Reduced negative behaviors like isolation, violence, early sexuality, and substance use.
- Significant improvement in student academic performance.
- District-wide improvements in test scores.
- Higher rate of job satisfaction among teachers.
- Increased teacher retention and improvement in teacher recruiting.

When school administrators provide ongoing training for teachers in *Capturing Kids' Hearts 1*, the process infuses the entire school with a sense of loyalty and enthusiasm for learning.

Approach:

Capturing Kids' Hearts 1 is an immersive, participatory experience. Teachers, staff, and administrators learn and practice skills they will use and model in their classrooms, schools, and districts, including:

- How to build meaningful, productive relationships with every student and every colleague.
- How to use the *EXCEL Model™* of teaching to create a safe, effective environment for learning.
- How to develop self-managing, high-performing classrooms using team-building skills and a Social Contract.
- High payoff techniques for dealing with conflict, negative behavior, and disrespect issues.

Capturing Kids' Hearts 1 is the beginning of a transformational, multi-year process for teachers and administrators at the campus or district level.

Get Started Today: 800-316-4311



Capturing Kids' Hearts® | 1



Key Facts About Capturing Kids' Hearts 1

Who:

- For all faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Trainings can accommodate up to 50 people per group.

When:

- Training occurs over two consecutive days, with an hour for lunch each day.
- Schedule

Day Model:

Days 1 & 2: 8:00am - 5:00pm

Retreat Model:

Day 1: 9:00am - 6:00 pm

Day 2: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Where:

- Open Enrollment: Flippen Group hosts sessions throughout the year at locations nationwide.
- Client Booked: Your organization can schedule private bookings and is responsible for providing a location conducive to adult learning.

GETTING STARTED TODAY:

For more information or to schedule this event, please call Flippen Group at 800-316-4311.

Flippen Group

Flippen Group was founded in 1990 by internationally known educator, *New York Times* best-selling author, psychotherapist, executive coach, and leadership expert, Flip Flippen. We are one of the largest educator training companies and fastest-growing leadership development organizations in North America, with offices throughout the United States and in India.

Each year thousands of educators and business leaders attend Flippen Group "hands-on" trainings and hundreds of thousands of people are challenged and inspired by our keynote presentations. On any given school day, Flippen education curricula and processes touch the lives of more than one million students in districts nationwide.

Clients include Fortune 100 companies, small businesses, professional athletes, major sports franchises, government agencies, non-profit groups, colleges, and school districts of every size and description.

Flippen Group employs professionals across the nation. All Flippen executive coaches and training personnel come from backgrounds that enhance the delivery and value of the training experience.

- The education training staff are former educators, administrators, and teachers who implemented our processes firsthand in their own classroom or campus settings. The team understands the importance of a quality education, the value of a positive learning environment, and the significance of preparing the next generation for the world of work.
- Our processes and trainings create a positive working environment and build cohesive team dynamics, resulting in increased productivity and retention.

Flippen Group has been highlighted on both local and national media outlets, including *The Today Show*, the *Super Bowl Pre-Game Show*, and *Speed Channel's 24/7*, among others.

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**Marin County Superintendent of Schools
Professional Development Opportunities
October - January**

Cultural Proficiency – October 4, 2016

The Cultural Proficiency Trainer of Trainers will focus on culturally responsive practice through Critical Race Theory and Practice, Using Data to Inform Practice, Equity Learning Walks and Culturally Proficient Action Plans. Dr. Nancy Dome earned her doctorate from Alliant University, an M.A. in Education, specializing in Curriculum and Instruction from the U.S. International University-Europe, Bushey, England and a B.A., Psychology from the U.S. International University-San Diego.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training – October 13, 2016

All supervisory employees must receive two hours of sexual harassment training. This training must be provided to supervisory employees every other year and/or for new supervisors.

Marin County School/Law Enforcement Partnership Meeting – October 19, 2016

Presentations at this meeting will include a review of the August 30th Town Hall meeting addressing youth substance abuse; and an update from the California Highway Patrol on recent suicide trends.

Legal Update from Northern California American Civil Liberties Union – October 26, 2016

A presentation co-hosted by the Marin County Office of Education and the Northern California American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). This annual update provides educators with information regarding laws and requirements intended to support student engagement including transgender student rights in schools, student privacy rights, discussing police/race issues with young people and the role of police in schools.

Family Life for 5th Grade Teachers – January 13, 2017

This workshop will address current biological/scientific education information, philosophy of family life education, family/cultural values, ground rules, growth and development.

Supporting Marin's Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students – January 23, 2017

A workshop co-hosted by the Marin County Office of Education and Marin Youth Leadership Institute which will provide an opportunity for school administrators, teachers, and school board members to hear from local experts and colleagues about best practices and lessons learned serving Marin's transgender students.

5000 STUDENTS

5200 STUDENT WELFARE

5203 HATE-MOTIVATED BEHAVIOR AND BULLYING PREVENTION

The Marin County Board of Education (Board) and the Marin County Superintendent of Schools (Superintendent) affirm the right of all students, staff, parents and volunteers to be free from abusive statements and any activities which degrade the unique qualities of an individual such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, heritage, sexual orientation, physical/mental attributes, gender, religious beliefs and practices. Verbal or physical attacks will not be tolerated.

The Board and the Superintendent recognize that threats, physical assaults and inflammatory statements jeopardize the safety and well-being of all students and staff. The Board and the Superintendent will take reasonable steps to ensure that all students, parents and staff will be treated with fairness and justice.

The Board and the Superintendent will make reasonable efforts to provide a safe environment enabling students to realize their full academic potential and to develop an understanding and appreciation of society's diversity. Programs to enhance self-esteem, raise awareness and sensitivity and foster respect for all individuals shall be developed and implemented in all appropriate programs.

The Board and Superintendent believe that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The County Office, its schools, students, parents/guardians and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

The Board and Superintendent will not tolerate bullying or any behavior that infringes on the safety or well-being of students, staff, or any other persons within the County Office's jurisdiction. Bullying is defined as aggressive or unwanted and unwelcome behavior by an individual or groups of individuals, who ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate another. Typically, the behavior is repeated over time and includes the use of harmful words and/or acts.

Bullying behaviors may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Verbal: Hurtful name-calling, teasing, gossiping, making threats, making slurs or epithets, making rude noises, or spreading harmful rumors.
- Nonverbal: Posturing, making gang signs, leering, staring, stalking, destroying property, insulting or threatening notes, using graffiti or graphic images, or exhibiting inappropriate and/or threatening gestures or actions.
- Physical: Hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, poking, kicking, tripping, strangling, hair pulling, fighting, beating, "pantsing", pinching, slapping, biting, spitting, or destroying property.
- Emotional (Psychological): Rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, intimidating, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulating friendships, isolating, shunning, ostracizing, using peer pressure, or rating or ranking personal characteristics.

- **Cyber Bullying:** Transmission of communications, posting of harassing messages, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the Internet, social networking sites, or other digital technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Student or employee behavior contrary to this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

Reporting

The Board and Superintendent expect students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the school principal or designee. All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of bullying or harassing behavior, they are expected to immediately intervene, call for assistance, and report such incidents. Each complaint of bullying must be promptly investigated.

This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. Prompt and reasonable investigation of the alleged acts is expected.

Students are expected to report all incidents of bullying, teasing, or other verbal or physical abuse. Any student who feels she/he is a victim of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, or staff person. If a student and/or parent believes that their report has not been remedied, she/he may file a complaint in accordance with the Superintendent's Uniform Complaint policy and procedures. Students are to be informed annually of the process by which they may make a report of bullying or harassment.

To ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, the Board and Superintendent will provide staff development training in bullying prevention and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build each school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment. Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a student for filing a bullying complaint or assisting in a bullying investigation or proceeding is prohibited. Students who knowingly file false bullying or harassment complaints or give false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by measures up to and including suspension and expulsion, as shall any student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy.