

Resolution No.: 17-631
Introduced: December 4, 2012
Adopted: December 11, 2012

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: Councilmembers Ervin, Rice, Navarro, Floreen, Andrews, Riemer, and Leventhal

SUBJECT: Recommendation to the General Assembly to Enhance Anti-Bullying Efforts through the use of Multi-disciplinary Teams

Background

1. Addressing the problem of bullying, harassment, and intimidation must be a shared responsibility of all agencies throughout the community that work with young people.
2. The Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to require a county board of education and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to report incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation against students in public schools. In 2008, the General Assembly required MSDE to develop a model anti-bullying policy.
3. In March 2012, MSDE reported that for the 2010-2011 school year, there were 4,678 reported incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. This was a state-wide increase of 860 from the 2009-2010 school year. Almost 85% of the reported incidents occurred on school property. About 31% described the incident as demeaning and making the person a victim of jokes and about 10% said that the incident involved getting another person to hit or harm the student. Most incidents affected children aged 10 through 14.
4. Montgomery County Public Schools defines bullying as, "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 perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or Threatening or seriously intimidating; and Occurs on a school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school."

5. For the 2011-2012 school year, Montgomery County Public Schools reported 515 incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation of which 487 were confirmed. The 515 reported incidents is an increase of 78 from the 437 reported incidents in the 2010-2011 school year. County-wide, 52.4% of MCPS students agreed with the statement, "In this school, students bullying other students is a problem."
6. The non-profit organization, WiredSafety, reports that 85% to 95% of the 44,000 middle school students surveyed reported that they had been bullied online at least once, but only 5% said they would tell their parents. According the Pew Research Center, 95% of all teens ages 12-17 are now online and 80% of those online teens are users of social media sites. 88% of social media using teens have witnessed other people being mean or cruel on social network sites.
7. School, parents, and students, continue to look for better ways to address and contain the growing bullying and cyber-bullying problem.
8. Multidisciplinary teams have been shown to be an effective method for providing and coordinating services for children and their families.

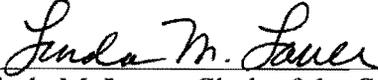
Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Montgomery County Council urges the Maryland General Assembly, during the 2013 session, to:

- (1) Provide the necessary resources to school systems and appropriate agencies who work with young people to allow them to establish multidisciplinary teams in each jurisdiction, to include but not be limited to school personnel, representatives from the local police department, the appropriate local mental health agency, and the local State's Attorney, to address bullying, harassment, and intimidation;
- (2) Promote the use of multidisciplinary teams to handle, investigate, and address reports of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation, whether in person or online, by encouraging school systems to enter into written agreements with the participating agencies in the multidisciplinary teams to specify standard operating procedures for the investigation and resolution of bullying, harassment, and intimidation complaints, including a timeline for investigation and resolution; and,
- (3) Ensure that the multidisciplinary teams receive the necessary training on an ongoing basis to help bolster bullying-prevention efforts, to support the students who are victimized, and to provide guidance and remediation to the perpetrators.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council