"DIGNIITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT"

Signed into law by Governor David Patterson, September 8, 2010



New York **Governor David Paterson** signs the Dignity for All Students Act into law. He was one of the first legally blind students to attend public school in his Long Island district. He tells a story of how he retaliated against one bullying peer by clobbering him with his metal lunch box.

"The Hempstead Board of Education is committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. The Board recognizes that harassment, hazing and bullying is detrimental to student learning and achievement. It interferes with the mission of the district to educate its students and disrupts the operation of the schools. Such behavior affects not only the students who are its targets but also those individuals who participate and witness such acts.

To this end, the Board condemns and strictly prohibit all forms of harassment, hazing and bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and event including those that take place at locations outside the district but that materially and substantially disrupt the educational process of the school environment or impinge on the rights of others …."

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DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATION

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN THE SENATE AND ASSEM BLY, DO ENACT THE "DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT"

Highlights……

S 10. Legislative Intent. The Legislature Finds That Students' Ability To Learn And To Meet High Academic Standards, And A School's Ability To Educate Its Students, Are Compromised By Incidents Of Discrimination Or Harassment Including Bullying, Taunting Or Intimidation. It Is Hereby Declared To Be The Policy Of The State To Afford All Students In Public Schools An Environment Free Of Discrimination And Harassment. The Purpose Of This Article Is To Foster Civility In Public Schools And To Prevent And Prohibit Conduct Which Is Inconsistent With A School's Educational Mission

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S 11. Definitions. For The Purposes Of This Article, The Following Terms Shall Have The Following Meanings:

1. "School Property" Shall Mean In Or Within Any Building, Structure, Athletic Playing Field, Playground, Parking Lot, Or Land Contained Within The Real Property Boundary Line Of A Public Elementary Or Secondary School; Or In Or On A School Bus, As Defined In Section One Hundred Forty-Two Of The Vehicle And Traffic Law.
2. "School Function" Shall Mean A School-Sponsored Extra-Curricular Event Or Activity.
3. "Disability" Shall Mean Disability As Defined In Subdivision Twenty-One Of Section Two Hundred Ninety-Two Of The Executive Law.
4. "Employee" Shall Mean Employee As Defined In Subdivision Three Of Section Eleven Hundred Twenty-Five Of This Title.
5. "Sexual Orientation" Shall Mean Actual Or Perceived Heterosexuality, Homosexuality Or Bisexuality.
6. "Gender" Shall Mean Actual Or Perceived Sex And Shall Include A Person's Gender Identity Or Expression.
7. "Harassment" Shall Mean The Creation Of A Hostile Environment By Conduct Or By Verbal Threats, Intimidation Or Abuse That Has Or Would Have The Effect Of Unreasonably And Substantially Interfering With A Student's Educational Performance, Opportunities Or Benefits, Or Mental, Emotional Or Physical Well-Being; Or Conduct, Verbal Threats, Intimidation Or Abuse That Reasonably Causes Or Would Reasonably Be Expected To Cause A Student To Fear For His Or Her Physical Safety; Such Conduct, Verbal Threats, Intimidation Or Abuse Includes But Is Not Limited To Conduct, Verbal Threats, Intimidation Or Abuse Based On A Person's Actual Or Perceived Race, Color, Weight, National Origin, Ethnic Group, Religion, Religious Practice, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Gender Or Sex.

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S 12. Discrimination And Harassment Prohibited.

1. No Student Shall Be Subjected To Harassment By Employees Or Students On School Property Or At A School Function; Nor Shall Any Student Be Subjected To Discrimination Based On A Person's Actual Or Perceived Race, Color, Weight, National Origin, Ethnic Group, Religion, Religious Practice, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Gender, Or Sex By School Employees Or Students On School Property Or At A School Function. Nothing In This Subdivision Shall Be Construed To Prohibit A Denial Of Admission Into, Or Exclusion From, A Course Of Instruction Based On A Person's Gender That Would Be Permissible Under Section Thirty-Two Hundred One-A Or Paragraph (A) Of Subdivision Two Of Section Twenty-Eight Hundred Fifty-Four Of This Chapter And Title Ix Of The Education Amendments Of 1972 (20 U.S.C. Section 1681, Et. Seq.), Or To Prohibit, As Discrimination Based On Disability, Actions That Would Be Permissible Under Section 504 Of The Rehabilitation Act Of 1973.

2. An Age-Appropriate Version Of The Policy Written In Plain-Language, Shall Be Included In The Code Of Conduct Adopted By Boards Of Education And The Trustees Or Sole Trustee.

   A Summary Of Such Policy Shall Be Included In Any Summaries Required By Such Section Twenty-Eight Hundred One.

WHAT IS BULLYING?”

The US Department of Health and Human Services’ National Bullying Prevention Campaign ***“Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!”*** defines bullying as aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength.

- Punching, shoving, and other acts that hurt people physically
- Spreading bad rumors about people
- Keeping certain people out of a "group"
- Teasing people in a mean way
- Getting certain people to "gang up" on others
- Bullying also can happen online or electronically. Cyber bullying is when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology.

This can include:

- Sending mean text, email, or instant messages
- Posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites
- Using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone

For more information visit web-site: http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

FEDERAL BULLYING INERVENTION PROGRAMS



Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Steering Committee

- The problem of bullying in our schools and communities is of national concern, and addressing it is a priority for the Obama Administration.

- A federal interagency effort, the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Steering Committee, was launched in early 2010 to focus on the problem of bullying. In August 2010, a major national summit was held to announce new Obama Administration initiatives and, with non-governmental organizations gathered, craft a national call to action.

- Why is the Administration so concerned? Bullying can be damaging to individual students and affects our schools by interfering with the learning process. Bullying has been linked to anger, aggression, violence, hyperactivity, and externalizing problems as well as to later delinquency and criminality. Victimization by peers has been linked to illnesses, school avoidance, poor academic performance, increased fear and anxiety, and suicidal ideation as well as to long-term internalizing difficulties including low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Both bullies and victims are at risk for short-term and long term adjustment difficulties such as academic problems, psychological difficulties, and social relationship problems (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010).

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Tragically, bullying is widespread.

- In the 2007 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, students aged 12 to18 were asked if they had been bullied at school during the school year. About 32 percent of students reported having been bullied at school during the school year. Rates of bullying were higher among younger students; almost 43 percent of 6th graders reported having been bullied, compared to about 24 percent of 12th graders. Overall, 21 percent of students said that they had experienced bullying that consisted of being made fun of; 11 percent said that they were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; four percent reported having been cyber-bullied; and six percent said they were threatened with harm.

- Of those students in 2007 who reported being bullied during the school year, 79 percent said that they were bullied inside the school, 23 percent said that they were bullied outside on school grounds, and eight percent said they were bullied on the school bus. Nine percent of all students reported that they had suffered injuries as a result of being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on.

- The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have collaborated since 2001 to create the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign website. The interactive website, provides schools and communities with resources that raise awareness and involve students and adults in bullying prevention. The Stop Bullying Now! Campaign also includes information on how to respond to bullying as well as ways to prevent bullying.

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- In early 2010, a Federal Partners Steering Committee was launched to focus on bullying prevention work across the federal government.

- The goals of the committee are to develop a coordinated federal strategy to address bullying in schools and communities. The components of the strategy include bullying prevention, intervention, response, and recovery.

For more information on the Steering Committee, visit email: WorkingGrouponYouth@hhs.gov

Bullying Prevention and Response

For children and youth to thrive in their schools and communities, they need to feel safe and be safe — socially, emotionally, and physically. They need to feel as if they belong, and they need to feel valued. Youth, parents, schools, communities, and others have a role to play in building positive, supportive environments for children and youth, promoting acceptance and respect among all individuals, and ultimately, fostering youth development and learning. Bullying is a form of youth violence, aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying usually includes an attack or intimidation with the intention to cause fear, distress, or harm that is either:

- physical (e.g., hitting, punching),
- verbal (e.g., name-calling, teasing), or
- psychological/relational (e.g., rumors, social exclusion);

- a real or perceived imbalance of power between the bully and victim; and

- repeated attacks or intimidation between the same children over time (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010).

- Bullying can occur in person or through technology, called "electronic aggression" or "cyberbullying."

- Understanding bullying is complicated by the fact that a young person can be a bully, a victim, or both a bully and a victim (called "bully-victims") (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009).

- The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Steering Committee has partnered with the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs to share information the federal government has prepared to help prevent and address bullying in communities.

For more information, visit web-site: BullyingInfo.org:

WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN BY THE HEMPSTEAD UFSD'S BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR POLICY ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

As part of a policy subscription service with the New York State School Board Association, the Hempstead Board of Education is kept abreast of new policies and revisions due to the passage of new state and federal legislations, laws and the Commissioner's Regulations; and the importance placed on this issue of Bullying and Harassment by the state and federal governments, the Hempstead School Board will address the "Dignity for all Students Act," by setting forth terms and conditions of a policy which will be adopted and made part of the district's policy manual.

The policy which will be placed on the meeting agenda for three(3) readings. The purpose of this practice is to give the Board members, administrators, staff, and community members the opportunity to ask questions and to understand the reason that the policy is being considered. When all members concur, the policy will be adopted. Once adopted, the policy will be added to the District's on-line policy manual which can be found on the Hempstead School District's web-site. Go to the web-site at::

http://www.hempsteadschools.org/newsite09/boardpolicies.htm

WHAT TERMS AND CONDITIONS WILL THE DISTRICT'S POLICY SET FORTH?

POLICY TITLE: STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

POLICY NUMBER: 0115

DATE INTRODUCED: February 20, 2011

POLICY COMPONENTS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWINNG:

- Purpose of policy- to ensure an educational and working environment that promoted respect, dignity and equality;

- Definition, Bullying = Harassment, which is a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying is characterized by:

    1. **Power imbalance** - occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a target.

    2. **Intent to harm** - the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity.

District policy continued…..

3. **Threat of further aggression** - the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue

4. **Terror** - when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance."

The policy will be designed to cover at least three forms of bullying: verbal, physical and social relational.

- **Verbal bullying** includes name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting, gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, threatening electronic communications, anonymous notes, etc.

- **Physical bullying** includes poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property, or threatening gestures.

- **Social or relational bullying** includes excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothing, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares, etc.

Proposed Prevention Strategies:

A proposed policy describes a program geared to prevention will be designed to not only decrease incidents of bullying, but to help students build more supportive relationships with one another by integrating the bullying prevention program into classroom instruction. Staff members and students will be sensitized, through district-wide professional development and instruction, to the warning signs of bullying, as well as to their responsibility to become actively involved in the prevention of bullying before overt acts occur. The components will involve:

- Learning about and identifying the early warning signs and precursor behaviors that may lead to bullying.
- Gathering information about bullying at school directly from students.
- Establishing clear school wide and classroom rules about bullying.
- Training adults in the school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying.
- Providing adequate adult supervision, particularly in less structured areas such as in the hallways, cafeteria and playground.

- Raising parental awareness and involvement in addressing problems.
- Providing instruction in civility, citizenship and character education that emphasizes tolerance and respect for others.

The proposed policy will require that the Superintendent establishes:

- a district wide Task Force on Bullying Prevention ; and
- a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee in each school.

The responsibility of both the district-wide task force and the school-level committee will be to assist the administration in developing and implementing specific procedures on early identification of bullying and

The proposed policy will require that a program of reporting incidents is established:

- the district policy will include procedures to ensure thorough reporting, investigating, remedying and tracking allegations of bullying

Proposed Intervention Strategies recommended to be included in the District's policy:

- Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step in preventing escalation and resolving issues at the earliest stages.

- Intervention will emphasize education and skill-building. I

- In addition, intervention will focus upon the safety of the target/victim.

- Staff will be expected, when made aware of bullying, to either refer the student to designated resources for assistance, or to intervene in accordance with this policy and regulation

Proposed Training component of the District Policy

The Board recognizes that in order to implement an effective bullying prevention and intervention program, professional development is needed. The Superintendent and the district Professional Development Team will incorporate training to support this program in the annual professional development plan, as needed. Training opportunities will be provided for all staff, including but not limited to, cafeteria workers, lunch monitors, security and all staff who have contact with students. In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall ensure that at least one staff member is thoroughly trained in human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex. (Title IX Compliance Officer)

Proposed Reporting and Investigation Procedures

- Students who have been bullied, parents whose children have been bullied, or other students who observe bullying behavior are encouraged to make a verbal and/or written complaint to a teacher, coach, bus driver, social worker, counselor, supervisor, or administrator in accordance with the training and guidelines provided.

- At all times, complaints will be documented, tracked and handled in accordance with the regulations and procedures accompanying this policy, or, if applicable, district policy 0100, Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination or 0110, Sexual Harassment, and the district's Code of Conduct. Incidents will be included in the Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) system when applicable

Proposed Disciplinary Consequences

- While the focus of this policy is on prevention, bullying acts may still occur. In these cases, Offenders will be given the clear message that their actions are wrong and the behavior must improve. Offenders will receive in-school guidance in making positive choices in their relationships with others. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration in accordance with the district's Code of Conduct, as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted.

- **Proposed Non Retaliation Pledge**
  - All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and district policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind .

- **Proposed Dissemination, Monitoring and Review**
  - This policy, or a plain language summary, shall be published in student registration materials, student, parent and employee handbooks, and posted on the district's website.
  - Each year, as part of the annual review of the Code of Conduct, this policy will be reviewed to assess its effectiveness and compliance with state and federal law. If changes are needed, revisions will be recommended to the Board for its consideration.
  - In addition, the Board will receive the annual VADIR data report for each building and for the district as whole, with particular attention to the trends in the incidence of bullying. Based on the review of the data, the Board may consider further action, including but not limited to modification of this policy and additional training.

DISTRICT POLICY REGULATION

- **What are Regulations; why are they developed for a policy?**

Policy Regulations are procedures developed by the Superintendent of Schools. The policy is considered and adopted by the Board of Education. The purpose of the Regulations is to specify required actions and layout the detailed arrangements under which the school district will follow to comply with the Board's policy. The rules and detailed arrangements spelled out in the Regulations constitute the administrative regulations that will govern the schools.

In developing Regulations and procedures for the operation of the school system, the Superintendent will involve, at the planning stage, those individuals who will be affected by such provisions as set forth in a policy.

Once Regulations are developed, they are usually attached to the policy. These regulations are not required to be approved by the Board, however, it is the practice of the Hempstead Board of Education to approved Regulations (procedures) that are included in the District's policy manual.

Components of the Bullying Policy Regulation

- **Reporting regulations**

  In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it will be essential that all victims and persons with knowledge of bullying report such behavior immediately. In order to assist investigators, individuals should document the harassment, hazing, bullying as soon as it occurs, providing as much detail as possible including: the nature of the incident(s); dates, times, places it has occurred; name of perpetrator(s); witnesses to the incident(s); and the victim's response to the incident. After appropriate investigation, if the district finds that a student, an employee or a third party has violated this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken in accordance with the code of conduct

- **Confidentiality**

  It shall be district policy to respect the privacy of all parties and witnesses to complaints of bullying. To the extent possible, the district will not release the details of a complaint or the identity of the complainant or the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed to any third parties who do not need to know such information.

However, since the individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with the district's legal obligation to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary action to resolve the complaint, the district must retain the right to disclose the identity of parties and witnesses to complaints to those individuals with a need to know.

If a complainant requests that his/her name not be revealed to the individual(s) against whom a complaint is filed, the staff member responsible for conducting the investigation shall inform the complainant that:

- 1. the request may limit the district's ability to respond to his/her complaint;
- 2. district policy and federal law prohibit retaliation against complainants and witnesses;
- 3. the district will attempt to prevent any retaliation; and
- 4. the district will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs.

If the complainant still requests confidentiality after being given the notice above, the investigator will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request as long as doing so does not preclude the district from responding effectively to the bullying and prevention of bullying of any other student.

Investigation and Resolution Procedure

A. Initial (Building-level) Procedure

Whenever a complaint of bullying is received whether verbal or written, it will be subject to a preliminary review and investigation. Except in the case of severe or criminal conduct, the district's assigned staff member shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve complaints informally at the school level. The goal of informal procedures is to end the bullying and obtain a prompt and equitable resolution to a complaint.

As soon as possible but no later than ***three working days*** following receipt of a complaint, the assigned staff member shall begin an investigation of the complaint by:

- Having any written documentation provided by the victim(s) reviewed.
- Conducting separate interviews of the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s), and witnesses, if any, and documenting the conversations.
- Providing the alleged perpetrator(s) a chance to respond and notify him/her that if objectionable behavior has occurred, it must cease immediately and that the individual may be subject to discipline.

Parents of victimized students and accused students should be notified within one school day of allegations that are serious or involve repeated conduct.

Where appropriate, informal methods may be used to resolve the complaint, including but not limited to:

a. discussion with the accused, informing him or her of the district's policies and indicating that the behavior must stop;
b. suggesting counseling, skill building activities and/or sensitivity training;
c. conducting training for the department or school in which the behavior occurred, calling attention to the consequences of engaging in such behavior;
d. requesting a letter of apology to the victim;
e. writing letters of caution or reprimand; and/or
f. separating the parties.

Appropriate disciplinary action shall be recommended and imposed in accordance with district policy, the applicable collective bargaining agreement or state law.

If a complaint contains evidence or allegations of serious or extreme bullying, the complaint shall be referred promptly to the Superintendent. In addition, where the assigned staff member has a reasonable suspicion that the alleged bullying incident involves criminal activity, he/she shall immediately notify the Superintendent, who shall then contact the school attorney, appropriate child protection and law enforcement authorities.

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation by the assigned staff member may request a district-level investigation by submitting a written complaint to the Superintendent within 30 days.

- **B. District-level Procedure**

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall promptly investigate and resolve all bullying complaints that are referred to him/her, as well as those appealed to the Superintendent following an initial investigation the district assigned staff member In the event the complaint involves the Superintendent, the complaint shall be filed with or referred to the Board President, who shall refer the complaint to an appropriate individual who will investigate the matter. The district level investigation should begin as soon as possible but not later than three working days following receipt of the complaint in the district.

During the formal district level investigation, the district will endeavor to use individuals who have had formal training in such investigations or who have previous experience investigating such complaints. If a district investigation results in a determination that bullying did occur, prompt corrective action will be taken to end the misbehavior

No later than 30 days following receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent (or in cases involving the Superintendent, the Board-appointed investigator) will notify the victim and alleged perpetrator, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation.

- **Retaliation Prohibited**

  Any act of retaliation against any person who opposes bullying behavior, or who has filed a complaint, is prohibited and illegal, and therefore subject to disciplinary action. Likewise, retaliation against any person who has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing of a bullying complaint is prohibited. For purposes of this policy, retaliation includes but is not limited to: verbal or physical threats, intimidation, ridicule, bribes, destruction of property, spreading rumors, stalking, harassing phone calls, and any other form of harassment. Any person who retaliates is subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination

- **Discipline/Penalties**

Any individual who violates this policy by engaging in prohibited bullying will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Students: Discipline may range from a reprimand up to and including suspension from school, to be imposed consistent with the student conduct and discipline policy and applicable law.

Employees: Discipline may range from a warning up to and including termination, to be imposed consistent with all applicable contractual and statutory rights.

Volunteers: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of volunteer assignment.

Vendors: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of district business.

Other individuals: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including denial of future access to school property

- **Training**

All students and employees shall be informed of this policy in student and employee handbooks, on the district website and student registration materials. A poster summarizing the policy shall also be posted in a prominent location at each school.

All employees shall receive information about this policy and regulation at least once a year. Administrative employees and other staff, such as counselors or social workers, who have specific responsibilities for investigating and/or resolving complaints of bullying shall receive yearly training to support implementation of this policy, regulation and on related legal developments.

Principals in each school shall be responsible for informing students and staff on a yearly basis of the terms of this policy, including the procedures for filing a complaint and the impact of bullying on the victim and bystanders.

Training needs in support of this bullying prevention and intervention program will be reflected in the district's annual professional development plan, in curriculum and will be considered in the budget process.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What can you do?

- Prepare your suggestions and questions that you have.
- Plan to attend the meetings when the policy will be on the agenda.
- Speak with others and let them know the district's plan for adopting the policy.
- Review the policy recommendation thoroughly.
- If you are unable to attend the meeting, post your comments on the web site at http://www.hempsteadschools.org

What will the District will do to promote this policy?

- The meeting dates and times for review of this policy will be posted on the web site.
- Provision will be made to accept comments posted on the web-site.
- A copy of the proposed policy and regulation will be posted on the web-site for your review.
- The district will have three readings (policy being considered by the Board of Education) prior to the resolution to adopt.
- All comments submitted will be posted on the web site, even if they are not used in the final policy

CONCLUSION & FINAL STEPS

Considering to adopt a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy with Procedures, the Hempstead School Board goes on record by sending a message that we are preparing to provide a climate in which the "Dignity of all Students is Evident" in a safe environment conducive to teaching and learning, by

"Taking a Stand;"

" Lending a Hand;" and

" Stopping Bullying Now!"

PUBLIC NOTICE

This presentation is the second in a series of informational items that is being posted on the web site. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas and feelings about the direction in which the Hempstead District is going. We started with the role of the School Board as the governing agent for district and we will expand on their role as the policy makers.

This and future presentations are being shared so that you as the community and staff can follow the Board of Education as they strive to lead the district to a high performing entity, one in which the students can achieve and excel as they grow into adulthood and become productive citizens in a global society.