

RES 18-071

Wilmington, Delaware
October 18, 2018

#4584

Sponsor:

Council
Member
Oliver

WHEREAS, according to the Delaware Department of Education, there are currently 138,371 students attending elementary, middle and high schools across the state of Delaware – 57% of whom attend school in New Castle County. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the DOE reported a total of 1,978 alleged bullying incidents – 557 of which were found to be substantiated incidents of bullying; and

WHEREAS, Bullying is defined in the Delaware State Code as any intentional, written, electronic, verbal, or physical act or actions that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- (1) Placing a student, school volunteer or school employee in reasonable fear of substantial harm to his or her emotional or physical well-being or substantial damages to his or her property; or
- (2) Creating a hostile, threatening, humiliating or abusive educational environment due to the pervasiveness or persistence of actions or due to a power differential between the bully and the target; or
- (3) Interfering with a student having a safe school environment that is necessary to facilitate educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
- (4) Perpetuating bullying by inciting, soliciting, or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass or cause emotional, psychological or physical harm to another student, school volunteer, or school employee; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have defined bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings

or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying can inflict harm or distress, including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm; and

WHEREAS, bullying has been found to have many negative consequences for children in schools. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Stop Bullying website, bullying can lead to depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness or sadness, changes in eating or sleeping behaviors, loss of interest, health concerns, and decreased academic achievement – not to mention potentially contributing to other factors which might lead to suicidal thoughts or violent behavior. Additionally, 5.4 million students skip school at some point in the year due to bullying, according to STOMP Out Bullying; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware General Assembly passed anti-bullying legislation outlined in Title 14, Chapter 41 of the Delaware Code, in 2012 to mandate school crime reporting, school bullying prevention and criminal youth gang detection training, and child safety awareness, prevention, and other nonacademic trainings. The law also mandates that each school district establish an anti-bullying policy for schools to share with students and personnel and requires the Department of Education to prepare annual reports of reported and substantiated bullying incidents; and

WHEREAS, Delaware's Attorney General issued Anti-Bullying Reports in 2014 and 2015 to evaluate implementation of the State laws, explain reports issued by the Department of Education, and offer recommendations for further implementation; and

WHEREAS, October is recognized as National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month, with the goal of encouraging communities to work together to stop bullying and cyberbullying by increasing awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on children of

all ages. Schools, students, teachers, and the community are encouraged to participate in educational and awareness activities to encourage bullying prevention.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that Council declares its support of all students, residents and visitors to Wilmington by promoting the recognition of October as National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month. Further, Council respectfully encourages the Delaware Attorney General to issue an updated Anti-Bullying Report to assess implementation of State anti-bullying legislation, and to take stock of conditions in Delaware schools in the most recent school year.

Passed by City Council,
October 18, 2018

Attest: Maribel Seijo
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution recognizes October as National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month, and respectfully requests the Delaware Attorney General to issue an updated Anti-Bullying Report to assess implementation of State anti-bullying legislation, and to take stock of conditions in Delaware schools in the most recent school year.