

You have many options. Some *are* more *effective* than others.

Is the Professional Development that Your Faculty and Staff Are Receiving on The Topic of

# Bullying Prevention and Response

Based on Research-Based Best Practices and Consistent with Schools' Legal Responsibilities?

<b>Bullying</b>	<b>Bias &amp; Respect</b>	<b>Cyber Bullying</b>
<p>Many schools use peer mediation to resolve bullying situations.</p> <p><b>Best Practices: Peer mediation is useful in normal conflict, but contraindicated in bullying situations. Do your faculty and staff know the difference? Do they know why peer mediation can be harmful when used as a response to bullying? Do they know what responses are effective in bullying situations?</b></p> <p>Many schools seek to help the victims of bullying by providing social skills training or support services to help the student resist or withstand bullying.</p> <p><b>Best Practices: Many students can be helped by social skills training, but social skills training for victims should not be used as a response to bullying. Students' safety should not depend on their ability to change themselves, and if social skills training for the victim is successful in individual cases, the bully will simply pick the next most vulnerable target, because the problem of the bullying was not addressed.</b></p>	<p>Race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, mental, physical, or sensory disability, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.</p> <p><b>Each form of difference presents a unique challenge in the school setting.</b></p> <p>In preparation for the workplace and citizenship, students must learn to work with each other across differences.</p> <p>The goal of diversity education in schools is not to eliminate moral differences, but to teach students to respect &amp; behave civilly <i>toward those from whom they differ, and toward those with whom they disagree.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Comments like “What a <i>retard</i>” &amp; “That’s so <i>gay</i>” are heard daily by students.</p> <p>These comments might not be directed to individuals, intended as personal insults, or said in reference to people at all.</p> <p>However, both the New Jersey anti-bullying law and the Law Against Discrimination, as interpreted in the <i>L.W.</i> case, gives schools the authority — and responsibility — to address bias-based hostility in the school environment.</p> <p><b>How can you address these issues in school?</b></p>	<p>New Jersey’s anti-bullying law (<i>18A:37-13 et seq.</i>) explicitly includes bullying using electronic technology, that is, <b>cyber bullying</b>.</p> <p>One of the central problems facing school districts is the fact that most cyber bullying occurs off campus, outside school jurisdiction. Under the <i>Tinker</i> standard (consistent with NJ DOE and NSBA Guidelines), schools may discipline off campus speech if it causes substantial interference with the school environment. But in cases of cyber bullying, this leaves a large gap between schools’ responsibility to protect students and schools’ authority to discipline students.</p> <p><b>What strategies are available to schools to prevent cyber bullying?</b></p> <p>Cyber bullying can be far more damaging than traditional bullying, and far more difficult to detect.</p> <p><b>Are your faculty and staff familiar with different types of cyber bullying? What do parents need to know?</b></p>

With the phasing out of the NJ DOE provider registry, school districts must independently assess providers’ credentials. Whether or not you choose my services, *please make sure you choose PD that is consistent with best practices.* Negotiable fees structured to encourage whole faculty training. Free initial phone or e-mail consultation. Not an offer of legal advice. Dr. Paula C. Rodríguez Rust, Bullying Prevention Specialist, Spectrum Diversity LLC, (732) 735-7209. spectrumdiversity@comcast.net