

**Senate Committee on Education  
October 3, 2013**

**Department of Public Instruction  
Testimony on 2013 Senate Bill 184**

I want to thank Chairman Olsen and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify for information today regarding Senate Bill 184 (SB 184). My name is Doug White and I serve as director of student services/prevention and wellness for the Wisconsin DPI.

Consistent with Wisconsin statutes under s. 118.46, DPI developed a model policy regarding bullying in 2009. This model policy requires a definition of bullying. While SB 184 requires the definition of bullying to include bullying by electronic means, DPI's current model policy includes a definition of bullying in its various forms, including bullying by electronic means or cyberbullying. Other provisions of the current model policy include a prohibition on bullying, a procedure to report bullying, a prohibition on retaliation against those who report it, sanctions, supports, disclosure, public reporting, and where the policy applies.

SB 184 would also add two new elements to the model policy. The first would clarify that boards can prohibit bullying that occurs outside of school if it affects the school environment or creates a hostile environment for a student. This would be a clear expansion of the authority of the school to respond to actions and events. The second would create, in the model policy, a new mandatory reporting requirement for school staff who would be required to report to law enforcement any bullying that is a perceived violation of criminal law. There may be questions as to the liability of school staff if they don't report an incident that is later found to be a violation.

Under 118.46 school boards must adopt a policy prohibiting bullying but are not required to use DPI's model policy. The department does not know how many school districts have adopted the model policy as that information is not required to be reported to us.

In addition to the requirements under s. 118.46, the department also provides resources to help schools implement anti-bullying programs and policies. These include curricula, on-line education programs for students, and training for staff.

The department is well aware of the seriousness of bullying, including bullying by electronic means. Use of electronic technology, which may occur anywhere in the community, presents challenges for parents, school personnel, and law enforcement officers so the department appreciates the author's focus on addressing this pressing problem.

Thank you and I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.