

**HOUSE BILL No. 2257**

By Committee on K-12 Education Budget

2-12

1 AN ACT concerning school districts; relating to bullying; requiring  
2 adoption of policies prohibiting and preventing bullying; amending  
3 K.S.A. 72-6147 and repealing the existing section.

4  
5 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

6 New Section 1. (a) The board of education of each school district  
7 shall adopt a policy to prohibit bullying either by any student, staff  
8 member or parent towards a student or by a student, staff member or  
9 parent towards a staff member on or while utilizing school property, in a  
10 school vehicle or at a school-sponsored activity or event. Such policy  
11 shall, at a minimum, incorporate the model policy promulgated by the state  
12 board of education pursuant to section 7, and amendments thereto, and  
13 shall:

14 (1) Prohibit bullying of all students, as specified and defined in  
15 K.S.A. 72-6147, and amendments thereto, and sections 1 through 8, and  
16 amendments thereto;

17 (2) designate one person in the school district as the primary contact  
18 regarding the bullying policy and procedures. The primary contact person  
19 shall receive copies of all formal and informal complaints, have  
20 responsibility for assuring the implementation of the policy and procedures  
21 and serve as the primary contact on the policy and procedures between the  
22 school district and the state board of education;

23 (3) require staff members and trained volunteers who witness  
24 incidents of bullying to promptly report such information to the designated  
25 school administrator, who shall be the principal, or the principal's  
26 designee, for the school where such incident occurred or where such  
27 individual is assigned and to the school district primary contact person;

28 (4) provide a procedure for prompt investigation of complaints of  
29 bullying, identifying the designated school administrator as the person  
30 responsible for such investigations;

31 (5) delineate the range of ways in which a school may respond once  
32 an incident of bullying is identified, including a range of age-appropriate  
33 consequences that may attach to the prohibited bullying;

34 (6) prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an  
35 act of bullying and describe appropriate remedial action for any such  
36 person;

1 (7) allow for anonymous reporting while clarifying that no responsive  
2 action, including any age-appropriate consequences, may be undertaken  
3 solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

4 (8) include a statement of how the policy is to be publicized,  
5 including that the school district's policy shall appear:

6 (A) In new employee training materials;

7 (B) in any publication of the school district that sets forth the  
8 comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools  
9 within the school district;

10 (C) in any student handbook;

11 (D) on the school district's website, with a link prominently posted on  
12 the homepage of such website; and

13 (E) in an annual publication distributed to parents who have children  
14 enrolled in a school operated by the school district; and

15 (9) describe a process by which data on incidents of bullying shall be  
16 collected, reported and analyzed at least on an annual basis.

17 (b) The board of education of each school district may adopt  
18 additional policies relating to bullying pursuant to K.S.A. 72-1138(e), and  
19 amendments thereto.

20 (c) The board of education of each school district shall adopt and  
21 implement a plan to address bullying in accordance with the policy  
22 adopted pursuant to this section. Such plan shall be submitted to the  
23 department of education and shall be kept on file with the department.

24 New Sec. 2. (a) All allegations of bullying shall be reported to the  
25 designated school administrator, either orally or in writing. Any student,  
26 parent or staff member may file a report. If a report contains incomplete  
27 information, the designated school administrator shall take reasonable  
28 measures to contact the individuals involved to determine whether an  
29 investigation should be pursued.

30 (b) Upon receiving a complaint of bullying the designated school  
31 administrator shall:

32 (1) Promptly and thoroughly investigate the alleged incident;

33 (2) take immediate steps, at the designated school administrator's  
34 discretion, to protect any students or staff members involved in the alleged  
35 incident pending completion of the investigation;

36 (3) in accordance with the provisions of section 3, and amendments  
37 thereto, provide notification to the parents of all students involved in an  
38 alleged incident;

39 (4) maintain a written record, which may be kept in electronic format,  
40 of the complaint, any investigation and any intervention or disciplinary  
41 actions taken;

42 (5) take proper disciplinary action immediately following the  
43 conclusion of the investigation; and

1 (6) issue a report in a timely manner regarding the incident,  
2 investigation and any disciplinary measures taken to all students, parents  
3 or staff members involved in the alleged incident, while maintaining the  
4 privacy and safety of the students.

5 (c) Reports of bullying may be filed anonymously. However,  
6 disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report.  
7 Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure,  
8 timeliness and vigor as other reports, and disciplinary action can occur  
9 based on the results of an investigation.

10 (d) Any student who knowingly and willfully makes a false report of  
11 bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

12 (e) A designated school administrator shall use the procedure  
13 specified in this section to investigate reports of retaliation or threats of  
14 retaliation that are meant to intimidate the victim of the bullying incident,  
15 or towards any person investigating such incident.

16 (f) Incidents of bullying that involve criminal activity shall be  
17 reported to law enforcement in accordance with K.S.A. 72-6141 et seq.,  
18 and amendments thereto.

19 (g) Any person who makes a report pursuant to this section may  
20 request that the school district conduct an independent review if such  
21 person:

22 (1) Believes that the designated school administrator did not correctly  
23 analyze the complaint and failed to conduct an investigation of the  
24 incident, because the designated school administrator believed the alleged  
25 conduct did not constitute bullying;

26 (2) is dissatisfied with the final determination of the designated  
27 school administrator following an investigation; or

28 (3) believes that although a final determination was made that  
29 bullying occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the  
30 problem.

31 Any such request shall be made in writing to the superintendent of the  
32 school district. Upon receipt of such request, the superintendent shall  
33 promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person, and the  
34 designated school administrator who received the initial report and any  
35 other staff members shall cooperate with the independent review such that  
36 the review may proceed expeditiously. The independent review shall  
37 consist of an interview of the person who made the initial report and any  
38 relevant staff members and a review of the written materials from the  
39 designated school administrator's investigation.

40 New Sec. 3. No educational or other personal data of the alleged  
41 perpetrator shall be disclosed. In certain circumstances, disclosure of the  
42 basis for which a student is bullied may result in additional negative  
43 consequences to the student's health and well-being. Prior to notification of

1 any parent regarding any incident of bullying, the designated school  
2 administrator shall consider the issue of notification the same as any other  
3 educationally-relevant decision, which includes considering the health,  
4 well-being and safety of any students involved in the incident.

5 New Sec. 4. Disciplinary actions for bullying may include, but are  
6 not limited to: Warnings; counseling; loss of opportunity to participate in  
7 extracurricular activities, school social events or graduation exercises; loss  
8 of school bus transportation; community service; in-school suspension;  
9 short term suspension; or transfer to another school. The specific  
10 consequences shall be consistent, reasonable, fair, age-appropriate and  
11 match the severity of the incident. A school district shall promote  
12 progressive discipline and intervention as opposed to the implementation  
13 of "zero tolerance" policies.

14 New Sec. 5. The board of education of each school district shall  
15 implement ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff  
16 members to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such  
17 professional development shall include, but not be limited to: (a)  
18 Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (b)  
19 developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective  
20 interventions to stop bullying incidents; (c) information regarding the  
21 complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and  
22 among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; (d) research  
23 findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of  
24 students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the  
25 school environment; (e) information on the incidence and nature of  
26 cyberbullying; and (f) internet safety issues related to cyberbullying. The  
27 board may identify and offer information on alternative methods for  
28 fulfilling the professional development requirements of this section.

29 New Sec. 6. Each school operated by a school district shall present, in  
30 age-appropriate language, the school district's bullying policy as part of  
31 any orientation program conducted for students at the beginning of each  
32 academic term. Such presentation shall include instruction on: How to  
33 prevent bullying; the process for making a report; the process of  
34 investigating reports; and the potential consequences that may result from  
35 an investigation.

36 New Sec. 7. (a) In order to assist school districts in developing  
37 policies for the prevention of bullying, the state board of education shall  
38 develop and maintain a model policy that is applicable to grades  
39 kindergarten and one through 12, and that contains definitions of bullying  
40 that are consistent with K.S.A. 72-6147, and amendments thereto.

41 (b) The state board shall develop appropriate procedures for:

42 (1) Investigating violations of sections 1 through 8, and amendments  
43 thereto;

1 (2) the reporting of and responding to failures in adopting and  
2 implementing bullying policies and procedures;

3 (3) the reporting of incidents of bullying by school districts; and

4 (4) publication of statewide statistics concerning bullying.

5 (c) The state board shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to  
6 implement the provisions of K.S.A. 72-6147, and amendments thereto, and  
7 sections 1 through 8, and amendments thereto.

8 New Sec. 8. Nothing in K.S.A. 72-6147, and amendments thereto,  
9 and sections 1 through 7, and amendments thereto, shall be construed to  
10 limit or supersede, or in any manner affect or diminish the requirements of  
11 compliance by a staff member with the provisions of K.S.A. 2018 Supp.  
12 38-2223 or 38-2226, and amendments thereto.

13 Sec. 9. K.S.A. 72-6147 is hereby amended to read as follows: 72-  
14 6147. ~~(a)~~—As used in this section *and sections 1 through 8, and*  
15 *amendments thereto*:

16 ~~(A)~~(a) "Bullying" means: ~~(A)~~(1) Any intentional gesture or any  
17 intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act or threat either by any  
18 student, staff member or parent towards a student or by any student, staff  
19 member or parent towards a staff member that is sufficiently severe,  
20 persistent or pervasive that such gesture, act or threat creates an  
21 intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment that a  
22 reasonable person, under the circumstances, knows or should know will  
23 have the effect of:

24 ~~(i)~~(A) Harming a student or staff member, whether physically or  
25 mentally;

26 ~~(ii)~~(B) damaging a student's or staff member's property;

27 ~~(iii)~~(C) placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm  
28 to the student or staff member; or

29 ~~(iv)~~(D) placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of  
30 damage to the student's or staff member's property;

31 ~~(B)~~(2) cyberbullying; or

32 ~~(C)~~(3) any other form of intimidation or harassment prohibited by the  
33 board of education of the school district in policies concerning bullying  
34 adopted pursuant to this section or ~~subsection (e)~~ of K.S.A. 72-1138(e),  
35 and amendments thereto.

36 ~~(2)~~(b) "Cyberbullying" means bullying by use of any electronic  
37 communication device through means including, but not limited to, e-mail,  
38 instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers, online  
39 games and websites.

40 ~~(3)~~(c) "Parent" includes a guardian, custodian or other person with  
41 authority to act on behalf of the child.

42 ~~(4)~~(d) "School district" or "district" means any unified school district  
43 organized and operating under the laws of this state.

1       ~~(5)(e)~~ "School vehicle" means any school bus, school van, other  
2 school vehicle and private vehicle used to transport students or staff  
3 members to and from school or any school-sponsored activity or event.

4       ~~(6)(f)~~ "Staff member" means any person employed by a school  
5 district.

6       ~~(b)~~ The board of education of each school district shall adopt a policy  
7 to prohibit bullying either by any student, staff member or parent towards  
8 a student or by a student, staff member or parent towards a staff member  
9 on or while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle or at a school-  
10 sponsored activity or event.

11       ~~(c)~~ The board of education of each school district shall adopt and  
12 implement a plan to address bullying either by any student, staff member  
13 or parent towards a student or by a student, staff member or parent towards  
14 a staff member on school property, in a school vehicle or at a school-  
15 sponsored activity or event. Such plan shall include provisions for the  
16 training and education for staff members and students.

17       ~~(d)~~ The board of education of each school district may adopt  
18 additional policies relating to bullying pursuant to subsection (c) of K.S.A.  
19 72-1138, and amendments thereto.

20       ~~(e)~~ Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or supersede or  
21 in any manner affect or diminish the requirements of compliance by a staff  
22 member with the provisions of K.S.A. 2018 Supp. 38-2223 or 38-2226,  
23 and amendments thereto.

24       Sec. 10. K.S.A. 72-6147 is hereby repealed.

25       Sec. 11. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its  
26 publication in the statute book.