

Bullying Prevention Task Force FY15 Performance Oversight Questions

- Q1. Describe the FY15 goals of the Bullying Prevention Task Force. Was the Task Force successful in meeting its FY15 goals? If not, please describe what prevented the Task Force from meeting its goals.

The Mayor’s Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force had a successful FY 2015, fulfilling all of the requirements set out in the statute, including prioritizing, creating and finding supports and trainings for covered entities. We continued to work on compliance with agencies, grantees and schools. All 10 DC agencies remain compliant. To date, there is just one charter school that has not submitted a policy and three that need revision to be fully compliant. DC Public Schools and the DC Public Charter Schools Board provided updated Points of Contact (a requirement of the law) for each school with a compliant policy. The Task Force continued to work with the Trust (the former City Youth Investment Trust Corporation CYITC) to ensure all non-profits receiving funding from the District have compliant policies. A number of grantees that receive funding from the Trust have requested training and the Task Force was able to provide trainings and support to both staff members of the grantees and parent communities associated with the grantees.

In April of 2015, we released The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Toolkit. The Toolkit was created in partnership with Child Trends, our research partner and experts in the field of bullying prevention. The Toolkit is a comprehensive package of guides, presentation slides, scenarios and self-assessments for schools or other entities to train their staff on how to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying. The Toolkit is available at no-cost and was developed to be used by school staff to train and develop their individual program.

Participants who were trained using the Toolkit will understand the required policy components of the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012, including:

- The District's definition of bullying,
- Reporting requirements, and
- Appeals procedures;
- Be able to determine whether bullying has occurred, using the “Bullying Incident Checklist”;
- Know best practices as well as cautionary notes regarding intervening in bullying situations;
- Recognize the role of school climate in the prevention of bullying; and
- Assess their current capacity for addressing school climate issues.

Members of the Task Force participated in a train-the trainer training and we are happy to accommodate any school or agency that would like us to provide the training.

- Q2. Describe the goals for the Bullying Prevention Task Force for the remainder of FY16 and FY17 if applicable.

The Task Force was set to sunset in August of 2015, but as part FY16 Budget Support Act, it was renewed for three more years. That extension provided the following goals for the next three years:

- a. Appropriately engage the parents and guardians of youth in covered entities in supporting bullying prevention.**
- b. Create a referral list of community based programs that mitigate bullying and address identified behavioral health needs to all covered entities.**
- c. Support the collection of evidence based school climate data to ensure full implementation of the law**

Progress has begun on each of these new areas of work as follows:

Appropriately engage the parents and guardians of youth in covered entities in supporting bullying prevention.

In October 2015, the Task Force released a new parent pamphlet (in multiple languages) that provides guidance for parents on how to best support their children and how to work with their school to address bullying. The parent pamphlet outlines the law and provides parents and guardians a step-by-step process for supporting their students. It also contains information for outside resources and best practices for de-escalating concern and focusing on student safety. This year, we plan to build out on this work and develop a speaker's bureau to provide research based information to families on preventing bullying, as well as steps to take if you are worried your child may be targeted.

Create a referral list of community based programs that mitigate bullying and address identified behavioral health needs to all covered entities

The Task Force is continuing to work cross agency and collaboratively with our partners at the Office of the State Superintendent of Schools (OSSE) and the Department of Behavior Health (DBH) to align supports and resources to be comprehensive, evidence based, and appropriate. We will continue to develop resources for schools and community agencies that support resiliency and look for the underlying roots of negative behavior.

Support the collection of evidence based school climate data to ensure full implementation of the law

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. Researchers have studied the characteristics of safe and supportive schools with positive climates. A school's climate is measured by its norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interaction, and organizational processes and structures. Positive school climates have been shown through research to lower dropout rates, decrease incidents of violence, support teacher retention, and increase student achievement.

From the Task Force's beginning in 2012, it has advocated for comprehensive school climate data that is cross sector and evidence based. The Task Force is committed to bringing this data directly to schools so that they can begin the important work of addressing the needs of each school based on their own data. There is no one size fits all response to bullying and building positive school climate. Schools must be given the appropriate data to make decisions that will benefit their community based on valid data that has been proven to support this work.

In September 2015, the National Institutes of Justice (NIJ) awarded a \$3.8 million research grant to Child Trends, DCOHR and OSSE to focus on school climate and bullying prevention in District schools through implementation of the evidence-based Safe School Certification Program (SSCP). SSCP is a framework designed to develop schools' capacity to implement evidence-based programs to prevent bullying and improve school safety, a key element of school climate. SSCP is three-year technical assistance model that involves a school certification process to incentivize schools to participate in capacity building efforts. This framework fully aligns with the model policy created by the Task Force. This research project has three overarching goals:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the SSCP in developing schools' capacity to reduce bullying and other violence and improve students' senses of school connectedness and belonging.
- Investigate the processes and challenges of implementing the SSCP model.
- Build capacity within D.C.'s systems to sustain school climate improvement.

The grant provides opportunity for thirty-six public and public charter schools to participate in the SSCP. In doing so, they will receive expert support and technical assistance in using student and teacher input to identify needs, identifying and implementing strategies to improve climate and prevent bullying, and how to use data to assess effectiveness of the strategies. The SSCP is a proven technical assistance model that certifies schools after they demonstrate efforts on each of eight key components of school climate. Schools will additionally have the ability to apply for sub-grants from OSSE to help support implementation of evidence-based programs. SSCP's

framework is strongly rooted in school climate and bullying prevention research, and it has been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions.

Schools participating in the three-year program will be announced next year, and will begin the program in the 2016 – 2017 school year. Participating schools will use an evidence-based approach that is tailored to the needs of each school, so the strategies are both effective and sustainable. The thirty-six school in the pilot will collect evidence based school climate data and will be given the technical assistance and supports necessary to analyze the data and identify the appropriate programs and interventions needed to build positive school climate and reduce bullying. All schools will be using a climate survey developed by the Department of Education. This pilot will create the opportunity for DC to understand the importance of this data and build the capacity at OSSE to both collect and support schools in interpreting the data and matching needs with evidence based programs.

- Q3. Provide a list of the current membership of the Task Force including each individual's name, affiliated organization, and ward of residence.

See attached.

- Q4. Are there currently any vacancies on the Bullying Prevention Task Force? If so, what is the reason for the vacancy? How long has the position been vacant? What steps are being taken to fill the vacancy?

We have no vacancies.

- Q5. How often did the Task Force meet in FY15 and to date in FY16?

FY15: October 14, 2014, January 27, 2015, February 11, 2015 (Just DC Agency POC's), May 14, 2015

FY16: October 14, 2015, January 28, 2016.

- Q6. What were the major accomplishments of the Task Force in FY15 and to date in FY16? Include the following: specific efforts to engage with the community; efforts to engage with other city agencies, schools, and grantees; bullying policy compliance of city agencies; bullying policy compliance of DCPS; bullying policy compliance of Public Charter Schools; and bullying policy compliance of city grantees.

The Task Force has continued to engage with the community, provide vital resources and work to change the paradigm around bullying to align with evidence based approaches and best

practices information. We have stressed the importance of reestablishing safety and building resiliency for a student that has been targeted, and changing the behavior of the student who has targeted another student(s).

- Specific efforts to engage with the community;

In October 2015, during bullying prevention awareness month, the DC Bar Association hosted a parent forum at Martin Luther King Library. Along with the DC Office of Ombudsman's for Public Education and the DC Office of the Youth Advocate, the Task Force spoke to parents regarding the specifics of the DC Youth Bullying Prevention program and law.

We also helped to explore ways parents can play preventing bullying and developing the communication and tools necessary to support their children. The parent pamphlet was introduced at this event and is being used (in multiple languages) to do outreach and support in the community.

- Efforts to engage with other city agencies, schools, and grantees;

From October of 2014 until now there have been more than 25 trainings (schools, grantees, agencies, and parent groups), over 20 individual cases including many school meetings, and outreach to over a dozen groups to build the network of supports and services needed for youth. In April 2015, the Task Force created and released a toolkit called, "The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Toolkit," which is a self-directed training that can be done in sections or as a whole that provides the legal as well as philosophical framework of the citywide bullying prevention program. The Toolkit includes a presentation, user guide that is comprehensive and flexible, and practice scenarios, all of which are available for download on the Office of Human Rights website. The Toolkit provides schools, agencies, and grantees with a step-by-step understanding of what they can do to protect youth, build positive school climates and respond appropriately if an incident has been reported. See Q1 for more details.

- Bullying policy compliance of city agencies;

All city agencies have fully compliant policies with an updated point of contact required yearly at the beginning of the school year. While agencies do not follow the school calendar, the update point of contact information is requested in August.

- Bullying policy compliance of DCPS;

DCPS submitted updated points of contact in the fall. In August we provided a version of the toolkit to DCPS administrators that were participating in a school climate professional development day.

- Bullying policy compliance of Public Charter Schools; and

The Public Charter School Board provided updated point of contact information that the schools shared with them. We have one charter school that has not submitted a policy and there that are not fully compliant.

- Bullying policy compliance of city grantees.

We continue to work with the Trust (the former City Youth Investment Trust Corporation CYITC) to ensure all of their grantees are compliant.

- Q7. Provide the committee with an update on the Task Force's efforts to collect city-wide bullying data. Have there been any impediments to collecting city-wide bullying data? If so, describe these impediments.

Collecting data is a challenge. The law specifically required that schools (and only schools) share incident data. The first set of incident data will be available at the end of the present school year. We will be reporting on this data in aggregate form as part of an end of the year report.

It is important to note, however, that incident data is not the only data that the Task Force has requested or that the experts in the field suggest is important to address bullying or create the positive school climates that are key to preventing bullying. From the beginning, the Task Force has asked for comprehensive data based on research. While that includes incident data, it also includes additional compliance data on things such as whether there is a fully compliant policy, whether training has been provided, and most importantly, how students, staff and the community feel about the climate of the school. Through our strong partnership with OSSE, we will be using data that they have collected through the Healthy Schools Act and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to help describe the situation in the District schools. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey provides aggregate information about what individual students are experiencing and the Healthy Schools Act provides information on training. All of these sources of information will be included in a report that will be issued next fall. Through our own database at OHR, we will report out compliance rates around policy and point of contact information (all available to the public on the "Know Your Policy" section of the OHR website). The final data source that the Task Force has consistently advocated for is evidence based school climate data.

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. Researchers have studied the characteristics of safe and supportive schools with positive climates. A school's climate is measured by its norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interaction, and organizational processes and structures. Research shows a positive school climate is not only linked to decreased bullying, but also to increased academic achievement, increased attendance, increased graduation rates, and decreased violence.

Generally, there are **three core areas of school climate**: engagement, safety, and environment.

- **Engagement** includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

- Student and school connectedness is a key piece of engagement. This manifests itself as student-student and student-teacher relationships that are trusting, supportive, respectful, and caring.
- Increased engagement is indicated by increased student participation in class, completion of coursework, and participation in extra-curricular activities
- **Safety** refers to both physical and emotional safety.
 - Physical safety is promoted through the protection of students from violence and exposure to weapons, threats, theft, etc.
 - Emotional safety is promoted through the availability of emotional supports for students and staff, prevention of hate speech, and implementation of programs that teach problem solving, anger management, and positive communication skills.
- **Environment** extends past the physical structure of the school, to include the academic, disciplinary, and wellness environment.
 - A positive academic environment includes high-quality instruction, high academic expectations, and academic supports for struggling students.
 - A positive disciplinary environment is characterized by school rules that are perceived by students as clear, fair, and consistently enforced. The environments favor restorative practices over exclusionary ones.

The survey is administered not only to students but to staff and the community. As the result of receiving the National Institutes of Justice Research grant, the Task Force, in partnership with Child Trends and OSSE will be collecting school climate data for 36 schools starting in the fall 2016 and for the next 4 years. We will use aggregate data from this pilot to better understand the importance of positive school climates on reducing violence, including violence associated with bullying.

Q8. Describe any partnerships, collaborations, or initiatives currently underway between the Task Force and other District government agencies. In particular, point out any new partnerships or collaborations developed, planned, or implemented over the last fiscal year. Include the following agencies: DC Public Schools; DC Public Charter Schools; Department of Health; DC Department of Parks and Recreation; DC Department of Employment Services; DC Department of Human Services; Department of Behavioral Health; University of the District of Columbia; and UDC Community College.

- DC Public Schools; DC Public Charter Schools; Department of Health

In August of 2016, OHR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Health (DOH) to fund a pilot of elementary schools that would implement an evidence based bullying prevention program. The program selected was “Second Step,” a social and emotional learning curriculum that is teacher driven and is based on a whole school model tier 1 approach. Second Step has a supplemental curriculum that includes a

targeted set of lesson plans on bullying prevention. Eleven schools are participating in the pilot, of which nine are DC Public Schools and two are Charter Schools. Each school has received a full set of materials including the Second Step curriculum for each teacher in grades K-5, as well as the specific bullying prevention lessons that have been tested to coordinate with the program. Some pre-implementation training was available (although limited by the time frame of the pilot). Each school agreed to a research based evaluation tool that was funded by the pilot to assess the effectiveness of the program on students. A baseline assessment was made and the Task Force will follow up at the end of the school year with a re-assessment to evaluate the progress program. A certified trainer (same one as some schools met with before the pilot was launched) will provide training, do observations and support implementation goals in each of the schools in March. A final report on the outcomes of the pilot will be prepared for DOH in June 2016.

- DC Department of Parks and Recreation;

No new initiatives. We have continued to provide training to summer employees of the Department of Recreation on the policy.

- DC Department of Employment Services;

No new initiative, although the Department of Employment Services did include bullying prevention information to all their summer employees as part of their training, informing them of the law and the point of contact for their agency.

- DC Department of Human Services;

Not covered by the program.

- Department of Behavioral Health;

We have collaborated with the Department of Behavior Health (DBH) regarding ensuring that both suicide prevention training and trauma informed training incorporates the best practices and approach adopted in the Bullying Prevention Program. Going forward we hope to coordinate training and support DBH clinicians in the schools to participate in the full implementation of the bullying prevention policy, which focuses on supports to youth and not punishment.

- University of the District of Columbia and UDC Community College.

No new initiatives.

Q9. Describe the training and support available to schools, agencies, and grantees to assist with bullying policy implementation and compliance.

All schools, agencies and grantees can use the Toolkit, which addresses the legal as well as philosophical approach taken in the city to address bullying. The Toolkit is comprehensive and flexible and establishes a fundamental structure to build on. There is no one size approach to preventing bullying but a solid understanding of the law with a framework and approach that is

flexible and based on the current climate and realities of a school is the strongest path for a school, grantee or agency to follow.

Q10. What resources and supports are needed to increase bullying policy compliance among the District's schools, agencies, and grantees?

Compliance with the policy is only the first step in the process of ensuring that we are doing everything we can to prevent bullying and addressing the needs of students who are targeted. Having a policy across the city that includes a universal definition and supports a consistent approach to reporting, investigating and addressing incidents is a positive first step. But the research is also clear, that there is no single or simple way to change the dynamics of bullying. The framework that the Task Force pioneered--a public health prevention based approach with tiered supports based on need--is the most successful strategy available. The missing ingredient is collection of appropriate data that will help schools understand the underlying issues in their own particular school and then allow them to make decisions on programs that best support their unique needs. Without that information it is difficult to create a sustainable program that addresses the needs of the community. Fortunately, the NIJ grant will now provide the Task Force with a mechanism to obtain this information.

Q11. What resources are needed to help schools, agencies, and grantees focus on bullying prevention?

More mental health supports, particularly targeted toward building resiliency and navigating social pressures and gender roles. Focus groups conducted while developing the model policy, as well as opportunities to engage with students about the issue of bullying more recently, resulted in very similar information. Students select "personal appearance" as the category they are most likely to be bullied about. While this term can mean many different things, at the core, how safe and supported youth feel being themselves is what is important to recognize. We can and must help support communities that value all youth. Instead of generalizing about what issues are driving the problem, we must recognize that all schools and school communities look different, and the valid school climate data can get us started on the right track. And then have the supports and resources available for youth to address concerns.

Q12. Describe the challenges the Task Force has faced in changing the culture among the District's schools, agencies, and grantees.

The challenge that we all face in addressing bullying, is that it is more complicated than just punishing the person who is engaging in bullying behavior. We need to fundamentally look at this issue in a different way – to get at the roots of the behavior and address them in order to make real change. We also need to provide better support to youth who have been targeted

through better outreach and communications in order to make them feel reconnected and supported.

Q13. Identify all legislative requirements (both local and federal) that the Task Force lacks sufficient resources to implement properly.

None.

Q14. Identify any statutory or regulatory impediments to the Task Force's operations.

None.

Q15. The FY16 Budget Support Act expanded the scope of the Bullying Prevention Task Force. Discuss activities associated with the expanded scope of the Task Force, and how the expanded scope might improve schools and youth servicing agencies in the District of Columbia.

See question 2 for specifics of the new scope. Overall, the new work will continue to bring all parts of the community together, particularly the parents, to better understand how to support their children. By including parents, along with staff and students we can develop the overall community norms and supports that are key to positive climates. By continuing to shift the focus from punishment to behavioral health we can support youth and meet their needs.

Q16. List and describe any grants awarded in-part or in-whole to the Bullying Prevention Task Force during FY15 or to-date in FY16. Include: Grant Number/Title; Approved Budget Authority; Expenditures (including encumbrances and pre-encumbrances); Purpose of the grant; Grant deliverables; Grant outcomes, including grantee performance; Any corrective actions taken or technical assistance provided; Bullying Prevention program and activity supported by the grant; and Source of funds.

- Grant Number/Title;
NIJ Grant 2015-CK-BX-0016; Improving School Safety in the District of Columbia: Evaluating the Safe School Certification Program (Primary Grantee: Child Trends, Inc.)
- Approved Budget Authority;
Total budget \$3,837,189 (DC-OHR Subgrant Total: \$180,000), 2016-2019
- Expenditures (including encumbrances and pre-encumbrances);
As of January 28, 2016 no funds have been spent on this grant as we are still awaiting final budget approvals
- Purpose of the grant;

The purpose of this project is to evaluate implementation of the [Safe School Certification Program](#) (SSCP), a framework designed to develop schools' capacity to implement evidence-based programs to prevent bullying and improve school safety, a key element of school climate. SSCP is three-year technical assistance model that involves a school certification process to incentivize schools to participate in capacity building efforts. This project has three overarching goals:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the SSCP in developing schools' capacity to reduce bullying and other violence and improve students' senses of school connectedness and belonging.
 - Investigate the processes and challenges of implementing the SSCP model.
 - Build capacity within D.C.'s systems to sustain school climate improvement.
- **Grant deliverables;**
DC OHR is responsible for the following deliverables:
- Quarterly progress and financial reports
 - Report on the status of participating schools' portfolios and selection of schools for subgrants due August 2017, August 2018, and August 2019
 - Identification of local resources and guidance for technical assistance specialists with the Safe School Certification Program (ongoing)
 - Participation in quarterly team calls (ongoing)
- **Grant outcomes, including grantee performance;**
N/A; grant has not started.
- **Any corrective actions taken or technical assistance provided;**
N/A; grant has not started.
- **Bullying Prevention program and activity supported by the grant; and**
DC OHR's role on the grant is to manage and oversee the local "Certification and Advisory Board" (CAB) component of the Safe School Certification implementation. The CAB will be made up of volunteers currently serving on the Mayor's Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force. The CAB serves two primary functions for the Safe School Certification Program. First, the CAB provides ongoing guidance for participating schools and the technical assistance specialists to identify local resources available to schools to address identified needs and concerns. Second, the CAB is ultimately responsible for reviewing portfolios submitted by participating schools and provide feedback on progress towards achieving the eight key elements of the SSCP and select schools to receive grants administered by OSSE. DC OHR's subgrant covers the cost of a part-time contract consultant to coordinate these activities.
- **Source of funds.**

National Institute of Justice, Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

Q17 List and describe any pilot programs on which the Bullying Prevention Task Force is currently overseeing, or partnering with other agencies or outside entities. Include: purpose of the program; program deliverables; and Program outcomes.

As mentioned in Q8, we partnered with DOH to purchase a full set of materials for the “Second Step” program, which is evidence based social and emotional learning curriculum that teaches empathy, emotion management, and problem solving, . We also purchased a researched based assessment of the program.

- Purpose of the program;

Implementation of Second Step, a social-emotional curriculum, in eleven DC elementary schools (two charter and 9 DCPS), including the bullying prevention lessons.

- Program deliverables; and

As part of the pilot we purchased an evidence based research assessment tool that teachers are to complete twice to evaluate the progress of each student in the concepts covered by the program.

- Program outcomes.

After we study the data from the assessment tool we will determine if this pilot was successful and if there is funding for more schools next year.

Q18. Do terms of any grants received by the Bullying Prevention Task Force currently extend beyond the term of the Bullying Prevention Task Force? If so, should the Task Force be extended again or made permanent? If made permanent, should it stay in its current structure, or should the Council adopt another structure for the Task Force? Please describe any desired structures the Task Force may want the Council to consider, including the scope and purpose of the structure.

The NIJ grant will provide funding for 4 years, which is past the present duration of the Task Force. As we begin to implement the grant, there is a specific role that the Task Force will be overseeing. Following the first and second years of SSCP implementation, a certification advisory board (the Task Force), comprised of representatives from youth-serving DC governmental agencies and local non-profits, and subject matter experts, will help identify local resources to address schools’ needs and concerns and review school portfolios to determine schools that will be invited to apply for funding to support SSCP activities in the following year. After the final year of SSCP implementation, the advisory board will determine whether schools

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have met certification criteria. The Task Force will be supported in that process by funding from the grant. As we learn the role of certification we may choose to reassess the make-up and role of the Task Force but it is too early to make that determination. I look forward to re-evaluating the role and structure of the Task Force as we develop our role and build our capacity.