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**Bullying Law Based on Good Intentions
But May Be Cumbersome to Implement**

State law takes more aggressive approach starting September 1st

- Dr. Richard Bozza, executive director of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, is available to discuss the challenges of the new bullying, intimidation and harassment standards.

TRENTON, N.J. — August 31, 2011 — The new Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) law, while well intentioned, may be the most challenging item affecting New Jersey schools this year due to its cumbersome and stringent requirements, according to the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA).

“We have zero tolerance for bullying and agree that we should put strong controls in place,” said Dr. Richard Bozza, executive director of the NJASA. “However, we are concerned that the new law—while based on good intentions—is so prescriptive that it could stand in the way of effective resolution of bullying incidents.”

Dr. Bozza cited the 18-page compliance checklist issued by the state. “Districts throughout the state are trying to understand what the law requires so that they can implement it,” he said.

Governor Christie signed the new law, P.K. 2010 Chapter 122 on January 5, 2011 to go into effect the following September 1. The law, also known as the Anti-bullying Bill of Rights, requires school districts, charter schools, the New Jersey Department of Education, other state agencies, professional associations and institutions of higher education to meet a long list of requirements. These include stringent timelines for reporting and investigating incidents and notifying parents.

The new state law strengthens and expands the role and responsibilities of schools in dealing with bullying, intimidation and harassment. It requires districts to intervene in incidents that happen outside of school or online, if they disrupt or interfere with the operation of the school or the rights of students.

“Not every incident will be bullying but there will be a tendency to want to report it just in case,” noted Dr. Bozza.

The New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey School Boards Associations have organized training sessions throughout the state over the last month to brief administrators on the new law. More than 1,000 educators and school board members have attended.

Dr. Bozza called for parents, clergy and the community to stay involved, as well. “Our goal is a safe and supportive school environment where students can learn and succeed,” he said. “Even with the toughest law in the nation, the schools can’t do it alone. We need your support.”

About NJASA

The New Jersey Association of School Administrators is an organization of chief education officers and school administrators who lead school districts in New Jersey’s 21 counties. The association’s mission is to ensure a superior statewide system of education. Through ongoing professional training and education, the association shares knowledge among its members about best practices from both educational and administrative perspectives. Its goal is to move education forward by ensuring the highest quality of instruction for all New Jersey children.

Education Brief Videos Explain Budget Considerations

What schools can offer to students is directly impacted by budget. Due to the complexity of the school budget cuts and the effects that will be felt in schools across the state, the NJASA has released a series of videos to help parents and taxpayers better understand the issues and potential aftermath of the events and changes. Each video can be accessed on a special NJASA YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/TheNJASA or by clicking on the YouTube icon on the NJASA website, www.njasa.net.

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