

Dear AAPS Families and Community Members,

I was recently informed by the State Superintendent of Schools of a major change in the proposed anti-bullying legislation. The passage of State legislation regarding bullying (SB 137) had been anticipated as a tool to help enforce and protect students from any form of bullying in schools. Instead, recent language changes in the proposed legislation is turning it into a bill, and potentially a law, that would permit bullying a student if it is “a statement of a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction of a school employee, school volunteer, pupil, or a pupil’s parent or guardian.” This recent change in the legislative language by the Michigan Senate is disturbing and potentially dangerous. It clearly makes exceptions for bullying behavior based on religious beliefs or moral convictions.

I will be writing to Governor Snyder and the Legislature to voice my concern regarding this “exception” in the legislation and I encourage members of the community to let the Governor and legislators know your opinions on this legislation as well. I believe this new language can endanger students by justifying bullying behavior. It is my belief that bullying cannot be justified in schools and that intimidation and harassment of students are unacceptable. As Superintendent of Schools, I am alarmed to see the inclusion of this new language, which can be potentially harmful in allowing and/or justifying unacceptable behavior in a school setting. Please let the Governor and state legislators know your opinion of the language added to Senate Bill 137. Their addresses are attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Patricia P. Green

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