



Superintendent's Circular

School Year 2011-2012

NUMBER:
EQT-9

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September 1, 2011

SEXUAL ORIENTATION – PROTECTION OF STUDENTS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the Boston Public Schools' policies and procedures relating to the amendment of G.L. c. 76, § 5, prohibiting discrimination against a student based upon his/her sexual orientation.

The amendment to the anti-discrimination law, which became effective March 10, 1994, prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation including discrimination against students in public schools. The law states:

No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

In order to provide guidance and direction to school systems concerning the implementation of this law, the Massachusetts Board of Education developed and disseminated the following recommendations:

1. Schools are encouraged to develop policies protecting gay and lesbian students from harassment, violence and discrimination.
2. Schools are encouraged to offer training to school personnel in violence prevention and suicide prevention.
3. Schools are encouraged to offer school-based support groups for gay, lesbian and heterosexual students.
4. Schools are encouraged to provide school-based counseling for family members of gay and lesbian students.

At its meeting of June 15, 1994, the Boston School Committee voted to accept the recommendations of the State Board of Education outlined above and directed that they be implemented in the schools to enhance our efforts designed to ensure equity and to protect all students, including gay and lesbian students, from violence, harassment and discrimination.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION #1

The first recommendation of the Massachusetts Board of Education states that "Schools are encouraged to develop policies protecting gay and lesbian students from harassment, violence and discrimination."

Boston Public Schools has determined that implementation of this recommendation will be achieved through compliance with the following memorandums:

Superintendent's Circular #EQT-2, Uniform Procedures for Employee Grievances of Discrimination.

Superintendent's Circular #EQT-3, Uniform Procedures for Student Grievances of Discrimination.

Superintendent's Circular #LGL-1, Hazing Law.

Superintendent's Circular #EQT-6, Sexual Harassment Policy.

Superintendent's Circular #SUP-5, Code of Conduct of the Boston Public Schools.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION #2

The second recommendation states "Schools are encouraged to offer training to school personnel in violence prevention and suicide prevention."

The Boston Public Schools has implemented and will continue to implement this recommendation through a series of staff training, which will include the following:

Headmasters and Principals are requested to include, as part of their staff training agenda prior to the start of the school year, a review of appropriate policies articulated in Superintendent's Circulars and in their school based rules.

Support staff will receive training on suicide prevention and violence prevention through appropriate departments or level offices. Support staff includes: guidance counselors, student service coordinators, pupil adjustment counselors, school psychologists, school nurses and school police.

Student Service Coordinators and Lead Teachers will facilitate school-based training for staff. Principals and Headmasters shall provide the training as a part of their school-based program. The use of the "Message Model," when practical and possible is suggested.

Training opportunities may be coordinated through the Office of Student Support Services. An outline of training content, along with information concerning consultants implementing the "Message Model," can be obtained by contacting Student Support Services, at 617-635-8030. An overview of the "Messages Model" training format is attached.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION #3

The third recommendation of the Massachusetts Board of Education states that, "Schools are encouraged to offer school-based support groups for gay, lesbian and heterosexual students."

The Boston Public Schools has implemented and will continue to implement this recommendation in cooperation with the Student Support Team Model which has been mandated for all schools. All schools should have a functioning Student Support Team (SST).

The Student Support Team Model is the vehicle which provides support services for all students, including gay and lesbian youth. Student Service Coordinators who have received extensive training in gay and lesbian development have been designated as the liaison for gay and lesbian students in all high schools.

The Student Service Coordinators, based on the request of students, will assist students and faculty advisors in the establishment of school-based gay/heterosexual support groups, which will function in accordance with procedures established for student activity groups or clubs in the school. The Student Services Coordinator or assigned staff person shall consult with the Headmaster/Principal in the establishment of these support groups, in the designating of space and the provision of times for meetings.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION #4

The fourth recommendation of the State Board of Education is, "Schools are encouraged to provide school-based counseling for family members of gay and lesbian students."

The Boston Public Schools has implemented and will continue to implement this recommendation through the Student Support Team. Student Service Coordinators will refer families to appropriate counseling agencies.

Your attention to and cooperation in implementing these procedures is appreciated.

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