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New Online Staff Training Course Addresses Peer Discriminatory Harassment

PublicSchoolWORKS course defines types of harassment, helps educators identify and respond to concerns, and outlines legal considerations for districts

Cincinnati, OH (February 12, 2015) — PublicSchoolWORKS has released a new course, “[Discriminatory Harassment — Identification and Response](#),” to address and help reduce instances of student-to-student “peer” harassment. This is one of 500 courses now available through the PublicSchoolWORKS EmployeeSafe Suite, the only comprehensive and fully automated safety compliance and risk management program for schools.

Research shows that bullying often is related to student biases and prejudices. The [2013 National School Climate Survey](#) conducted by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network found that 74.1 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students were verbally harassed, 36.2 percent were physically harassed, and 16.5 percent were physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation. A hostile school environment ultimately affects students’ academic success and mental health. The survey also found that LGBT students who experienced higher levels of victimization because of their sexual orientation were more than three times more likely to have missed school in the past month and had higher levels of depression than their less-harassed peers.¹ Sexual-orientation and sexual-identity harassment are two of the eight types of harassment addressed in the new [PublicSchoolWORKS](#) training course.

The “Discriminatory Harassment — Identification and Response” course defines eight types of peer harassment based on race, sex, color, national-origin, disability, and religion. Specifically, peer discriminatory harassment is defined as when a student “engages in actions that make another student

¹“The 2013 National School Climate Survey,” GLSEN, 2014.

http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report_0.pdf



worry about his well-being or feel uncomfortable.” The course also mentions LGBT, how peer discrimination is different from bullying, and how school employees should respond and intervene.

Some student misconduct may qualify as peer discriminatory harassment under one or more of the federal anti-discrimination laws enforced by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights. While there is not yet a national training requirement, this topic addresses Title VI, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and its potential high liability for districts.

The course illustrates how educators can identify and respond to peer discriminatory harassment. The course also summarizes three legal requirements and considerations for district administrators: confidentiality, due-process rights, and freedom of speech. Included in the course are online resources from the [U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights](http://www.ed.gov/officeofcivilrights).

“By training educators on how to quickly address, and hopefully prevent, harassment, schools can create a climate that does not tolerate discrimination,” said Tom Strasburger, vice president of sales and marketing for PublicSchoolWORKS. “This helps us get one step closer to eradicating prejudices.”

For current PublicSchoolWORKS customers using the EmployeeSafe Suite, this 25-minute course is included in the “Student Safety, Wellness and Social Responsibility Catalog.”

About PublicSchoolWORKS

Since 2000, PublicSchoolWORKS safety and regulatory compliance management solutions have helped schools easily meet ever-changing compliance requirements, improve staff and student safety, cut costs associated with risk, and reduce administrator and staff time and effort. PublicSchoolWORKS is the *only*, complete safety compliance management program built for K-12 schools, and is proud to provide districts with award-winning technology and support recognized by North American educators. For more information on how PublicSchoolWORKS can improve district safety programs, contact [1-877-779-6757](tel:1-877-779-6757) or sales@publicschoolworks.com.

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