Anti HIB Work Group – Status Update

The 2011, Second Substitute House Bill 1163 (2SHB 1163) charged the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Office of the Education Ombudsman with creating a work group to both help maintain focus and attention on, as well as monitor progress of implementation of harassment, intimidation and bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

The mandated work of the group includes the following nine primary focus areas:

a. Considering whether disaggregated data should be collected regarding incidents of HIB.
b. Examining possible procedures for anonymous reporting of HIB.
c. Identifying curriculum and best practices to improve school climate, create respectful learning environments, and train staff.
d. Incorporating instruction about mental health, youth suicide, and bullying and harassment prevention.
e. Recommending best practices for informing parents about HIB.
f. Training primary district contact personnel.
g. Recommending educator preparation and certification requirements.
h. Examining discipline policies.
i. Collaborating with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to examine and recommend policies to protect K–12 students attending community and technical colleges.

Since its initial meeting in September 2011, the full Anti HIB Work Group has met a total of eight times. Early meetings established group membership, norms, and decision making processes. The first of the required biennial reports was sent to the Legislature in December 2011. That report can be found on the Anti HIB Work Group page of the School Safety Center web site.

After initial conversations and discussion among Work Group members, in March of 2012, five separate Subgroups were established to focus the work of addressing the nine areas of work for the Work Group. In the shorthand used by the Work Group, the initial five subgroups and the issues they focus on are:

1. (a) - The Data Group,
2. (c) (d) – The Curriculum and Best Practice Group,
3. (e) – The Informing Parents Group,
4. (f) (g) – The Training Group,
5. (h) – The Discipline Group.

In the meantime, as subgroups were formed, the larger Work Group sessions were designed to:
- further understanding of key terms and concepts in the discussion of harassment, intimidation and bullying prevention and intervention,
- to hear from experts about “things that work”, and
- to allow for subgroups to share information and report on their progress.

Among the activities noted by the subgroups are:
1. Shared local and national examples of data communicated to parents;
2. Conducted a statewide Administrator Survey of HIB and Discipline practices with 320 responses from 120 districts.
3. Conducted an initial Compliance Officer survey with 105 responses.
4. The Work Group is currently developing materials specifically designed to address the needs of Compliance Officers across the state.
5. Started to map out a tiered set of [training] recommendations for professionals (teachers, counselors, administrators, bus drivers, lunchroom workers, social workers, nurses, etc.).
6. Scanned other states’ HIB laws as they relate to HIB data. In addition, it is worthy of note that Washington State is one of four states identified by the US Department of Education for an in-depth follow-up study on its HIB legislation and policy. That study is due in the summer of 2013.
7. Defined terms and levels of implementation.
8. Found youth literature reading lists addressing HIB.
9. Used evidence based and/or tested-effective information to identify initial set of resources to recommend.
10. Generated and has begun to vet several work products.

The Curriculum-Best Practice subgroup has assumed the task of pulling together final work products into a unified whole to form the final work product of the Work Group, a state Anti-HIB Tool Kit.

The subgroups have found common challenges to their work. Taken from their Progress Reports, the main underlying challenge is finding and sustaining membership in the Work Group and subgroups. Therefore, the Work Group recommends that the Legislature:
   a. Fund the work of the Work Group and Subgroups
   b. Continue to focus on HIB and Cyberbullying;
   c. Plan and provide for a statewide training of trainers model/system
   d. Specifically include the word “emotional” into the state’s definition of HIB: “Physically and/or emotionally harms a student or damages a student’s property;”
   e. Specifically include the concept of “hazing” in the conversations and guidance around HIB;

Work Group Agency and Subgroup Leads will meet to plan specific next step strategies. As we move forward, the Anti-HIB Work Group plans to:
   a. Review it’s charge, both in whole to maintain focus and attention on, as well as monitor progress of implementation of harassment, intimidation and bullying prevention and intervention efforts individual and organization commitment to the work;
   b. Review and revisit each of the nine focus areas;
   c. Seek funding to help ensure the participation of members;
   d. Vet the work of the current subgroups with an eye to identifying gaps;
   e. Fill in the gaps in that current work. Examples which have already been identified include additional required work on curriculum and best practices around mental health and suicide prevention, data collection, and recommendations for pre-service training requirements;
   f. Begin work on focus area (i): collaborating with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to examine and recommend policies to protect K–12 students attending community and technical colleges;
   g. Begin to generate a comprehensive statewide Anti HIB Tool Kit.