



State Senator

Neal J. Kedzie

11th Senate District

**Legislative Council Study Committee on School Safety
Senate Bill 42 Q & A
Senator Neal Kedzie
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What does 2007 Senate Bill 42 do?

- Requires the Department of Public Instruction to develop a model school policy on bullying, as well as a model education and awareness program.
- Requires school districts to adopt a policy regarding bullying and to distribute this policy to students and parents annually.
- Specifies that the Wednesday of the 4th week of September is Bullying Awareness Day, and adds it to the list of special observance days that school districts may observe.

What is the fiscal estimate of SB 42?

- A fiscal estimate prepared by the Department of Public Instruction indicates that costs to comply with the provisions of the Department and local school districts are indeterminate.
- Because the Department of Public Instruction has essentially completed the provisions required of them in the bill, any future costs they would have associated with the bill's requirements would be minimal.
- School districts costs should be minimal as they are allowed to simply adopt the model policy prepared by the Department. Schools may experience some costs if they decide to deviate from the Department's model policy, but that would be their choice.

Does SB 42 dictate what schools must do regarding bullying?

- SB 42 does not tell schools what to do, but rather to do nothing is no longer permissible.
- Schools that already have a bullying policy will not need to do anything to comply with the bill. If a school does not have a policy currently in place, they must either create their own policy or adopt the DPI's model policy.

If DPI has already completed the model policy and the model education and awareness program, is the bill still needed?

- Yes. I introduced this bill because, in my opinion, schools weren't taking the necessary steps to protect children in these circumstances. While the DPI model policy and education and awareness program will be helpful, I believe it is necessary for school districts to address this issue.
- The DPI should be commended for proactively working on this issue. At the same time, the requirements in the bill should still be adopted to ensure this issue remains a priority for the Department.

Does the bill define bullying?

- No. The bill requires the DPI to provide a definition as part of the model policy. In addition, schools are free to adopt their own definition.
- In their model policy, DPI has the following definition:

Bullying includes aggressive or hostile behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied. It is typically repeated over time.

Bullying takes many forms, including, but not limited to, physical or verbal assaults, nonverbal or emotional threats or intimidation, social exclusion and isolation, extortion, and the use of a computer or telecommunications to send embarrassing, slanderous, threatening, or intimidating messages.

Bullying is a form of victimization and is not necessarily a result of or part of an ongoing conflict.

Bullying can also be characterized by teasing, put-downs, name-calling, cruel rumors, false accusations, and hazing.

What is the purpose of creating a Bullying Awareness day?

- The bill specifies that the Wednesday of the 4th week of September is Bullying Awareness Day, and adds it to the list of special observance days that the Wisconsin Statutes say "shall be appropriately observed." The statutes do not say what it means to appropriately observe these days, leaving it up to the discretion of school districts. The purpose of creating this day is to raise awareness to this issue and encourage schools to conduct education and awareness efforts where appropriate.

Who supports SB 42?

- SB 42 has broad bi-partisan support as evidenced by the number of co-sponsors from both parties: Senators Kedzie, Coggs, Carpenter, Lassa, Roessler, Darling, Lehman, Schultz, Hansen, Sullivan and A. Lasee. Representatives Jeskewitz, Lothian, Young, Sheridan, Fields, Turner, Hines, Albers, Berceau, A. Ott, Ballweg, Krusick, Cullen and Owens.
- SB 42 was adopted with unanimous support by voice vote in the State Senate in each of the last two sessions.
- The following groups have also indicated their support of SB 42: Wisconsin Education Association, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Madison Metropolitan School District, Mental Health Association in Milwaukee County, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, Independence First, Wisconsin Prevention Network, Mental Health America.