

HB 477 -- Bullying in Schools

Sponsor: Morgan

This bill changes the laws regarding bullying in schools. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Revises the definition of "bullying" to include discrimination; substantial interference with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school;
- (2) Prohibits bullying by school employees or students on school property, at school functions, or on school buses;
- (3) Removes the requirement that a bullying policy not enumerate protected classes of individuals and instead prohibits bullying when it is reasonably perceived to be motivated by a person's real or perceived affiliation with any of several specified categories of individuals;
- (4) Requires a school employee, student, or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or employee has been subject to discrimination or harassment to report the incident to the appropriate school official;
- (5) Adds provisions that must be required in each district's antibullying policy among which are procedures for reporting and investigating bullying incidents, what information is acceptable as a basis for reporting, what range of remedial action is possible, dissemination of policy information, schedules for providing training and the review of the policy, and procedures for implementing and maintaining annual confidential surveys of students and school employees; and
- (6) Requires the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop model policies to assist local school districts in developing policies for the prevention of bullying no later than September 1, 2013.