



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Schools
FROM: Christy Ballard, General Counsel
DATE: August 30, 2012
RE: New Law Regarding Bullying and Harassment

The passage of the attached Chapter 992 of the Public Acts of 2012 (PC 992) established additional requirements for local education agencies (LEAs) relative to addressing bullying and harassment. Existing policy requirements established under Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-1016 remain in place. In addition to the existing policy requirements contained in the law, PC 992 requires LEAs to do the following at the beginning of each school year:

- Provide teachers and counselors with a copy of the policy required under Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-1016 as well as information and training on how the policy is to be implemented, including strategies to address bullying and harassment when it happens.
- Make available to students and parents information relative to bullying prevention and provide opportunities for discussion with respect to prevention policies and bullying prevention strategies.

Additionally, each LEA is required, beginning August 1, 2013:

- To annually submit a report to the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) concerning the number of bullying cases brought to the attention of school officials during the preceding year and the manner in which they were resolved or the reason they are still pending.

Finally, principals of middle, junior high or high schools, or their designees, are required to:

- Investigate harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying when a student reports to any principal, teacher or guidance counselor that physical harm or a threat of physical harm to such student's person or property has occurred. Following such investigation, the principal or designee is further required to report the findings, along with any disciplinary action taken, to the director of schools and the chair of the local board of education.

The Office of General Counsel, in collaboration with the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, has developed a variety of resources to assist LEAs and schools in meeting the new requirements of PC 992. The resources can be found at http://www.state.tn.us/education/safe_schls/safety_cntr/bullying_schools.shtml. Questions may be directed to Assistant General Counsel, Lesley Farmer at (615)741-2921 or Lesley.Farmer@tn.gov.