For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES; TO REQUIRE THE POLICIES TO BE FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

AN ACT TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES; TO REQUIRE THE POLICIES TO BE FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. (a) The school board of directors in every school district shall adopt policies to prevent pupil harassment, also known as "bullying".

(b) The policies shall:

(1) Clearly define conduct that constitutes bullying;

(2) Prohibit bullying while on school property, at school sponsored activities, and on school buses;

(3) State the consequences for engaging in the prohibited conduct, which may vary depending on the age or grade of the student involved;

(4) Require that a school employee who has witnessed, or has reliable information that, a pupil has been a victim of bullying, as defined
by the district, shall report the incident to the principal of the school;

(5) Require that notice of what constitutes bullying, that bullying is prohibited, and the consequences of engaging in bullying be conspicuously posted in every classroom, cafeteria, restroom, gymnasium, auditorium, and school bus in the district; and

(6) Require copies of the notice of what constitutes bullying, that bullying is prohibited, and the consequences of engaging in bullying be provided to parents, students, school volunteers, and employees. The policies shall require that full copies of the policy must be made available upon request.

(c) A school employee who has reported violations under the school district’s policy shall be immune from any tort liability which may arise from the failure to remedy the reported incident.

(d) The local school board may provide opportunities for school employees to participate in programs or other activities designed to develop the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to acts covered by this policy.

(e)(1) The school district shall file with the Department of Education a copy of the policies adopted in compliance with this section.

(2) The State Board of Education shall review the policies provided by the school districts and may recommend changes or improvements to the districts if the board determines the policies need improvement.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-18-1005(a)(5), pertaining to student services programs to be provided by school guidance and counseling services, is amended to read as follows:

(5) Group conflict resolution services, which shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

(A) Educational and social programs which help students develop skills enabling them to resolve differences and conflicts between groups; and

(B) Programs designed to promote understanding, positive communication, and a greater utilization of a race relations specialist or human relations specialist to assist in the development of intergroup skills; and

(C) Programs designed to prevent bullying.
/s/ House, et al

APPROVED: 3/26/2003