

Coffee & Conversation

with Superintendent of Schools **Dr. Frank Santora**

held at Franklin Elementary School • October 30, 2023





What is HIB?

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying is defined as:



Any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c.122 (C.18A:37-15.3), that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- b. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- c. creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student



How does Roxbury investigate instances of HIB?

District Policy [5512](#) explicitly outlines the district's practices & procedures as it pertains to HIB investigations.

Further information on the district's Anti-bullying procedures can be found at www.roxbury.org/Page/124.

Prior to initiating the investigation regarding a reported incident or complaint, the Principal or designee, in consultation with the anti-bullying specialist, may make a preliminary determination as to whether the reported incident or complaint, assuming all facts presented are true, is a report within the scope of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14.

- 1) Should the Principal or designee, in consultation with the anti-bullying specialist, determine that a reported incident or complaint, assuming all facts presented are true, is not a report within the scope of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, the incident will be addressed through the Board's Code of Student Conduct policy.
- 2) The Principal will provide the parents of the alleged offender(s) and victim(s) with formal notice of the decision not to initiate a harassment, intimidation, or bullying investigation.



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If it is determined an investigation is warranted, the following steps are then taken:

- 1) Upon receipt of the verbal report, any staff member will direct the reporter to the [online submission portal](#).
- 2) The staff member receiving the report will also memorialize the concern in writing via an email to the Principal.
- 3) As soon as is practicable, the Principal or designee shall inform parent/guardian of all students involved in the alleged HIB.
- 4) Within one day of the report, the Anti-bullying Specialist (ABS) initiates the investigation.
 - a) *This process includes interview of the alleged victim, the alleged offender as well as any potential witnesses.*
 - b) *The entire investigation must be completed within 10 days from the receipt of the initial report.*
 - c) *Depending on the specific nature of the allegations as well as the outcome of the investigation, the Principal or designee may issue discipline via the code of conduct as well as remedial measures (i.e. school based counseling or social skills training).*
- 5) The Superintendent shall report the results of each investigation to the Board of Education no later than the date of the next Board of Education Meeting.
 - a) *This report includes info pertaining to any disciplinary, remedial or training measures implemented as a result of the investigation.*



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Parent Notification:

- 1) Parents of involved students shall be provided with information pertaining to the nature of the investigation, whether the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and whether consequences or services were provided to address the incident.
- 2) This notification shall be provided in writing within five school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the board of education.
- 3) If a parent disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, they may request an appeal hearing before the Board of Education.
 - a) *Such request must be submitted no later than sixty calendar days after the written information is provided to the board of education.*
 - b) *The hearing is conducted in closed executive session.*
 - c) *During the hearing, both the parent as well as the ABS or Principal provide input/testimony to the Board of Education regarding the investigation.*
 - d) *At the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting, the Board of Education issues a decision to affirm, reject or modify the findings of the investigation.*



HIB vs. Conflict



It is important to note that there are situations where a student's behavior may be characterized as **Conflict versus HIB**.

Regardless of whether an act is considered **Conflict or HIB**, the district takes each and every instance seriously and intervenes as appropriate.

Conflict

Conflict is "mutually competitive or opposing action of engagement."

Conflict includes disagreements, arguments, and fights.

Equal power between those involved.

HIB

HIB is one sided.

HIB involves one or more students that are victims of one or more person's aggression.

Person bullying has more power.



What supports are available to students involved in instances of HIB and Conflict?

Regardless of whether an act is considered **Conflict or HIB**, the district takes each and every instance seriously and intervenes as appropriate.

The district aims to provide student support services along a continuum that include large and small group services and individualized programming that includes the following:

- 1) School-wide character education and social-emotional learning programs.
- 2) Small group counseling programs.
- 3) Individualized supports including:
 - a) *Intensive individual and small group counseling (IEP/504/I&RS driven)*
 - b) *Behavioral Intervention.*
 - c) *Parent consultation and training services.*
- 4) Disciplinary practices for the alleged offender(s).
 - a) *Designed to teach student replacement behavior*
 - b) *Decrease the likelihood of repeated behaviors.*





Behavior Threat Assessment & Management Teams

*On August 1, 2022, Governor Murphy signed into legislation, **N.J.S.A 18:A:17-43.4** requiring the establishment of threat assessment teams in public schools.*

The purpose of the threat assessment team is to:

- 1) Assist school personnel in identifying students with behaviors of concern
- 2) Assess students' risk for engaging in violent or harmful acts
- 3) Deliver intervention strategies designed to manage the risk of harm for students.

This legislation is aimed at providing **a safe and secure learning environment for all students** by preventing instances of targeted in school.





Behavior Threat Assessment & Management Teams

*Roxbury Public Schools have established **a district-level team as well as BTAM teams** at each school building.*

The district level team includes:

- The Superintendent of Schools (Dr. Santora)
- The Director of Security (Jim Monaghan)
- The Director of School Counseling (Monica Mann)
- The Director of Special Services (Amy Gallagher)

The building-based team includes:

- Building Principal/Assistant Principal
- School Counselor/SAC
- School Psychologist/School Social Worker
- Additional Personnel

* The NJDOE's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning (OSPEP) is providing ongoing Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management virtual training for school communities through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act grant program.



School Preparedness & Emergency Planning
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



What are potentially concerning behaviors?

***Concerning behavior** does not necessarily imply or predict that an individual or group will become violent. Instead, it serves as an indicator that the student may be in need of intervention or increased supports. Proactive intervention and de-escalation are key and should be part of any approach to violence prevention.*

An observable behavior that elicits concerns in bystanders regarding the safety of an individual or those around them. Behaviors that may elicit concern can include the following:

- Unusual interests in violent topics
- Conflicts between classmates
- Increased anger
- Increased substance use
- Depression/Withdrawal
- Weapons violations
- Aggressive/Violent Behavior
- Threats

*Individuals who are aware or who have witnessed such behaviors are encouraged to contact the school immediately.



What are potentially concerning **communications**?

Concerning communication does not necessarily imply or predict that an individual or group will become violent. Instead, it serves as an indicator that the student may be in need of intervention or increased supports. Proactive intervention and de-escalation are key and should be part of any approach to violence prevention.

Unusual, bizarre, threatening, or violent communication made by an individual or a group that elicit concerns for the safety or wellbeing of the individual or others. Concerning communication may allude to the following:

- Violent intentions
- Violence as a means to solve problems
- Justification of violent acts
- Unusual interest in weapons
- Personal grievances
- Hoplessness or suicidal ideation

*Individuals who are aware or who have witnessed such behaviors are encouraged to contact the school immediately.



Behavioral Threat Assessment Next Steps...

As part of the **district's commitment to securing the safety and security of all students and staff**, there are a number action steps the district will take in the near future.

Next Steps:

- Adoption of District Policy and Regulation regarding Threat Assessment
- Creation of webpage on the district website with a link for anonymous reporting of any potential threat.
- Dissemination of further information and training resources for all stakeholders
- Continued and advanced training for Threat Assessment Team members
- Continued engagement with local and state law enforcement officials.

