



House Bill 116 to Address Cyber-Bullying

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Yesterday, Gov. **John Kasich** signed House Bill (HB) 116, sponsored by Rep. **John Barnes** (D-Cleveland). The legislation requires schools to make several changes to their anti-bullying policies. It is referred to as the "Jessica Logan Act" and is named for a Cincinnati teenager who committed suicide after being harassed at school and online.

Specifically, HB 116 makes the following changes:

- Expands the definition of bullying to include cyber bullying.
- Requires school districts to expand their existing student anti-bullying policies to cover incidences of bullying that occur on school buses.
- Requires anti-bullying policies to include: (1) a statement providing for possible suspension of students who engage in cyber bullying, (2) a means for making anonymous reports of bullying and (3) disciplinary procedures for students who make false reports.
- Requires anti-bullying policies and an explanation of the seriousness of cyber bullying to be made available to students and parents.
- Requires a written statement describing the board's anti-bullying policy and the consequences for violating the policy to be sent to parents once a year. This can be sent electronically or with report cards.
- Requires age-appropriate instruction to all students on the board's bullying policy if state or federal funds are appropriated for this purpose.
- Requires school districts and educational service centers to provide training on their anti-bullying policies as a part of the in-service training required for all teachers, administrators, counselors, nurses and school psychologists.

It is important to note that while the bill expands the definition of bullying to cyber bullying, it does *not* expressly expand the definition to include bullying that occurs off school property. The changes made by HB 116 do not become effective until November 2012.

Lake Local Schools is reviewing its board policy regarding bullying to ensure that the district is in compliance with this new legislation.