



# Cyber Bullying: Keeping Maryland at the Forefront of Bullying Prevention

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## Executive Summary

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While Maryland instated a highly regarded comprehensive bullying policy in 2009, it has failed to address the growing problem of cyber bullying in today's youth.

Although cyber bullying is severely underreported due to its covert nature, statistics show that **33 percent of teens have been cyber bullied**, and some reports state as high as **90 percent** of students have become victims.<sup>1</sup> Because 786,555 Marylanders are between the ages of 10 and 19 years old, if the statistic of 33 percent holds true for Maryland, **259,563 Maryland youth have been victims to cyber bullying**. Youth suicides across the country, from Massachusetts to Missouri, have been attributed to cyber bullying. Although Maryland's House Bill 199 includes electronic harassment as a facet of bullying not tolerated by the state, a comprehensive and detailed definition, jurisdiction and preventative programs have not been implemented to proactively protect Maryland's students from the vicious, cyber world. It is recommended that an amendment accompany House Bill 199 to identify and clarify any ambiguities currently existing in House Bill 199 in terms of cyber bullying.

A comprehensive definition must be applied and enforced to eliminate a double standard between districts. Second, jurisdiction of the school administration must be clarified to deal with cyber bullying which occurs off school grounds and on weekends.<sup>2</sup> Third, the state, in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, must mandate a policy that extends statewide, joining the other 42 states in the nation who have mandated state wide anti-bullying policies.<sup>3</sup>

Massachusetts' Senate Bill 261, implemented following the suicide of a 15-year-old girl who was a victim of severe cyber bullying, developed standards that increase the scope of jurisdiction as well as detail what behavior is and is not to be tolerated. The specificity of Senate Bill 261

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<sup>1</sup> Aftab, Parry. "Statistics and a Snapshot of Cyberbullying Trends." *Parry Aftab The Privacy Lawyer*. Web. 21 July 2010. <<http://aftab.com/index.php?page=cyberbullying-statistics>>.

<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, Jan. "Online Bullies Pull Schools Into the Fray." *The New York Times*. 27 June 2010. Web. 1 July 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/style/28bully.html?ref=bullies>>.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, Jan. "Online Bullies Pull Schools Into the Fray." *The New York Times*. 27 June 2010. Web. 1 July 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/style/28bully.html?ref=bullies>>.



gives clarity to jurisdiction of the school administration and alleviates ambiguities in terms of regulating cyber bullying.

In addition to regulation needed to combat cyber bullying, it is recommended that a program be chosen by districts to educate employees and students of the importance of social emotional learning and the standards to which all students will be held. These programs have been implemented statewide in Illinois, covering 879 districts since 2007.<sup>4</sup>

With the successful implementation of this policy, House Bill 199 will be able to protect communities of youth not only from the “real” world but from the cyber world as well.

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<sup>4</sup> Welcome to CASEL | Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. 2010. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.casel.org/>>.



## Introduction

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Maryland has been at the forefront of anti-bullying policy since 2008, when the legislature passed House Bill 199. The bill outlined a plan of action for schools and Boards of Education to take to prevent bullying and address offenders. Within this complex piece of legislation, however, the phenomenon known as cyber bullying was never defined nor addressed, leaving Maryland's students at risk for the devastating effects of this form of bullying. The effects of this harassment could be mitigated through a more clearly defined policy on the state and school levels, as well as the additional use of cost-effective, proven bullying education and mentoring programs, in the most at risk school districts. Maryland must take a pre-emptive move and stop cyber bullying before the trend grows to an uncontrollable level.

One study shows that 33 percent of teens have been the victim of cyber bullying.<sup>5</sup> Cyber bullying is a relatively new problem that has arisen out of the increased use of technology throughout society. In July of 2010, it was reported that 73 percent of teens were using social networking sites. In addition, statistics from 2008, found that 93 percent of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 were using the Internet, the highest percentage of any age group in America.<sup>6</sup> With teens constantly communicating via cyberspace, the harassment traditionally visible in the classroom is now able to circulate 24 hours a day completely unbeknownst to parents and educators. As many cyber related problems have been addressed at the state level, such as driving while operating a cell phone and the electronic transfer of child pornography, cyber bullying is a problem that Maryland has not properly addressed. Anonymity, the first amendment, adolescent cell phone ownership, and the community of social networking sites, operating with little to no adult supervision, come together to create a problematic environment for adults. With the lack of a clear definition and policy for cyber bullying, educators and parents are often lost when it comes to intervening in cyber bullying incidents. Further, the necessary

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<sup>5</sup> "Cyber bullying-Damage in a Digital Age." *Common Sense Media* July.2010 (2010): 10. *Common Sense Media*. Web. <commonsense.org>.

<sup>6</sup> Jones, Sydney, and Susannah Fox. "Generations Online in 2009." *Pew Internet & American Life Project* (2009). *Pew Research Center*. 28 Jan. 2009. Web. 15 July 2010. <<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1093/generations-online>>.



initiatives are not in place to prevent the underlying, psychological causes from maturing into full-blown cyber bullying.

Maryland's current anti-bullying policy is not capable of protecting its students from those who seek to harass and harm utilizing the cyber world. It is recommended that an amendment accompany House Bill 199 to directly address cyber bullying: clearly defining cyber bullying, not solely electronic harassment, redefining school's jurisdiction and mandating cyber bullying provisions in school wide policies. Secondly, the State should implement preventative social-emotional learning programs in the most at-risk schools in Maryland.



## Problem Definition

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School administrators are now facing two very different bullying problems: traditional face-to-face bullying and cyber bullying. As adolescents' use of electronics increases, the state of Maryland must take a serious look at all of the possible consequences, including cyber bullying. This form of bullying comes with its own problematic characteristics. For instance, the demographics of those students most likely to take part and feel the effects of cyber bullying are polarized on either end of the socio-economic spectrum. As current policy stands, Maryland students, schools, and courts do not have the resources necessary to properly address this issue with regards to their respective responsibilities.

Quantifying the frequency of cyber bullying incidents is difficult. Underreporting is a major issue due to a number of factors, such as fear of repercussions, unclear protocol and embarrassment due to "sexting" or reciprocal cyber bullying. Additionally, there is no unified definition throughout the United States for what qualifies as cyber bullying.

Recent studies measuring the scope of this issue have produced a wide variety of results. The *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2009 Report* claimed that only 4 percent of students asked stated that they had been cyber bullied on or off school property within the last year. However, Parry Aftab, a prominent cybercrime expert and attorney, asserts that after a countrywide tour of many schools and in-class polls of over 45,000 middle school students, it may be concluded percentages as high as 85 percent of students reported cyber bullying.<sup>7</sup> Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin, prominent researchers in cyber bullying, have done multiple studies at varying locations throughout the country and have also seen percentages reported from 20 to 35 percent.<sup>8</sup> Further, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that from 2000 to 2005 online harassment increased 50 percent and found between 9 percent and 34 percent of adolescents nationwide were victims of cyber bullying.<sup>9</sup> I-SAFE Inc., a leader in

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<sup>7</sup> Aftab, Parry. "Statistics and a Snapshot of Cyberbullying Trends." *Parry Aftab The Privacy Lawyer*. Web. 21 July 2010. <<http://aftab.com/index.php?page=cyberbullying-statistics>>.

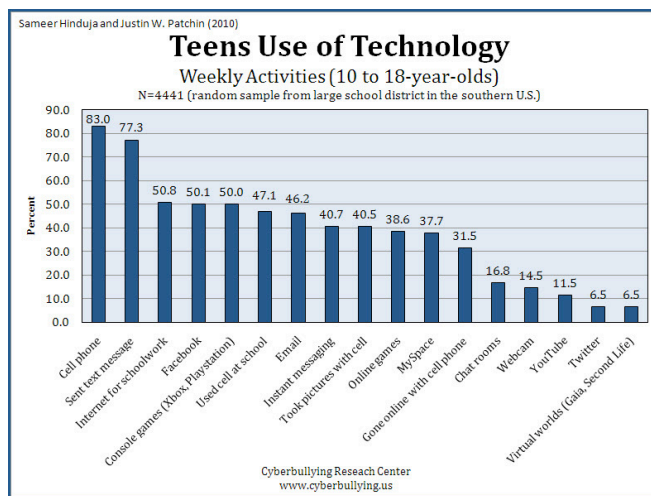
<sup>8</sup> Hinduja, Sameer, and Justin Patchin. *State Cyber Bullying Laws: a Brief Review of Cyber Bullying Laws across America*. Issue brief. Cyber Bullying Research Center. Print.

<sup>9</sup> Hertz MF, David-Ferdon C. *Electronic Media and Youth Violence: A CDC Issue Brief for Educators and Caregivers*. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control; 2008.



Internet safety education, found that in the 2003-2004 school year, 42 percent of kids had been the victim of cyber bullying, and 25 percent had it happen more than once. This survey also reported that 58 percent of the cohort had not informed any adults of the incident.<sup>10</sup>

However, there is more concrete evidence of the incredible amount of access that youth have to electronic devices. Currently, they have more access to electronic communication than ever before, allowing cyber bullying to occur at almost any time, in countless forms. In 2008, 93 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 were using the Internet, the highest percentage of any age group in America.<sup>11</sup> In July of 2010 it was reported that 73 percent of teens were using social networking sites. 37 percent of 10 to 12 year olds reported having a Facebook account despite Facebook's Terms of Service requiring its users to be at least 13 years of age.<sup>12</sup> The following chart depicts teen use of technology in 2010.<sup>13</sup>



The lack of comparably strong cyber bullying data naturally raises questions regarding how wide-spread cyber bullying is in Maryland schools. However, this question fundamentally cannot be answered because there is no clearly prescribed definition of cyber bullying in current legislation. This causes issues for teachers and administrators trying to identify behavior that has

<sup>10</sup> "Cyber Bullying: Statistics and Tips." *I-SAFE Inc.* 2009. Web. 21 July 2010. <[http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=op&sub\\_id=media\\_cyber\\_bullying](http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=op&sub_id=media_cyber_bullying)>.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, Sydney. <<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1093/generations-online>>.

<sup>12</sup> "Cyber bullying-Damage in a Digital Age." 5.

<sup>13</sup> Hinduja, Sameer, and Justin Patchin. *State Cyber Bullying Laws: a Brief Review of Cyber Bullying Laws across America*. Issue brief. Cyber Bullying Research Center. Print.



crossed the line between permissible adolescent behavior and harassment. Similarly, many students who are experiencing electronic harassment do not know when to report it.<sup>14</sup>

Besides a lack of clarity regarding cyber bullying itself, there are other characteristics of the cyber bullying issue that create problems for Maryland residents. The jurisdiction of school administrators, as defined in House Bill 199, is extremely vague and leaves much room for confusion. According to a New York Times article written in June of 2010, “[a]lthough 44 states have bullying statutes, fewer than half offer guidance about whether schools may intervene in bullying involving “electronic communication,” which almost always occurs outside of school and most severely on weekends, when children have more free time to socialize online.”<sup>15</sup> Current Maryland legislation only labels this sort of incident under schools’ jurisdiction if it “substantially disrupts” the classroom. The term “substantially disrupts” is so ambiguous that judges faced with similar fundamental student Internet speech cases have given drastically different rulings. In addition, the anonymity and covert nature of many cyber bullying attacks make intervening after the fact an almost impossible task.

Furthermore, the stereotypical youth who is caught cyber bullying is drastically different from the youth who typically resort to physical bullying. Sometimes, because of the power that comes from the anonymity of the Internet, victims of traditional bullying are the ones carrying out online bullying.<sup>16</sup> In addition, studies show how communities from the highest and lowest socio-economic backgrounds are most likely to experience high levels of cyber bullying. Those teens considered wealthy are often not burdened with after school jobs and therefore are able to go directly online at their leisure when the school day ends. In Westchester, New York, a wealthy suburb outside of New York City, Parry Aftab found 97 percent of the 200 students polled had been victims of cyber bullying. These youth are also more likely to have a computer in their home, or possibly even own their own computer.<sup>17</sup> Those teens considered socially and

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<sup>14</sup> “Cyber bullying-Damage in a Digital Age.” 10.

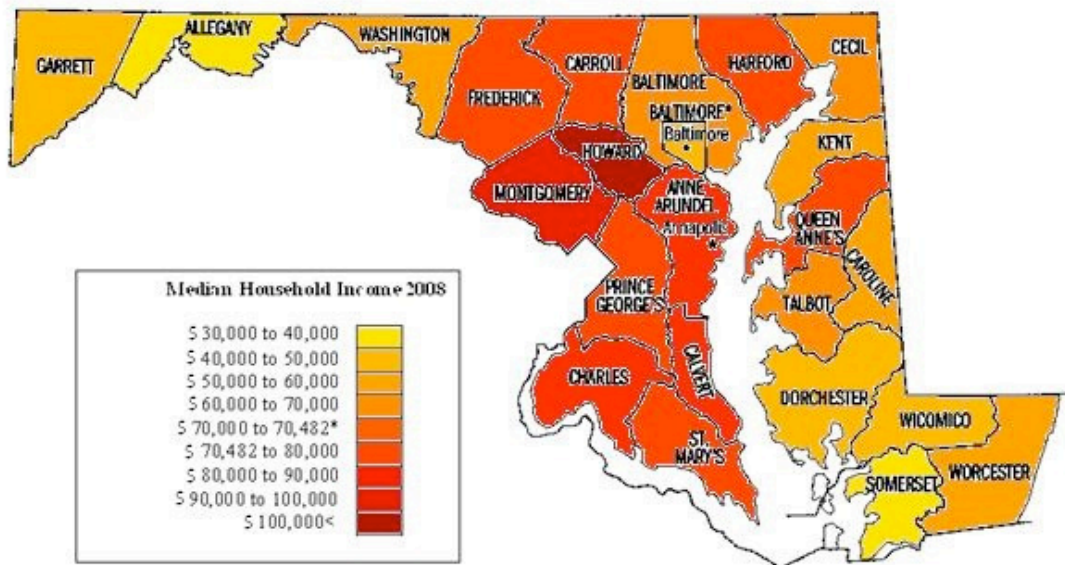
<sup>15</sup> Hoffman, Jan. “Online Bullies Pull Schools Into the Fray.” *The New York Times*. 27 June 2010. Web. 1 July 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/style/28bully.html?ref=bullies>>.

<sup>16</sup> “Cyberbullying.” <<http://aftab.com/index.php?page=cyberbullying>>

<sup>17</sup> Charkes, Juli. “Cracking Down on the Cyber Bullying.” *The New York Times*. 30 Mar. 2008. Web. 1 June 2010. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/30/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/30bullyingwe.html?\\_r=1&ref=bullies](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/30/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/30bullyingwe.html?_r=1&ref=bullies)>.



economically disadvantaged, however, are also at a high risk for cyber bullying. 44 percent of black teens and 35 percent of Hispanic teens, considered economically disadvantaged, use their cell phones to access the Internet instead of a family owned computer, as opposed to 21 percent of white teens who were polled from the economically stable platform.<sup>18</sup> Being online with a cell phone allows for youth to be online twenty four hours a day, constantly receiving emails, text messages and social networking updates. Both wealthy and economically disadvantaged youth are at risk for increased cyber harassment. It is for this reasons that preventative programs are most important at schools in these communities. The median-family income of each county is displayed on the map below.



\* 70,482 = 2008 Maryland Median Household Income

<sup>18</sup> *Teens and Mobile Phones*. Rep. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Web. 19 July 2010.

<<http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Teens-and-Mobile-Phones.aspx?r=1>>.

<sup>19</sup> ERS/USDA Data- MD Unemployment and Median Household Income. 19 July 2010.

<<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/unemployment/RDLList2.asp?ST=MD>>

Maryland Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau. 19 July 2010.

<[http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/maryland\\_map.html](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/maryland_map.html)>



Thankfully, no Maryland family has yet to experience firsthand the worst possible outcome of cyber bullying: an adolescent's suicide. In April, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts filed suit against six teens from the Hampshire County School District following the death of 15 year-old Phoebe Prince, the Irish immigrant who took her life in early 2010. Six classmates are being tried by the state of Massachusetts for relentless cyber and physical bullying which eventually resulted in Prince's suicide. One of the defendants, Sharon Valazquez, is being charged with the intention to, "willfully injure, intimidate or interfere with, or attempt to injure, intimidate or interfere with, or oppress or threaten Phoebe Prince in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right(s) or privilege(s) secured to her by the constitution or laws of the United States, and bodily injury resulted to her." This repeated bullying was observed by educators, administrators and other students and is reported to have occurred over the 2009-2010 school year; however no suspensions were previously issued in the interest of Prince's safety.<sup>20</sup> Common internet sites as well as text messaging were utilized to harass Prince. Recognizing the possible consequences of inaction, Maryland legislators should amend the current bullying policy.

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<sup>20</sup> Ellis, Ross. "Phoebe Prince's Bullies - Some Suspended, Some Disciplined from South Hadley High School." *Examiner.com-Baltimore*. 27 Feb. 2010. Web. 21 July 2010.  
<<http://www.examiner.com/x-39476-Cyber-Safety-Examiner~y2010m2d27-Phoebe-Princes-bullies-expelled-from-South-Hadley-High-School>>.

# Cyber-Bullying:

Keeping Maryland at the Forefront of Bullying Prevention

## Problem:

Maryland does not have a comprehensive state policy to combat cyber bullying, a new trend in youth harassment.

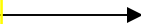


### Current Situation:

With the recent technology use continues to grow, cyber bullying is a growing trend across the nation.

### Current Road Blocks:

An absence of state wide legislation and policy regarding cyber bullying.



### Definition:

- No state-wide definition of cyber bullying
- Legislation only defines “electronic communication”

### Legislation:

#### House Bill 199

- Defines “electronic communication”
- Requires each school to have a bullying policy
- Outlines possible repercussions for perpetrators.

### Jurisdiction:

- As policy stands, school’s power to control the issue is unclear.

### Prevalence:

#### 33% of Teens Have Been Cyber Bullied

- Widely recognized facts are still missing because it is a new issue.
- Studies report a wide range of statistics, measuring the prevalence.

### Problematic Characteristics:

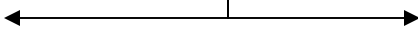
- Anonymity of bully
- Can happen off school grounds
- Overall difficulty in controlling behavior.

### Recommended Solutions:

- Legislation overhaul
- Social Emotional Learning Programs

## Legislation

## Programs



### State-wide Policy

### Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program

### Incorporated in school’s bullying policies

-or-

### Responsive Classroom



## Current Policy

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### Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005

Passed in 2005 by the Maryland General Assembly, the Safe Schools Reporting Act (Education Article § 7-424) addresses the issue of bullying, harassment, and intimidation in Maryland public schools. The law requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to involve each county board of education to report incidents of harassment or intimidation against students under their respective jurisdictions. Under the law, MSDE was instructed to create and distribute a “Standard Victim of Harassment or Intimidation Report Form,” and to report a summary of the county’s report form information to the Maryland General Assembly.

The findings from the reports include incident rates, locations and descriptions of the incidents, ages of victims and perpetrators, alleged motives of the perpetrators, investigative methods used, corrective actions taken by the schools, number of days missed by victims and perpetrators, and the number of false allegations reported. The school itself is responsible for assigning a staff member to implement the Safe Schools Reporting Act and must establish procedures for collecting, compiling and reporting information to MSDE.

In addition to completing the standard reporting form, an investigation of the alleged incident is conducted to collect additional information. The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 found over 2,000 reported cases of bullying in the first seven months of data collection and proved to be a significant milestone in addressing bullying harassment and intimidation in Maryland public schools.<sup>21</sup>

This law formed the basis for the development of House Bill 199, but excluded cyber bullying as well as electronic communication.

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<sup>21</sup> *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools*. Rep. Vol. March. Baltimore: Maryland State Department of Education, 2010. Maryland State Department of Education. Web. 11 July 2010. <[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/E74CD775-CB05-4338-A900-EB5F1CA62B66/23561/Bullying\\_and\\_Harassment\\_Report\\_03312010.pdf](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/E74CD775-CB05-4338-A900-EB5F1CA62B66/23561/Bullying_and_Harassment_Report_03312010.pdf)>.



## **House Bill 199: Public Schools—Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation—Policy and Disciplinary Standards**

Maryland’s current acting piece of legislation is House Bill 199. House Bill 199 was passed in 2008 by the Maryland General Assembly to further address the issue of bullying, harassment and intimidation in schools. The bill expanded on the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 and required the State Board of Education to develop a model policy in collaboration with school system representatives that included specific information relevant to prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation in schools.<sup>22</sup> In addition, it required county boards of education to create their own anti-bullying policies. The model policy had to meet the requirements of Education Article § 4-724.1, Annotated Code of Maryland and was adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education in 2009. As required by law, the twenty-four local school systems in Maryland used the model policy as a basis for developing their own policies.<sup>23</sup> However, Maryland is one of eight states that does not mandate a state-wide policy, leaving it in the extreme minority in terms of uniform policy.<sup>24</sup>

### **Maryland’s Model Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy**

Required by House Bill 199, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted the model anti-bullying policy on February 24, 2009. In accordance with Education Article § 4-724.1, the model policy outlines:<sup>25</sup>

- A statement prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation in schools
- A statement prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation

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<sup>22</sup>H.B. 199, [Http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/bills/hb/hb0199e.pdf](http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/bills/hb/hb0199e.pdf) (2008) (enacted). Print.

<sup>23</sup> *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools*.  
<[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/E74CD775-CB05-4338-A900-EB5F1CA62B66/23561/Bullying\\_and\\_Harassment\\_Report\\_03312010.pdf](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/E74CD775-CB05-4338-A900-EB5F1CA62B66/23561/Bullying_and_Harassment_Report_03312010.pdf)>.

<sup>24</sup>Hinduja, Sameer, and Justin Patchin. *State Cyber Bullying Laws: a Brief Review of Cyber Bullying Laws across America*. Issue brief. Cyber Bullying Research Center. Print.

<sup>25</sup> *Maryland's Model Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*. Rep. Vol. 2009. Baltimore: Maryland State Department of Education, 2009. *Maryland State Department of Education*. Web. 11 July 2010. <<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/0700B064-C2B3-41FC-A6CF-D3DAE4969707/19401/ModelBullyingPolicyDRAFT102108.pdf>>.



- A definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that is either the same or not less inclusive than:
  - **“Bullying, harassment, or intimidation”** means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:
    - motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or,
    - threatening or seriously intimidating; and,
    - occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or,
    - substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school
  - **“Electronic communication”** means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.
- Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons:
  - committing acts of bullying
  - engaged in reprisal or retaliation
  - found to have made false accusations
- Model procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation
- Model procedures for investigation of acts
- Information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and bystanders
- Information regarding the availability and use of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation form



## Recommendations

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In order to protect Maryland schools from the negative effects of cyber bullying, an amendment must be made to House Bill 199. Cyber bullying needs to be clearly defined in this additional legislation, not solely electronic harassment, which leaves room for many misinterpretations as well as blurry jurisdictional boundaries. It is further recommended that as a statewide policy, this definition be implemented throughout all Maryland schools' bullying policy. Finally, a preventative program is suggested to target cyber bullying at its roots in hopes of diminishing this devastating technological obstacle.

### *Definition*

In terms of differentiating what is actually considered cyber bullying, it is necessary to have a clear definition. In accordance to Massachusetts Senate Bill 261 passed in 2009 following the suicide of 15 year old Massachusetts student Phoebe Prince, cyber bullying is defined as:

- the severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of:
  - (i) causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student's property;
  - (ii) placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
  - (iii) creating a hostile environment at school for the other student;
  - (iv) infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or
  - (v) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operations of a school.<sup>26</sup>

This law clearly details many more aspects than the Maryland law, including mention of suicide and attempted suicide as well as property belonging to the individual. More importantly, the phrase cyber bullying is defined, a term completely excluded from House Bill 199 and in which electronic communication is only briefly touched upon.

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<sup>26</sup> "Index of /legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf." *Mass.Gov.* May 2010. Web. 09 Aug. 2010.  
<<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf/>>.



Examples of actions that qualify as cyber bullying:

- Text-messages, sent at a school dance by student A to student B, taunting him/her about their weight.
- Messages on a social networking site, posted during computer science class, posted by student A directly insulting student B's religion.

Examples of actions that **do not** qualify as cyber bullying:

- Student A sends student B a single text message on the weekend, stating that student B is ugly.
- Student A accidentally posts a comic covering the topic of religion on his/her social networking site that unconsciously hurts student B's feelings.

Examples of actions that are **unclear** in current Maryland's policy, but not under Massachusetts':

- Student A sends threatening text messages to student B, while at a bus stop.
- Student A and student B stand on the side-walk across the street from their school and use student B's cell phone to post negative messages about student C on a social networking site.

### *Jurisdictional Boundaries*

Included in this definition of cyber bullying must be an outline of how to deal with cyber bullying attacks that occur completely off-school grounds, clearly excluded from the policy. Resources will need to be identified within each school to increase reporting and increase support outlets for the victims to ensure the well being of Maryland's students.

### **Court Cases**

In the pre-Internet era, the Supreme Court's rulings in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)*, *Bethel School District No.403 v. Fraser (1986)*, and *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)* created standards regarding First Amendment student speech. The circumstances under which school officials may punish students for



electronic communication, however, is often unclear since the Supreme Court has never addressed a student Internet speech case. Moreover, the most recent precedent was set in 1988, making the last case the Supreme Court heard regarding First Amendment student speech a 22 year old precedent.<sup>27</sup> Although Maryland has passed House Bill 199, the broad definition of bullying, harassment, and intimidation could include almost any electronic student speech that another student finds offensive. The lack of substantial cases addressing issues of student Internet speech limits the number of standards the lower courts follow and increases uncertainty among school officials on which punishments could lead to lawsuits.

Courts addressing off-campus student Internet speech cases have applied the “substantial disruption standard” set forth in *Tinker*. The Supreme Court ruled that school officials could censor student speech that “interferes ‘materially and substantially’ with a school’s ability to educate or affects ‘the rights of others’”<sup>28</sup> However, a student’s right to freedom of speech cannot be suppressed by school officials “undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance” or “mere desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that always accompany an unpopular viewpoint.”<sup>29</sup> The *Tinker* standard is seen in Maryland House Bill 199 where bullying, harassment, or intimidation that does not occur on school grounds can be regulated by school officials if it “substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.”<sup>30</sup> In *Fraser*, the Court ruled that school officials could regulate student speech after a student used vulgar and offensive language during a speech at a school assembly; this became known as the “lewdness standard.” The Court ruled in *Hazelwood* that school officials could regulate student speech if the curriculum standard applied. The “curriculum standard” determined that if student speech was part of the curriculum then school officials had greater control but actions taken against students were required to be “reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.”<sup>31</sup> These standards have been applied to Internet-era cases such as *Beussink v Woodland R-IV School District* and *J.S. v Bethlehem Area School District*.

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<sup>27</sup> "Free "CYBER" Speech in Public School." *TheWordOut.Net*. Aug. 2008. Web. 19 July 2010.  
<[http://www.thewordout.net/pages/page.asp?page\\_id=56661](http://www.thewordout.net/pages/page.asp?page_id=56661)>.

<sup>28</sup> Lei, Vivian. *Students' Free Speech Rights Shed at the Cyber Gate*, XVI RICH. J.L. & TECH. 7 (2009).  
<<http://law.richmond.edu/jolt/v16i2/article7.pdf>>. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Lei, 4.

<sup>30</sup> H.B. 199, [Http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/bills/hb/hb0199e.pdf](http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/bills/hb/hb0199e.pdf) (2008) (enacted). Print.

<sup>31</sup> Lei, 6.



## Case Studies: Post-Internet First Amendment Student Speech

### *Beussink v Woodland R-IV School District*

Brandon Beussink developed a website on his home computer that was critical of Woodland High School’s administration. Beussink used vulgar language on the website to express his opinions and encouraged viewers to contact the school principal to communicate their own opinions about the high school.<sup>32</sup> A fellow classmate opened the website on school grounds and brought it to the attention of the school, which led to Beussink’s suspension. A policy set in place at the school lowered a student’s grade for unexcused absences and the consequences of his punishment meant Beussink was failing all of his classes. The court applied the *Tinker* standard and ruled that the school’s punishment violated Beussink’s free speech rights under the First Amendment. It was determined that “even though students discussed the incident at school, Beussink’s website did not substantially interfere with school administration.”<sup>33</sup>

### *J.S. v Bethlehem Area School District*

In another case, Justin Swidler created a website on his home computer named “Teacher Sux.” Swidler’s website contained comments about his teacher and principal that were derogatory, profane, offensive and threatening. Although Swidler maintained the website off school grounds, he “bragged about [the website] and showed it to the other students at school.”<sup>34</sup> As a result of his website, the school district permanently expelled Swidler at the end of the school year. In the lawsuit, the court applied the *Fraser* and *Tinker* standards and ruled in favor of the school. Under the *Fraser* standard, the court determined his punishment for the use of “lewd, vulgar and plainly offensive language, including the personal attacks on [his teacher] and [principal]” was suitable since his comments undermined the basic function of a public school.<sup>35</sup> The *Tinker* standard was applicable because Swidler’s website caused “a substantial disruption to the operation of the school”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lei, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Lei, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Lei, 9.

<sup>35</sup> Lei, 10.

<sup>36</sup> Lei, 10.



As House Bill 199 stands, jurisdiction strictly covers just school grounds or school owned property and events; unless the cyber communications “substantially disrupt the orderly operations of a school.”<sup>37</sup> Under both *Beussink* and *J.S.* the courts ruled differently on two fundamentally similar cases. With Maryland’s ambiguous definition of what is to “substantially disrupt” as well as the completely omitted topic of off campus events of cyber bullying, Maryland students and administrators are left without real guidelines to follow.

In reference to Massachusetts Senate Bill 261, the jurisdiction of a school is considered: “school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school sponsored or school related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, at school bus stops, on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by a district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district, commonwealth charter school, or nonpublic school. Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a district or school if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.”<sup>38</sup> In addition to Massachusetts Senate Bill 261, it is recommended that the scope of “materially and substantially disrupt” be narrowed in order to avoid inconsistencies in those cyber bullying incidents that incur punishment and those which do not.

### *State Wide Policy*

To maintain a model bullying policy, the state of Maryland must expand its publicity of cyber bullying and require schools to form a plan to combat such harassment. Out of the fifty states, 42 have policies in place that require schools to have their own cyber bullying procedures.<sup>39</sup> Such plans eliminate gray areas and show that harassment and abuse of any kind will not be tolerated in any school within that state.

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<sup>37</sup> H.B. 199, [Http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/bills/hb/hb0199e.pdf](http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/bills/hb/hb0199e.pdf) (2008) (enacted). Print.

<sup>38</sup> "Index of /legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf." *Mass.Gov.* May 2010. Web. 09 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf/>>.

<sup>39</sup> Hinduja, Sameer, and Justin Patchin. *State Cyber Bullying Laws: a Brief Review of Cyber Bullying Laws across America.* Issue brief. Cyber Bullying Research Center. Print.



## Suggested Programs

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In Maryland’s House Bill 199 “information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim and bystanders” are mandatory. This is commendable and an effort that should continue. It is recommended, in addition, that a program with a comprehensive curriculum be used to address the causes of cyber bullying before they even occur. In Massachusetts Senate Bill 261, for example, “the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall include ongoing professional development to build the skills of all members of school staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, and paraprofessionals, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to:

- 1) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
- 2) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- 3) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among the perpetrator, the victim, and any witnesses to the bullying;
- 4) research findings on bullying;
- 5) information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying; and
- 6) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.”<sup>40</sup>

### The Social-Emotional Learning Model

One form of prevention and intervention that is widely used and evidence based are SEL Programs, or social-emotional learning programs. These programs work to integrate academic, emotional and social dimensions of learning, and have been shown to improve attendance, ties to school, student engagement, and standardized test scores, among a host of other positive outcomes.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Index of /legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf." *Mass.Gov.* May 2010. Web. 09 Aug. 2010.  
<<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf/>>.

<sup>41</sup> *Welcome to CASEL | Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.* Web. 10 Aug. 2010.  
<<http://www.casel.org/>>.



These programs are particularly important for cyber bullying because of the skill set that they teach. Because cyber bullying is a type of abuse that is more inescapable and all encompassing than in-person bullying, learning respect, resilience to attacks, and, for teachers and parents, the most effective ways to recognize and deal with these attacks is the most logical way to deal with the problem.

The purpose of social-emotional learning programs is to encourage students to develop self-awareness and self-management skills, use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships and demonstrate decision making skills and responsible behaviors at home and at school. These behaviors help students to be more resilient, learn to respect their peers, and react more effectively to bullying incidents that do take place.<sup>42</sup>

### **Statewide Program Implementation: Illinois**

In 2004, Illinois became the first state to adopt SEL Standards, and all 879 school districts were able to meet the policy within the year after it was put in place. In 2007, Illinois committed \$1.7 million annually for a 3 year, 84 school statewide pilot project. It uses a framework similar to that of academic standards to encourage the integration of social-emotional learning across the curriculum. The state also provides regional support, supporting program implementation through both training and technical assistance.<sup>43</sup>

While this comprehensive SEL program may not be the first step for Maryland, there are two particular evidence-based programs already in existence that could be particularly helpful to schools that are experiencing particular difficulties with cyber bullying and bullying in general.

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<sup>42</sup> *Welcome to CASEL | Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.casel.org/>>.

<sup>43</sup> *Welcome to CASEL | Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.casel.org/>>.



## **Program 1: Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program**

### *Background*

A multilevel program, Steps to Respect works to reduce bullying by “coordinating a school-wide environmental intervention,” a cognitive-behavioral curriculum in classrooms, and intervention with bullying students. The school wide aspect involves providing adults and children with support and procedures that can work against bullying as well as encourage socially responsible behavior.<sup>44</sup> The curriculum is for grades 3 through 5 or 4 through 6, and focus on “normative beliefs related to bullying” as well as “social-emotional skills for responding to bullying and increasing peer acceptance.” Further, the program involves a coaching system for students who are “at risk of developing bullying-related adjustment problems,” who are selected due to participation in bullying.

### *Significant Statistics*

A study of six elementary schools took place in 2005, involving 544 children. Each of the six schools was randomly assigned to be in the intervention or control groups. After 6 months, the intervention schools were observed to have had a 25 percent decrease in bullying behaviors as compared to control schools. In the 18 month posttest, there were also significant declines in antisocial playground behaviors, ranging from 32 percent to 78 percent, according to Frey et al. Another study reported a 31 percent reduction in bullying and a 70 percent decrease in destructive bystander behavior.<sup>45</sup>

### *Funding*

Complete program kit costs \$749, which includes a school wide Implementation Support Kit, with Program Guide, Training Manual, and Level 1, 2 and 3 Curriculum kits.

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<sup>44</sup> *Steps to Respect Research and Results*. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/str/research/>>.

<sup>45</sup> *Committee for Children: Leaders in Bullying Prevention and Social and Emotional Learning*. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.cfchildren.org/>>.



## Program 2: Responsive Classroom

### *Background*

Responsive Classroom is a social emotional learning technique that reaches all levels of elementary school teaching. The philosophy behind the program is that social skills, and thus the social curriculum, are as important as the academic curriculum. Because of this, the program focuses on teaching a set of social skills. Another tenet of the philosophy is the importance of the mode of learning, or that "process and content go hand in hand."<sup>46</sup> Finally, the program focuses on the significance of the ways the supporting adults in children's lives work together, or the cooperation of teachers as well as the cooperation of teachers and parents.

The approach has ten concrete components that create a learning environment to support the philosophy of the program. These components are morning meeting, rule creation, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences, guided discovery, academic choice, classroom organization, working with families, and collaborative problem solving.

### *Significant Statistics*

A number of independent studies have shown both social and academic gains in classrooms with the Responsive Classroom approach opposed to control classrooms.<sup>47</sup> In a study of 6 schools in the same district, which was conducted between 2001 and 2004, researchers found a substantial difference between intervention and control schools. According to the study report, entitled, "Social and Academic Learning Study on the Contribution of the *Responsive Classroom Approach*"<sup>48</sup>:

- students in Responsive Classroom schools performed better in reading and math than children at comparison schools
- teachers felt more effective and positive about teaching

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<sup>46</sup> *Responsive Classroom: A Practical Approach to Creating Safe, Challenging, and Joyful Elementary Classrooms*. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>>.

<sup>47</sup> Rimm-Kaufman, Sara E., Xitao Fan, Yu-Jen Chiu, and Wenyi You. "The Contribution of the Responsive Classroom Approach on Children's Academic Achievement: Results from a Three Year Longitudinal Study." *Journal of School Psychology* 45.4 (2007): 401-21. Web.

<sup>48</sup> Rimm-Kaufman, Sara E. "Social and Academic Learning Study on the Contribution of the Responsive Classroom Approach." Web.



- children had better pro-social skills, felt closer to teachers, and were less fearful,
- teachers offered more high-quality instruction
- children felt more positive about schools, teachers, and peers
- teachers more frequently engaged in and placed higher value on collaboration.

### *Funding*

A week-long on-site seminar for 25 teachers costs \$14,500.<sup>49</sup> Responsive Classroom recommends three weeks of these sessions for teachers to understand the full Responsive Classroom curriculum, which puts the cost at \$1,740 per teacher, or, with a class of 25 students, \$70 per student. This cost rapidly gets lower assuming teachers stay at the school for longer than one year. Facilitators will come to the school, whether for school wide consultations, classroom observation, or Responsive Classroom review sessions for \$2,100 per day.

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<sup>49</sup> *Responsive Classroom: A Practical Approach to Creating Safe, Challenging, and Joyful Elementary Classrooms.* Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>>.



	<b>Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program</b>	<b>Responsive Classroom</b>
<b>Target group</b>	Late elementary through early middle school	Elementary school
<b>Approach</b>	Lessons in grades 3-5 or 4-6, school wide teacher and parent anti-bullying education and network (SEL)	Teaching teachers approaches that promote social emotional learning, interactive and structured classroom approaches
<b>Significant statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Decreases in bullying: 25 - 31%</li> <li>-Decreases in destructive bystander behavior: 70%</li> <li>- Decreases in antisocial playground behavior: 34 - 78%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gains in pro-social skills</li> <li>- Gains in positive feelings about school, teachers, and peers</li> <li>- More gains in math and reading skills</li> <li>- Better teaching performance, collaboration, and positive feelings about teaching for teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Awards</b>	Safe and Sound report <sup>50</sup> : “high marks” in integration with academics, sound social and emotional instructional practice, program implementation support, safe and sound learning environments	
<b>Costs</b>	Complete program kit: \$749	Three week-long learning sessions, each costing \$14,500 per group of 25 teachers or \$43,500 for all three, putting the cost per teacher at \$1,740

<sup>50</sup> Welcome to CASEL | Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.casel.org/>>.



## Resource Plan

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The operating budget for MSDE in FY 2011 will decrease 2.9% from FY 2010. However, there is still a \$5.7 billion appropriation for K-12 education.<sup>51</sup> Within the county educational systems, only a portion of their revenues come from the state government. Roughly half of the revenue is dependent on county appropriations and hence the unique economic climates of each county. Each year the local school system is required by law to increase budget appropriations to education proportional to any applicable increase in student population from the prior school year. This raise is called Maintenance of Effort and can often be challenging for districts to finance in uncertain economic times.

Depending on the program selected, the costs vary from fairly small to considerably substantial. If, after an initial assessment of the schools and their funding structure, the least costly program could easily fit into the budget, then no further measures would be taken. Resources, both financial and human, could be shifted accordingly to accommodate the implementation of the program. However, should more significant funding be needed, there are several opportunities to use, among them two project grants from the federal government. First, the U.S. Department of Education awards the Safe and Supportive Schools grant. The Department of Education allocates these funds to state educational agencies for the purpose of improving “conditions for learning in order to help schools improve safety and reduce substance use.”<sup>51</sup> These grants are awarded to State Educational Agencies (SEA) in order to engage in “statewide measurement” and “targeted programmatic interventions” of school violence and substance abuse. The grant specifies that certain Local Education Agencies (LEA) be targeted and that a school safety score system be developed. Data collection is also required and would serve to help gauge the success of the programs both during and after implementation. LEA that are chosen must represent a minimum percentage of the state’s student population, and while the program is carried out locally, the SEA must “retain administrative direction and fiscal control for the project.”<sup>52</sup> Grants are made

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<sup>51</sup> Maryland. Dept. of Budget Management. "Dept of Education." *MD Budget Highlights: FY 2011*. N.p.: n.p., 2010. 42-3. *MD Dept of Budget and Management*. Web. 9 Aug. 2010. <<http://dbm.maryland.gov/agencies/operbudget/Documents/2011/FY2011BudgetHighlights.pdf>>.

<sup>52</sup> Jennings, Kevin. "Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Overview Information; Safe and



for anywhere from 12 months to 48 months, and award amounts range from one million to 12 million dollars. For the number of students in MD, it is estimated that the state would receive an award of approximately \$3.5 million. For the upcoming year, five to seven awards are likely to be distributed.

The other grant opportunity comes from the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) program operated under the U.S. Department of Justice. They offer a Safe Schools Initiative grant that could be obtained through a local city or town and then channeled to the targeted school(s). Maryland over the years has been home to many of the COPS grant opportunities on a variety of programmatic levels dealing with delinquency prevention and safe communities. For example, Baltimore School Police Force received \$69,000 in funding from the COPS Secure our Schools grant several years ago. Formally, the Safe Schools Initiative aims “to assist in delinquency prevention, community planning and development, school safety resources, and technology development.”<sup>53</sup> The grant does not impose any unreasonable or unusual restrictions on the grantee, and the only crucial requirement is that the agency awarded must be in good standing with the Department of Justice and other relevant federal regulations. For this year, COPS has garnered \$2.6 million to disperse for the Safe Schools Initiative. For both of these key opportunities, the deadline for application for this year has already passed. It is strongly anticipated that next year these two funding avenues will again be available to pursue in order to facilitate the recommended plan.

Finally, in addition to these two funding routes, the Safe Schools, Healthy Schools grant from the federal government is also a possibility. It is a collaborative effort of the Dept. of Education, Dept. of Justice, and Dept. of Health and Human Services. Its goal is to encourage through funding comprehensive programs to tackle school violence and substance abuse and ultimately to form safer and healthier school environments. These grants are made available to LEAs, and in the past, certain schools systems have received up to \$2 million in funding. Maryland has also

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Supportive Schools; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for FY 2010." *Federal Register* 75.131 (9 July 2010): 39504-10. Web. 9 Aug. 2010.  
<<http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2010-3/070910c.pdf>>.

<sup>53</sup> United States of America. Dept of Justice; COPS. *COPS FY 2010 Application Guide: Safe Schools Initiative (SSI). Community Oriented Policing Services*. US DOJ, May 2010. Web. 9 Aug. 2010.  
<<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/e061023289-SSI.PDF>>.



applied and been awarded these grants previously, in places such as Montgomery County and Baltimore City.<sup>54</sup> Depending on restrictions and availability of funding in the upcoming year, either one or a combination of these three grants could provide adequate financial support to the proposed pilot programs.

While the above suggestions are not the sole opportunities, they will supply a firm starting point to launch and initially sustain whichever program is selected. Taking into account the superb position and accolades of Maryland schools over the past few years, any entity providing funding will know that they are making a sound, secure and promising investment which will help improve “public education in every part of the state.”<sup>55</sup> Clearly, the current economic situation cannot be ignored, and Maryland as a whole has had to restrict spending across the budget. The programs proposed would not prove especially cumbersome to the LEA budgets once all funding possibilities are considered, and the long term benefits and savings are well documented for both programs. With a more robust cyber bullying policy, schools will continue upward with achievement by fostering an environment “conducive to learning.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "About the Safe Schools/Healthy Schools (SS/HS) Initiative." *Safe Schools, Healthy Schools*. US DOE., DOJ, DHHS, 6 Nov. 2009. Web. 9 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/about.aspx>>.

<sup>55</sup> Jennings, Kevin. "Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Overview Information; Safe and Supportive Schools; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for FY 2010." *Federal Register* 75.131 (9 July 2010): 39504-10. Web. 9 Aug. 2010. <<http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2010-3/070910c.pdf>>.

<sup>56</sup> Maryland. Maryland State Department of Education. "Maryland Public Schools: Achievement Matters Most." *2005 Strategic Plan Update*. 8-24. *Maryland State Department of Education*. N.p., 2005. Web. 9 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/5769EBC9-8C05-4B8A-B33F-909BA3D03ED5/6750/SPfinalprint.pdf>>.



## Implementation

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The legislative spelled out here should be implemented state-wide, in every school district and school in the State. Already, under the legislation in House Bill 199, each school is required to have a written policy for dealing with bullying. This amendment would require that cyber bullying provisions are included; at a very minimum, the state-wide definition and jurisdiction of cyber bullying would be stated.

The social emotional programs are being suggested on an experimental level, in only 10 trial schools. Seeing as cyber bullying is a new subject of concern, there is no hard evidence to suggest that these programs are necessarily the most effective at preventing incidents from occurring in schools. Taking into consideration the current economic climate, implementing programs in experimental schools will help create a foundation of knowledge for future policy-makers and educators.

The initial trial stage should consist of ten schools, with a variety of demographics, within a similar geographical area. This will allow for the highest level of comparability across Maryland's diverse student population. Specifically, ten schools in the Washington D.C. metro area should be included, the greater the variety of median family income (based on the percent of students who qualify for free lunches), race and ethnic background, and environmental setting, the more the results will be able to inform legislators about the effectiveness of these programs.

Each individual school will have the ability to choose which of the two programs, or another qualifying program, to use based on their schools resources and needs. All of the ten schools must have the ability to fully implement the program to be chosen.



## Conclusion

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As the use of technology and, concurrently, cyber bullying, become more and more prevalent both in and out of schools, it is important for Maryland to define and deal with issues of definition, jurisdiction, and prevention before the problem becomes even larger in scope.

Maryland's current policy is insufficient to protect students from cyber bullying. In order to protect them more fully, an amendment should accompany HB 199. Modeled after Massachusetts' 2009 bill, the amendment should define cyber bullying, define schools' jurisdiction, create statewide policies, and implement preventative programs beginning in the most at-risk schools. The programs, if successful, could expand to other districts and schools.

A preventative pilot program should be implemented in 10 schools in the Washington DC metro area, 5 for each program. Using surveys and written feedback, the state can evaluate the effectiveness of each program, and determine whether either, or both, is sustainable for the long term.

By taking these steps, more fully defining cyber bullying as well as implementing programs to prevent and counter it, Maryland can continue to lead the country in bullying law and prevention.