Shrewsbury Public Schools

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Superintendent

September 13, 2019

To: School Committee
Re: Bullying Prevention and Intervention – Annual Report

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy adopted in December 2010 indicates that *the superintendent or a designee shall report annually to the School Committee regarding the frequency of bullying behaviors during the prior school year and to update the Committee regarding steps being taken in the schools to minimize such behaviors while promoting the continuous improvement of learning environments.* This report satisfies this policy requirement.

<u>Frequency of bullying behaviors</u>
It is important to note that, in order for behavior to be deemed "bullying," it must involve *repeated* behaviors that cause physical and/or emotional harm. Therefore, only situations that meet this standard are reported as "bullying." There are, of course, many times where students do not treat each other according to our school communities' expectations, but these are usually not scenarios where the same aggressor repeatedly acts inappropriately towards the same target, thereby qualifying as "bullying."

There were no incidences of defined bullying at the preschool and elementary levels, and one incident each at the middle and high school levels. The following tables provide statistics for grades K-12 for the 2018-2019 school year and, for comparison, the statistics for the previous year. You will see that the statistics are slightly lower for 2018-2019, and continue to show very low rates of bullying overall.

2018-2019	Allegations of Bullying	Qualifying as Bullying	Aggressors	Targets
Elementary Level	3	0	0	0
Middle Level	6	1	1	1
High School Level	12	1	1	1
Total	*21*	*2*	*2*	*2*

2017-2018	Allegations of Bullying	Qualifying as Bullying	Aggressors	Targets
Elementary Level	7	3	3	3
Middle Level	10	0	0	0
High School Level	9	1	1	1
Total	*26*	*4*	*4*	*4*

The following table shows the type of incidents and locations that were documented as bullying in the past year (some incidents were included in more than one category).

2018-2019	Verbal	Physical	Cyber	At School	Outside School
Elementary Level	0	0	0	0	0
Middle Level	1	0	0	1	1
High School Level	1	0	1	1	1

Again, it is important to note that these statistics refer to situations defined as bullying. There were certainly many more instances of problematic behavior that were addressed, but that did not qualify under the definition of being repeated between the same aggressor(s) and target(s).

Actions that are taken by school administrators to resolve situations of bullying and problem behavior generally may include conferences with the children involved and their parents; loss of privileges; assigned seating in class or on the bus; and other typical disciplinary actions. For the most serious cases, changes of the aggressor's class

assignment or schedule, in-school or out-of-school suspensions given to the aggressor(s), and "safety plans" created to ensure the actions were not repeated towards the target are additional steps that may be taken.

Ongoing work to minimize bullying
The very small number of situations that qualified as "bullying" can be viewed as very positive data regarding our schools' cultures and climates and how students treat one another. As always, it remains important for our school communities to continue to reinforce expectations regarding respectful behavior, as well as to help promote a climate where students are willing to share concerning behaviors with a trusted adult.

Additionally, during the past year we added an anonymous incident reporting feature that appears with a flag symbol at the top center of each of our website's pages (see image below) where students can report a "school safety tip." We have advertised this through email messages as well. While it has not been used frequently, we have received eight reports through this portal since last spring. None were related to bullying, but all were investigated and resolved to the extent possible based on the information provided.

Our district's strategic commitment to inclusive practices and social emotional learning is intended to promote continuous improvement to the positive climate and cultures of our schools and to minimize problematic behavior such as bullying. It is our intention and hope that we will continue to make strides in ensuring that our schools are safe, positive, productive places for our students and staff.

I look forward to answering any questions you have on this topic.