

**Bullying Prevention Task Force FY16 Performance Oversight Questions**

- Q1. Describe the FY16 goals of the Bullying Prevention Task Force. Was the Task Force successful in meeting its FY16 goals? If not, please describe what prevented the Task Force from meeting its goals.

A FY16 goal for the Mayor's Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force was to ensure that DC Government Agencies, public and public charter schools, and grantees of the city that work with youth have complaint bullying prevention policies. The Task Force was successful in achieving this goal. We continued to work on compliance with agencies, grantees and schools. All ten (10) DC agencies remain compliant (while policies do not change, Points of Contact (POC's) are updated). All but three (3) local education agencies have submitted anti-bullying policies that comply with the Youth Bullying Prevention Act. DC Public Schools and the DC Public Charter Schools Board provided updated Points of Contact (as stated in the regulations) for each school with a compliant policy. We have worked to transition the approach we took with grantees of the former Children's Youth Investment Trust to the United Way and continue to ensure that all grantees of the United Way have compliant bullying prevention policies. All grantees are offered training and support around implementation for their sites.

- Q2. Describe the goals for the Bullying Prevention Task Force for the remainder of FY17.

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. Currently, the Task Force is working towards the following goals:

- 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 continued on each of these new areas of work.

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

Last year the Youth Bullying Prevention Program (YBPP) 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 concerns and focusing on student safety. This past year we provided parent trainings in 10 schools to help parents better understand what bullying is and how to best work with their schools to address it. Our office has distributed over 700 parent pamphlets.

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

As a result of the National Institutes of Justice grant, the YBPP is in a better position to achieve this goal. Specifically, the grant provides funding to train and support a Certification and Advisory Board (CAB), which is designed to provide ongoing guidance to schools and other participants with identifying and vetting local resources to support school needs. The CAB is then charged with analyzing and sharing that information. The CAB consists of members from the Task Force and other members from the public. The exact language in the subaward agreement includes the following:

***Certification and Advisory Board.***

*The CAB will consist of members from the Mayor's Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force, an appointed body made up of representatives from all youth-serving governmental agencies in DC as well as representatives from local youth-serving non-profits and subject matter experts. The DC Office of Human Rights oversees the task force and will be primarily responsible for coordinating these supplemental activities for the grant.*

*The Certification and Advisory Board (CAB) serves two primary functions for the Safe School Certification Program. First, the CAB provides ongoing guidance for participating schools and the TAS (Technical Assistant Specialist) to identify local resources available to schools to address identified needs and concerns. The TAS team will provide a quarterly report to the CAB to inform them of current challenges and issues participating schools are facing. In turn, the CAB will provide the TAS team with resources as well as broader observations on current challenges for DC youth at large.*

*Second, the CAB is ultimately responsible for reviewing the portfolios submitted by participating schools, as well as any control schools, that are applying for funding to implement an evidence based program or training based on the schools' analysis of their school climate data.*

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

From the Task Force's beginning in 2012, it has advocated for comprehensive, cross-sector, evidence-based school climate data. The Task Force is committed to bringing these data directly to schools to inform each school's unique needs. There is no one-size-fits-all response to bullying and building a positive school climate. Schools must be given the appropriate data to make decisions that will benefit their own communities. In September 2015, the National Institutes of Justice (NIJ) awarded a four-year research grant to Child Trends, DC OHR and OSSE to focus on school climate and violence 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 violence and improve school safety, a key element of school climate. SSCP is 3-year technical assistance model that fully aligns with the model policy created by the Task Force. The model does not dictate what schools should be doing, but rather helps them understand what is and is not working in their current activities and how to shift their focus to better address the needs of their communities. The grant will also provide funding for schools to engage with new evidence based programs that respond to their needs.

There are 30 cross-sector schools in the pilot and they will all collect school climate data through the newly created U.S. Department of Education School Climate Survey (ED-SCLS) and will be given the technical assistance and supports necessary to analyze the data and identify the appropriate programs and strategies

needed to build positive school climate and reduce violence. This pilot will create the opportunity for the District 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?

There is one vacancy (teacher) due to a member leaving the country. No steps are currently being taken to fill this vacancy because of the overlap in the work between the Task Force and NIJ's CAB, which is undertaking similar or same work.

- Q5. How often did the Task Force meet in FY16 and to date in FY17?

The Task Force met 4 times in 2016 – January 28, April 28, June 16 and November 16.

- Q6. What were the major accomplishments of the Task Force in FY16 and to date in FY17? Include the following:

- Specific efforts to engage with the community;  
The YBPP participated in the day-long OSSE LEA institute, "It Takes a District" by presenting on multiple panels explaining the work of the program and how to best engage with parents and schools.  
Media opportunities included radio (WHUR to discuss bullying) and panels hosted by both the Anti-Defamation League and the Capital Area Muslim Bar Association (CAMBA) to address concerns around the rise of anti-Muslim incidents in schools (the event with CAMBA was televised on CSPAN).
- Efforts to engage with other city agencies, schools, and grantees;  
Trainings were provided to the Children and Family Services Administration's educational staff, 10 schools asked for parent presentations on bullying, and training was done for Children's Hospital Committee on Injury Prevention. We will continue to work with Children's Hospital and are scheduled to provide more training.
- Bullying policy compliance of city agencies;  
City agencies all have a complaint policy and a designated point of contact.
- Bullying policy compliance of DCPS;  
All DCPS schools are under one policy and each school has provided a name and contact information for the person in charge of investigating incidents.
- Bullying policy compliance of Public Charter Schools; and  
All but three Public Charter Schools have compliant bullying prevention policies. All four new charter schools that opened this year have compliant policies. Two of the three schools that do not have compliant policies submitted policies initially but never resubmitted with the required modifications for compliancy. One charter school has never submitted a policy.
- Bullying policy compliance of city grantees.

We have begun to work with the United Way to ensure all non-profits receiving funding have compliant policies. A number of these agencies have requested training and we were able to provide trainings and support to both staff and parent communities associated with the programs.

- Q7. Provide the Committee with an update on the Task Force's efforts to collect city-wide bullying data. Please provide these efforts for FY15, FY16, and FY17 to date. Have there been any impediments to collecting city-wide bullying data? If so, describe these impediments.

Local Education Agencies (LEA's) are required annually to submit incident and other requested data under the YBPA. School year 2015-16 was the first year incident data were requested. 52 LEAs out of 66 (81 %) submitted incident data. The regulations for the Youth Bullying Prevention Act were not finalized until June of 2016 and therefore many LEA's were not fully aware of the way in which we would be collecting the data. Going forward we believe that LEA's are now in a position (we provided a tool for them to record incident data to reflect the requirements of the YBPA in a uniform and consistent manner. The Youth Bullying Prevention Program's bi-annual report includes this data, as well as, data from the DCC Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, both of which ask questions about bullying.

While collection of the data will be more streamlined going forward, our sense is there is a lot that can be done to strengthen the data that is collected. Our recommendations from the Youth Bullying Prevention Report are as follows:

- **Conduct regular audits of schools' bullying reporting to ensure schools are consistently recording and investigating all reports of bullying, especially for schools, which reported zero incidents of bullying for school-year 2015-16.** To assist in this process, schools should be encouraged to use the Task Force's Bullying Prevention Toolkit, which includes an Investigator Checklist and sample incidents that illustrate what fits and does not fit the YBPA definition of bullying.
- **Sponsor facilitated discussions between students, parents, and school officials to identify potential reasons for underreporting.** There is a significant gap between the percentage of students reporting bullying victimization and the number of schools reporting bullying incidents. One potential cause of this gap is underreporting of bullying incidents—by parents or students—to school officials. Another is schools' resistance to recording incidents as bullying. Convening targeted focus groups with students, parents, and school officials may help to confirm whether there is underreporting, identify the reasons why communities may not feel comfortable reporting incidents to schools, and identify potential solutions, for instance ensuring all incidents are addressed in some way, even if they do not meet the YBPA definition of bullying.
- **Provide interactive training opportunities for students, parents, and school officials to address differences in definitions of bullying to encourage alignment.** At present, the vast majority of parents and students receive their training from written materials, while school staff receives information from professional development opportunities. To address potential differences in how these populations understand bullying, training opportunities should provide an overview of the YBPA definition, and provide participants with opportunities to display their understanding and receive feedback.

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;  
We have partnered with DCPS schools on the NIJ grant.
- DC Public Charter Schools;  
We have partnered with a number of charter schools on the NIJ grant.
- DC Department of Parks and Recreation;
- DC Department of Employment Services;
- DC Department of Human Services;
- Department of Health;
- Department of Behavioral Health;
- University of the District of Columbia and UDC Community College;
- DC State Board of Education;
- Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education; and  
We continue to coordinate with the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education regarding specific cases and referrals.
- Office of the Chief Student Advocate;  
The Bullying Prevention Program is participating in the safe passage campaign of the Office of the Chief Student Advocate

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 (available on the OHR website) 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. We have provided over 20 trainings this last year based on the Toolkit.

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

Agencies, schools and grantees have been forthcoming in creating policies (particularly with the support of the model policy provided by the Mayor's Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force) that are compliant with the law. The more challenging work comes in ensuring that the policy is being implemented consistently and in a systemic way. The policy does not work in isolation and integrating it into the larger processes and policies of the school or agency is a more complicated and challenging process.

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

This work can be seen in two parts – the first is how schools, agencies and grantees respond to reports of bullying – which is outlined in the law and flushed out in the model policy. The hope is to have a specific and consistent response by adults to situations. The second part is to understand what works to prevent bullying



from happening in the first place. Among the recommendations we provided in our bi-annual report to Council we suggested:

- **Encourage the use of evidence-based prevention approaches that are integrated within schools' broader initiatives and behavioral frameworks.** Bullying is just one issue that schools face in the broader school climate. By helping schools understand the interconnections between bullying prevention work and existing behavioral frameworks, programs and practices will help streamline these efforts and maximize resources. Schools should be encouraged to follow best practices regarding bullying prevention rather than focusing on ineffective assemblies and anti-bullying campaigns. The same is true for agencies and grantees.
- **Support schools in implementing supportive disciplinary practices and warn educators of the consequences of overreliance on exclusionary discipline for bullying incidents.** Additionally, school leaders should be notified of the potential detrimental effects of suspension, and the potential legal implications of exclusionary discipline under federal civil rights and disability statutes.

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. We must also learn to recognize and differentiate between bullying and conflict. The hallmarks of bullying (power imbalance, repetition and intentional harm) require a different response than conflict, which is more likely to involve an incident that happened between youth and not based on a power imbalance. If we don't know if it is conflict or bullying, the response can be at best ineffective but at worst be potentially damaging. Adults need to be able to distinguish the difference so they understand how to address the problem in a way that meets the needs of all of the youth.

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. Provide an update on the Task Force's work to help implement the Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey Amendment Act of 2015.

The Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey Amendment Act of 2015 (the "Act") imposes obligations upon the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) to adopt rules, provide trainings, and develop guidance materials on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and handling various aspects of student mental and behavioral health. OSSE is also required to establish and implement a pilot program to collect school climate data (data regarding engagement, safety, and environment) through school

climate surveys. Because the Task Force is also collecting school climate data, we are sharing this information with OSSE to meet their climate data collection requirement under the Act. However, the majority of the requirements under the Act reside with OSSE.

Q16. The FY17 Budget Support Act expanded the scope of the Bullying Prevention Task Force. Discuss activities associated with the expanded scope of the Task Force, how the expanded scope might improve schools and youth servicing agencies in the District of Columbia, and any restraints on implementing the new scope. Please give specifics on the following:

- Engaging parents and legal guardians of youth in covered entities;
- Providing referrals to parents and legal guardians of community-based programs or resources that mitigate bullying and address behavioral health needs;
- Providing consultation and review evidence-based school climate data;

Please see responses to question 2 for specifics of the new scope.

Q17. Does the Task Force have the necessary resources it needs to execute its duties? If not, please describe why.

The duties and responsibilities of the Task Force are being met. The main task left from the extension of the Task Force is: Providing referrals to parents and legal guardians of community-based programs or resources that mitigate bullying and address behavioral needs. This task has been incorporated into the NIJ research grant and will be fulfilled over the course of the grant.

Q18. List and describe any grants awarded in part or in whole to the Bullying Prevention Task Force during FY16 or to-date in FY17. Include:

None.

Q19. 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 10, 2017 OHR has invoiced \$20,600 in funds from its Subgrant to hire a consultant to recruit CAB members provide the training and support for the CAB to fulfill its requirements.

- 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;

Thirty (30) middle and high schools, including both public and public charter schools, have agreed to participate in the project. As of January 15, data collection including student, parent, and school staff school climate surveys as well as systematic classroom observations was near completion. Data analysis is currently underway. We will be able to share more information about the baseline state of school climate during the next oversight hearing.

- Any corrective actions taken or technical assistance provided;

We expanded the pilot to include high schools serving 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades as well as schools serving 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in order to secure participation from a sufficient number of schools.

- 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 provides 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

Q20. 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.

None.

Q21. 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 until December 2019, which is past August 2018, the expiration date of the Task Force. The work of the Task Force – to best understand how to support schools (and by extension agencies and grantees) and to develop a list of resources and supports that are evidence based--is now incorporated into the Certification and Advisory Board (CAB), funded by the NIJ grant. The CAB, which is made up of members from the Task Force, is currently doing the work and will continue to do so going forward. Therefore, I would recommend that the work of the Task Force be suspended until December of 2019, at which point we can assess whether reactivating the Task Force is necessary.