

Safe Schools. For All Kids.

A campaign to end bullying in Oregon schools

How will the Oregon Safe Schools Act change bullying policies?

Effective anti-bullying programs can cut bullying in half. The Safe Schools 2009 campaign will strengthen Oregon's anti-bullying law, ensure consistent enforcement, and help keep all children safe. This proposal will:

- Ensure wider adoption of anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies
- Create clear notice and complaint procedures
- Establish a comprehensive approach to address bullying

Who needs anti-bullying protections?

More than 30% of US students report being involved in bullying—as a bully, a target of bullying, or both. Bullying has also been linked to future likelihood of committing crime, and to depression and other long-term mental health concerns. The number one reason given for bullying students is that they “don’t fit in.” That’s why so many marginalized students are disproportionately impacted by bullying.

Students of color – In 1999, African-American students were most likely to be bullied in middle and high school. Between 1999 and 2001, bullying of all students of color increased more than 60%. And 24% of children ages 8-11 report that race-related bullying takes place at their school either occasionally or often.

Rural students – Rural students are 26% more likely to experience bullying than their urban counterparts.

Students with disabilities – Students with developmental, psychological and physical disabilities are at substantially higher risk of being bullied.

Gay and transgender students – Gay youth are three times more likely than straight students to drop out of school, to find themselves homeless, and to attempt suicide—and those numbers are even higher for transgender youth and gay and transgender youth of color. Currently, only 15% of Oregon school districts advertise bullying policies protecting gay youth from bullying.

How do school policies work now?

- Oregon law requires all school districts to adopt policies prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying. Though the law encourages adopting a long list of provisions, none are required. This leaves parents and students confused about how to respond to bullying.
- Even the most basic requirements to post policies and identify staff to take bullying complaints are not mandated in the current law.

How can I help end bullying and harassment in Oregon schools?

The most effective way to win the campaign for Safe Schools will be to build a broad coalition of organizations and individuals to stand against bullying and harassment in Oregon schools. To sign on to the coalition, just fill out a Safe Schools endorsement form! Also, please contact your elected officials and encourage them to support safe schools policies.