

Attorney General Denn Updates School Compliance with Delaware Bullying Laws

WILMINGTON, DE – Attorney General Matt Denn released the second annual report on compliance by Delaware schools with state anti-bullying laws today. The report analyzes the implementation by the Department of Education, school districts, and charter schools of significant changes that were made to the state's bullying statutes in 2012.

The report finds that the state's efforts to require schools to communicate with parents about bullying incidents are showing success, but that the state's evidence-gathering practices regarding bullying are in need of reform and that school districts and charter schools are not consistently complying with their obligation to direct students and parents to help when bullying occurs.

The report notes that there were 11% fewer substantiated bullying incidents reported in the 2013-2014 school year than in the 2012-2013 school year, but questions about the reliability of the state's bullying statistics make it difficult to gauge whether a real reduction in bullying of that amount occurred.

"It is encouraging to see the progress our schools have made in keeping parents informed about bullying, because that was one of the primary goals of the 2012 legislation," said Attorney General Denn who co-authored the 2012 legislation as Lieutenant Governor. "But our schools clearly have more work to do in letting parents know what recourse they have when bullying does occur, and the state needs to do a better job accurately tracking bullying incidents so we can accurately monitor our overall progress."

In addition to conclusions highlighted in the report, the document proposes recommendations for moving forward, including:

(a) That the state revise its system for tabulating reported and substantiated bullying incidents so that data the legislature intended to gather can be accurately tabulated.

(b) That the state more uniformly educate and monitor the reporting practices of districts and charter schools so that incidents and data are properly reported on a consistent basis.

(c) That school districts and charter schools ensure that contact information for the state's bullying ombudsman is prominently displayed on their web sites, and that the Delaware Code be revised to provide specific enforcement provisions for this statutory requirement.

(d) That the Department of Education continue to emphasize reporting of bullying incidents to parents of both victims and perpetrators.

"Delaware students, parents, and educators share genuine concerns about bullying—in-school bullying, bullying outside of school, and especially, the rise in bullying on social media," said Frederika Jenner, President of the Delaware State Education Association. "We appreciate the attention that has been brought to these concerns, as well as efforts from the AG's office to both curtail and monitor bullying. All progress is welcomed and celebrated."

"We are pleased with the progress the state has made in addressing the issue of bullying in our schools," said Dr. Terri Hodges, President of the Delaware PTA. "The findings and recommendations are consistent with the changes we have seen in the schools, as well as the reports we receive from parents in regards to how incidents of bullying are handled."

You can view the entire report here:
http://www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/documents/2015_anti-bu

[llying-laws.pdf](#)