

Source: Tom Mexicancheyenne, Community Health Director, Northern Cheyenne

Mr. Casey A. Barrs
Legislative Analyst
Legislative Services Division
Montana Legislature

Re: Senate Bill NO. 141

Reviewing the bill and the language should not just be about the protection of the school district, individuals working for a school district or the victim. The language should be more about being proactive rather than reactive. The protection of the student, all students and their well being, the assistance a school can give; the victim of bullying, and to a student inflicting pain on others. "Sanctions such as suspension, expulsion and any other sanction authorized by law" as pointed out Pg. 2 line 11-13 resolves nothing if we are not addressing "how to help the bully" a person inflicting the pain on others. Whether it's an individual, group, or the attitudes of larger group (population/school). If the problem is not being addressed by the school administration, the family or families, and larger population of student's it grows/multiplies.

A SCHOOL: suspending a student, labeling a student as a problem student, eventual expulsion, showing documented meetings with parents/guardian on student's behavior, by the school, statements "well we tried". Many times the problems the student is demonstrating are systems of what is coming from the home environment. This has to be addressed and pointed out and dealt with the parents/guardians involvement. Many youth/teens are acting out the pain they are in, not knowing how to deal with, and been going on over a period of time.

EVENTUAL RESULTS: If not addressed we have high dropout rates, low performing students, teen pregnancy, drug or alcohol issues, self harm, eventually suicide. If not addressed while struggling with school, eventually dropping out, expelled, which comes first, they face a life of crime, possible prison, and eventual death.

ATTITUDES: bullying evolves from a formed attitude directed at a person, group of people based on what we've learned witnessed in our home, or experienced (being bullied by family members, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, witness domestic violence, racial attitudes toward others because of skin color, sexual preference being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, attitudes about overweight, or people smaller than us, are easy targets) negatively in our own environment (community). We have bullies in our home, large family groups even in our communities. We can pick them out and identify bullying behavior if we become more educated about the behavior and how it is groomed over a period of time. Standing up to a bully or group of bullies is difficult. Young people sometimes join bullying groups behavior for survival, protection from other bullies or see group as family support, if absent in the home. Bullies draw attention to their self, thru negative group interaction, through others reaction to their actions. Drawn attention to negative behavior fuels their behavior.

WORKING WITH THE BULLY: Many of us don't have patient for bullies or their behavior. We "react" thinking if we call or attempt to correct behavior immediately it will cease. How far from the truth we are in addressing issue, we only fuel the bully's behavior through our reactions. If we've ever been bullied in our life, growing up, we have core issues that play a part in our reaction; many of us don't have a tolerance for negative behavior. Some people, based on their own experience, can't react because of how it was handled in their home or family "become frozen", when growing up because of not being able to change situation, sense of hopelessness. As a Teacher or Administrator, when a situation is brought to their attention, by a student. Hoping, if I just ignore situation or send them to another administrator, it will resolve itself, we are still in the role of the victim.

"Loving/Caring about the bully. Many bullies don't like to be talked to nicely, avoid affection, or being cared about. It defuses their energy. Teachers, administrators, parents and friends need to work with this, to defusing the negative energy.