Appendix I

**Site Visit Interview Protocol: District Representative**

**U.S. Department of Education State Bullying Laws and Policies Implementation Study**

**Field Interview Protocol**District Representative

The U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring a study about bullying in schools. The purpose of the study is to describe how districts and schools are implementing state laws and policies related to bullying. We are asking you to share your observations about bullying among students on school campuses in your district and your experiences developing and implementing the district’s bullying policy. [DISTRICT NAME] has been randomly selected as one of 12 school districts nationally to participate in the bullying study. You have been invited to participate in this study because you may be knowledgeable about bullying practices in this district.

**POTENTIAL RISKS OR BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION**

There are no anticipated risks involved in taking part in this study. Participation may not benefit you personally. However, the information gathered in this study may be valuable for developing effective policies for responding to bullying in schools.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

We will not share information identifying you or your district with anyone outside of the study team except if required by law. No one in your school or district administration will be told of your responses to interview questions and your responses will not be tied to any review or evaluation of your professional performance. Responses will be summarized in individual case studies for districts and schools to provide examples of policy implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific individual and does not identify a school or district by name.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION/WITHDRAWAL**

If you agree to complete the interview, you will be considered a participant in a research study on the implementation of state bullying laws and policies. Your participation in the research study is completely **voluntary**. You may decide not to join, to only answer some questions, or to leave the study at any time. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate.

**U.S. Department of Education State Bullying Laws and Policies School Implementation Study**School District Representative Interview

| **Respondent Information** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | What is your **position with the district**? |  |
|  | What are your **specific roles and responsibilities with regard to preventing or responding to bullying problems** within the district? |  |

| **Development of District/School Site Policy** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | **Tell me about the process for developing your district’s anti-bullying policy.** |  |
|  | 1. What **year was the** **district bullying policy created**? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ -- \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school year |  |
|  | 1. What **prompted the policy’s development**?  * Legislative changes * Direction from the State Department of Education * Response to a specific incidents * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. Who was **responsible for developing the policy** (i.e., individual or department within the district)? |  |
|  | 1. If the policy was developed through a **collaborative process**, which stakeholder groups participated?  * District employees * School employees * Families * Students * Community groups or organizations (specify) * Local law enforcement * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Did not involve a collaborative process |  |
|  | 1. How would you describe the **roles of different stakeholders or stakeholder groups** (respondent’s own role, roles of district and school personnel, parents, students) in developing the policy? |  |
|  | 1. What were the most **important influences shaping the development** of the district’s bullying policy?  * Research and evidence-base practice * State legislative requirements * State model policies and guidelines from your state * State model policies and guidelines from other states * State school boards’ association guidelines * Other sources |  |
|  | 1. Did the district choose to **adopt a model policy provided by the State Education Agency or state school boards’ association?**  * District adopted state model policy * District adopted school boards’ association model policy * District adopted some provisions of the [state model/school boards’ association model] * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | [PROBES]   * How useful was the **state model policy or guidelines by the State Department of Education** in developing the local policy? * If the district chose not to **adopt the state model policy or only adopted key provisions**, what were the factors influencing this decision? |  |
|  | 1. What challenges did you **encounter in developing the policy**? |  |
| [PROBE]   * Were there any areas of disagreement on key policy provisions? If so, what were the issues and how were they resolved? |
|  | 1. What **types of technical assistance** or support for developing the school district policy was available through the state department of education? |  |
|  | [PROBES]   * To what extent did the district utilize the support that was available? * If the district utilized the technical support that was available from the state, what types of assistance was requested? |  |
|  | 1. Do **schools develop their own bullying policies**? If so, what are the requirements?  * No, schools must adopt the district policy * Yes, schools may develop their own policies * Yes, schools must develop their own policies |  |
|  | [PROBES]   * If schools do develop their own policies, briefly describe the process (i.e., who is involved, are policies reviewed by the district? * How are school site policies similar to or different from district policies? |  |
|  | 1. How would you describe the **leadership role of your local school board** in supporting policy development, implementation, and enforcement of policy guidelines? |  |

| **Communication** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | **Tell me about how the district policy is communicated to school administrators and other school personnel, families, and students.** |  |
|  | 1. How is the **district policy communicated** to school personnel?  * Posted on the district website * Posted on school campuses * Published in the district employee manual * Reviewed as part of in-service training * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. How is the **district policy communicated** to parents and students?  * Posted on the district website * Posted on school campuses * Published in the student handbook or code of conduct * Directly mailed to parents * Discussed with students (e.g., at school assemblies, or in the classroom) * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. Is the bullying policy **communicated to parents in languages other than English** for students or families with limited English proficiency? |  |

| **School Personnel Training** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | **Tell me about any training that is provided to school personnel on bullying policies.** |  |
|  | 1. Does the district provide **training on bullying issues for school personnel**?  * Yes, school-level bullying training * Yes, district-wide bullying training * No, district does not provide bullying training |  |
|  | 1. How would you describe the **structure and content of training**?   [PROBES]   * Who **conducts the training program**? * How **often is training provided**? * How is the **training structured**? (e.g., part of in-service training covering multiples topics, online training)? * How much **time is spent** **training** on bullying issues? * What **issues or topics** are covered in the training curriculum? * How to identify or recognize bullying behavior * How to appropriately intervene in bullying situations * How to implement or enforce bullying policies * How to promote positive school climate * How to conduct an investigation * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. How was the **training curriculum selected or developed** (standardized curriculum or custom designed)? |  |
|  | [PROBES]   * If a standardized curriculum is used, identify the name of the training curriculum and developer? * If the district developed its own customized training curriculum, who was involved in this process? * Did the district receive any support from the State Department of Education in developing the curriculum? |  |
|  | 1. Who is **required to participate** in the training programs and is their participation mandatory or optional?  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Any training? | Mandatory training? | Voluntary/optional training? | | District administrators | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | School administrators | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | Teachers | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | Counselors/psychologists | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | Yard supervisors | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | Transportation personnel | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | School volunteers | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | | Other personnel | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | |  |
|  | [PROBE]   * How does the **district ensure that all required staff receive the training**? What strategies are used to incentivize participation or to monitor compliance? |  |
|  | 1. What kinds of **feedback have you received from school personnel** regarding the relevance of utility of training content? How was feedback obtained? How was feedback used? |  |
|  | 1. Have there been any **challenges associated with implementing staff training**? If so, how have these challenges been resolved? |  |

| **Prevention** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | **Tell me about any bullying prevention or education programs for students in the district.** |  |
|  | 1. Does the district **implement school programs or approaches to address bullying** (prevention, intervention, and whole-school approaches to promote school climate)?  * Yes, school-level bullying prevention programming * Yes, district-wide bullying prevention programming * No, schools do not implement bullying prevention programming |  |
|  | 1. How would you describe the structure and content of the bullying program?  * What are the specific program components? * How is the program delivered (e.g., whole-school approach, in-class curriculum)? * Which grade levels are targeted by the program? * In what ways, if any, does the school program involve families of students? |  |
|  | 1. Does the program **integrate a standardized or evidence-based curriculum**? If so, what curriculum do you use?  * Yes (specify the name of the curriculum) * No |  |
|  | 1. How **was the program selected**?  * Recommended by the state * Recommended by other entity * Identified through research * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. What are the **expectations for schools to implement school** programs?  * District requires implementation of district-wide prevention program * District requires implementation of a prevention program, schools have the option to choose the curriculum * District encourages schools to implement prevention program (no specific mandate) * District does not encourage or require prevention program implementation * Other |  |
|  | 1. Has the district **received any technical assistance from the state** to assist with school program development? If so, what types of assistance have been provided?  * Yes (specify the name of the curriculum) * No |  |
|  | 1. Does the district provide **training or other support to school personnel on how to implement** the school program? Please describe any training or support that is provided.  * Yes * No |  |
|  | 1. Have there been any **challenges to implementing the school program**? If so, how were these challenges resolved? |  |
|  | 1. What types of **feedback have you received from schools regarding the school program**? How was feedback obtained? How was feedback used? |  |

| **Investigations and Written Records** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | Tell me about the district’s involvement in investigating reporting bullying incidents. |  |
|  | 1. What are the specific **roles and responsibilities for the district in conducting a bullying investigation**? |  |
|  | 1. At what stage in the reporting and investigation process does the district become involved? |  |
|  | 1. What are the **steps required in the investigation process**? |  |
|  | 1. Does the district provide any **special accommodations for reporting or investigations** to assist students and families with special resource needs (e.g., accommodations for families with low literacy or limited English proficiency, or students with disabilities)? |  |
|  | 1. Is there any **written record of the investigation?** Please describe the types of written reports and how they are maintained. |  |
|  | 1. Are there any **specific timelines required for investigating** bullying complaints? |  |
|  | 1. Does the district **policy distinguish between bullying and harassment**? If so, what are the differences in how bullying and harassment incidents are handled? Are there any challenges related to defining and addressing these different types of behavior? |  |
|  | 1. What is the **typical scope of a bullying investigation**? What is the resulting impact on district resources? |  |
|  | 1. What have been some of the most **significant issues or challenges related to investigating** bullying behavior? |  |

| **Cyberbullying** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | We are interested in understanding more about the issue of cyberbullying among students within the district and how cyberbullying incidents are addressed. |  |
|  | 1. What are the specific **challenges associated with the identification, reporting, and investigation of cyberbullying incidents**? |  |
|  | 1. How does the district address concerns regarding **rights of free speech** when responding to cyberbullying incidents? |  |
|  | 1. Does the district **enforce student codes of conduct for off-campus bullying** or cyberbullying behavior that disrupts the school environment? If so, what criteria are applied to determine jurisdiction over off-campus incidents? What are the challenges to enforcement? |  |
|  | 1. What are the **limits of school jurisdiction over off-campus conduct**? Are there any challenges associated with these limits over jurisdiction? |  |

| **Responses to Bullying Behavior** | | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | | Tell me about the consequences for bullying behavior and how bullying issues are ultimately resolved. |  |
|  | | 1. What types of **consequences or disciplinary actions are imposed** for students who are involved in serious bullying incidents? |  |
|  | | 1. Does the district any **positive behavioral supports or** **non-punitive consequences** to address students’ bullying behavior? If so, what approach is used? How do you decide which consequences are assigned? |  |
|  | | 1. Are there **prescribed consequences** or do administrators have some flexibility in assigning consequences based on individual circumstances? |  |
|  | | 1. How are decisions made about **reporting to law enforcement when bullying violates criminal law**? Are there established guidelines for law enforcement reporting? |  |
|  | [PROBES]   * Does the policy require mandatory **law enforcement reporting for potential criminal violations**? * What are the advantages or disadvantages of specific policy provisions? | |  |
|  | | 1. Are **parents notified when their child is involved in a bullying complaint**? If yes, under what circumstances? |  |
|  | | 1. Are there any special procedures for **communicating with families about a** **bullying incident that involves an LGBT student** who may not be “out” to his or her family? |  |
|  | | 1. How would you **describe the relationship between the district administration and school resource officers (SRO)** with regard to managing and enforcing bullying problems? |  |

| **Supports for Targets of Bullying** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | **Tell me about any types of support services that are available to students who bully or students who have been the victims of bullying.** |  |
|  | 1. Does the district provide specific **protections for victims or reporters to prevent retaliation**? If so, how would you describe them? |  |
| [PROBES]   * Are there any **strategies used to protect students who are most frequently** targeted by bullying? * If so, what are the strategies? |
|  | 1. What types of supports **are available within the district to support students** who have been the victims of bullying?  * District provides mental health counseling to students * District provides mental health counseling through cooperative agreements with community-based providers * District refers students to community-based mental health providers * No mental health services or linkages |  |
|  | 1. What are some of the **challenges to addressing the needs** of bullying involved youth? |  |

| **Support for Policy** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | We are also interested in the degree to which teachers, staff, and the community understand and support the anti-bullying policies in your school. |  |
|  | 1. **How would you characterize the reaction** of school personnel to the bullying policy and its requirements? |  |
|  | 1. What **components of the policy receive the strongest support**? |  |
|  | 1. What components have received less support? What is it about these components that produce concern? |  |

| **Transparency & Monitoring** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | Tell us about how the district and individual school sites monitor and record bullying incidents. |  |
|  | 1. What are the **expectations for schools to record and report** information on bullying incidents? |  |
|  | 1. What **format is used for data reporting**? |  |
|  | 1. How **frequently is data reported** by schools?  * Monthly * Quarterly * Twice per year * Annually * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. How **frequently is data reviewed** at the district level?  * Monthly * Quarterly * Twice per year * Annually * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 1. **How is the information used** by the district (e.g., planning and program development, school accountability)? |  |
|  | 1. What **steps does the district take to ensure that individual schools are in compliance** with bullying policies (e.g., processes for monitoring, sanctions)? |  |
|  | 1. What are some of the **liability concerns** for the district? |  |

| **Costs to Implement** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | **Tell me about the costs of implementing the bullying policy for the district and for schools.** |  |
|  | 1. Has the district added any additional full- or part-time staff to implement bullying provisions?   [PROBES]   * FTE’s added? * Estimated cost? |  |
|  | 1. Has the district purchased any bullying training or prevention curricula or supporting materials (including presentations, training)?   [PROBES]   * What materials/services? * Estimated cost? |  |
|  | 1. Does the district receive any **funding assistance from the state** or other sources to implement bullying provisions?   [PROBES]   * What assistance? * What sources? * What dollar amounts? |  |
|  | 1. Has the district incurred any **other direct costs associated with the implementation** of bullying policies or programs?   [PROBES]   * What costs? * What dollar amounts? |  |
|  | 1. To what **extent has funding been an issue** for the schools in your district in implementing anti-bullying policy? |  |
|  | 1. What have been the **most costly aspects of implementing anti-bullying policy** (e.g., training, information dissemination, infrastructure development, investigation, liability concerns, and protection)? |  |
|  | 1. Are there other **current initiatives to address safety, school climate and violence prevention** other than bullying policy? If so, how do these initiatives either support or impede implementation of bullying policy? |  |

| **Policy Application and Effectiveness** | |  |
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| **Interview Questions** | | **Open-Ended Elaboration** |
|  | Tell me about some of the challenges associated with implementing the bullying policy in the district?  **[PROBES]**   * What are the particular components or requirements of the policy that are most challenging to put into practice? * What is it about these components that makes them challenging? * How have you coped with these challenges? What have you done to resolve them in particular cases? * What (additional) steps would help you put the policy into practice in your district? |  |
|  | Are there **components or requirements in your district’s bullying policy that stand out as particularly effective** in addressing bullying? If yes, what are these components? What makes these components of the policy effective? |  |
|  | How **effective** are your school district’s bullying policies in reducing bullying problems?  [PROBES]   * Which problems are most effectively addressed? * Which problems are least effectively addressed? * What specific policy components or requirements contribute most to effectiveness? * What specific policy components or requirements contribute the least to effectiveness? |  |
|  | What **advice would you give to others districts** that are developing bullying policies and programs? |  |
|  | What **kinds of further resources or support** would be helpful for your district to address **bullying more effectively**? |  |
|  | Have district or school site policies ever been **evaluated to assess their effectiveness**? |  |