

Mission - Goals - Objectives

Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents in Schools

Hate Speech, Responding to:

New London Public Schools is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation and/or bullying. District policy requires all schools and personnel to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students and staff. Hate-motivated incidents, including hate speech, and crimes or actions motivated by bias/prejudice/bigotry jeopardize both the safety and well-being of all students and staff. The District will not tolerate hate-motivated incidents/crimes and/or hate speech based on actual or perceived characteristics, of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race or ethnicity, ethnic group identification, ancestry, nationality, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, age, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity it conducts or to which it provides significant assistance. The district will not tolerate retaliation in any form for reporting such incidents or crimes.

The Board of Education (Board) denounces the use of words or images to harass individuals or groups based on gender, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity. "Hate speech" of this nature is contrary to the District's Mission Statement, Diversity Statement, and Core Values.

Hate speech, for the purposes of this policy, is a communication that carries no meaning other than the expression of hatred for some group, especially in circumstances in which the communication is likely to provoke violence. It is an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, sexual identity and sexual expression, political beliefs and the like. Hate speech can be any form of expression regarded as offensive to racial, ethnic, and religious groups and other discrete minorities or to women.

The Board believes educators should never tolerate hateful speech in District schools. The Board forbids hate speech, threat speech and harassment. The concept of free speech/freedom of expression is valued, not as some "right" to disparage others without any consequences, but as the ability to discuss ideas. All speech that denigrates, disrespects or misrepresents "types of people" must be challenged.

In order to prevent hateful speech and harassment, the Board specifically states that hate, harassment, and intimidation have no place in the schools of this District. No member of the educational community shall be denigrated and/or threatened. Students shall be provided activities in which they are asked to respect, value and learn from one another; to learn facts about communities and our shared society; and to promote messages of inclusion themselves.

Civil rights laws require educators to protect students from harassment or other discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, gender identity, gender expression

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and sexual orientation. Schools must maintain a safe and nondiscriminatory learning environment for all students. District staff shall prohibit harassment by name calling, conduct based upon protected classes that is so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably disrupts an individual's educational or work environment or creates a hostile educational or work environment. The shaping of student behavior requires the explicit promotion of respectful communication. The primary antidote to a hostile environment in schools is preventative speech. Such speech requires continually talking in classrooms and on the school campus about how to respect and value other human beings.

In responding to hate speech incidents, the Board believes educators can combine formal punishment of harassers, in accordance with District policies, and with restorative dialogues in order to have students consider the consequences and causes of their speech. A powerful response to hate speech is to talk more explicitly with students about how words can hurt and about the harmful ideas under the words. It is important to talk about why hateful speech is hurtful to other students and other individuals in the community. If left undiscussed, an inaccurate claim can metastasize into hate. If left unchallenged, hateful speech can escalate into a threat. It is essential that all speech that hates and harms be challenged and questioned, within the parameters provided by law.

Hate Prevention Program

The Board believes that a comprehensive hate prevention program involving all staff and students will permit the expression of diverse viewpoints but will help to prevent hate crimes, hate speech and bias-related incidents in District schools and in the community.

1. Training shall be provided to all district staff in order to increase their awareness of the various manifestations of hate, hate speech and bias-related incidents. The training will include anti-bias and conflict resolution methods; procedures for identifying and reporting incidents of racial, religious, and sexual harassment, discrimination, and hate crime and hate speech; strategies for preventing such incidents from occurring; and resources available to assist in dealing with these incidents.
2. All students shall receive hate prevention training, including the issue of hate speech, through age-appropriate classroom activities, assemblies, and school-related activities. The Board believes that prejudice and discrimination are learned attitudes and behaviors. Teaching children that even subtle forms of hate such as ethnic slurs or epithets, negative or offensive name-calling, stereotyping, and exclusion are hurtful and inherently wrong can help to prevent more extreme, violent manifestations of hate. Structured classroom activities and programs will help children to develop empathy, while practicing the critical thinking and conflict resolution skills needed to recognize and respond to various manifestations of hate and bias-related behavior.

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3. The District will develop partnerships with families, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies. These partnerships help identify resources available to school personnel to address hate incidents, raise community awareness of the issue, ensure appropriate responses to hate incidents, and ensure that youth receive a consistent message that hate-motivated and/or bias-related behavior will not be tolerated.
4. This policy shall be reviewed annually and distributed to all students, their families and to all District personnel. The purpose of this policy is to promote a school climate in which racial, religious, ethnic, gender and other differences, as well as freedom of thought and expression, are respected and appreciated. The policy should have the input of parents, students, teachers, community members, and school administrators. It should respect diverse viewpoints, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression.
5. A range of corrective actions for those who violate school hate-prevention policies shall be used. The District will take a firm position against all injurious manifestations of hate, from ethnic slurs, racial epithets, and taunts, to graffiti, vandalism, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and violence. A wide range of non-disciplinary corrective actions to respond to incidents, including counseling, parent conferences, community service, awareness training, or completion of a research paper on an issue related to hate, as well as disciplinary actions such as in-school suspension or expulsion shall be utilized. School officials shall contact local, state or federal civil rights officials to respond to more serious incidents and, in cases involving criminal activity or threat of criminal activity, should call the police.
6. Data is to be collected to focus district-wide hate prevention efforts. Collection of data on the occurrence of school-based hate or bias-related incidents or crimes will assist administrators and teachers to identify patterns and to more effectively implement hate prevention policies and programs.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-15c](#) Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year olds. (Amended by P.A. 97-247 to include "sexual orientation" and P.A. 11-55 to include "gender identity or expression")

[29-7m\(a\)](#) Classification of crimes motivated by bias

[29-7m\(b\)](#) Report of crime motivated by bias.

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Legal Reference (cont.):

[53a](#)-181i Intimidation based on bigotry or bias: Definitions.

3A-181i, j, k, l Intimidation based on bigotry in the first, second, or third degree.

[17a](#)-101 Protection of children from abuse.

Connecticut State Board of Education "Position Statement on Culturally Responsive Education," adopted May 4, 2011

P.A. 17-111 An Act Concerning Hate Crimes

Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.

29 CFR 1604.11, EEOC Guidelines on Sex Discrimination.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.

34 CFR Section 106.8(b), OCR Guidelines for Title IX.

Definitions, OCR Guidelines on Sexual Harassment, Fed. Reg. Vol 62, #49, 29 CFR Sec. 1606.8 (a) 62 Fed Reg. 12033 (March 13, 1997) and 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (January 19, 2001)

20 U.S.C. 7905 (Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act)

Amendment of U.S. Constitution Article I.

Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S., 503 (1969)

Bethel School Dist. No 403 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)

Hazelwood School Dist. V. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988)

Morse v. Frederick, 551 U.S. 393 (2007)

Meritor Savings Bank. FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)

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Legal Reference (cont.):

Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, No. 97-282 (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26,1998)

Gebbs v. Lago Vista Indiana School District, No. 99-1866, (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26,1998)

Davis v. Monro County Board of Education, No. 97-843, (U.S. Supreme Court, May 24, 1999.)

The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. §4212

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

The Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008

Public Law 111-256

Meacham v. Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory 128 S.Ct. 2395, 76 U.S.L.W. 4488 (2008)

Federal Express Corporation v. Holowecki 128 S.Ct. 1147, 76 U.S.L.W. 4110 (2008)

Kentucky Retirement Systems v. EEOC 128 S.Ct. 2361, 76 U.S.L.W. 4503 (2008)

Sprint/United Management Co. v. Mendelsohn 128 S.Ct. 1140, 76 U.S.L.W. 4107 (2008)

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New London Public Schools
New London, CT