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TO: Mr. Liam Skinner, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Alice Brown-LeGrand, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services
DATE: January 13, 2026
RE: *Response to Motion:*

This report is in response to the following motion by committee member David Conway:

Request from the superintendent, a spotlight on excellence to highlight the various initiatives across the system that are in place to address bullying, harassment, and violence. As well, please contact the district attorney Marion Ryan's office and invite them to present an informational session on this matter for our middle school students.

Lowell Public Schools Mental Health Department is implementing a coordinated, districtwide approach to bullying prevention focused on skill development, student safety, engagement, and well-being. Through updated policy, targeted professional development, evidence-based curriculum, and strengthened family and community partnerships, the district is building consistent systems to prevent and respond to bullying behaviors. The initiatives presented below reflect an intentional strategy to strengthen adult capacity, support positive peer relationships, and address social-emotional factors that impact student attendance, engagement, and academic success.

In June 2025, the district updated its Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP) to ensure alignment with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education expectations, current best practices and district priorities. This updated plan provides for a clear framework for prevention, reporting, response, and ongoing support for students.

To build staff capacity, the LPS Mental Health Department provided the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) *Train-the-Trainer* professional development to school-based building leaders in August 2025. Dr. Elizabeth Englander, the founder and Executive Director of MARC facilitated this training which provided participants the background and skill to respond to bullying behaviors. By training staff to identify and address

“gateway” behaviors (e.g., eye rolling, whispering, ignoring, or mocking) in the classroom, the program’s focus is to set clear expectations for appropriate behavior and strengthen students’ sense of emotional safety.

To support classroom-based prevention efforts, the Mental Health Department has compiled a range of evidence-based bullying prevention and social-emotional learning curricula that are already available and in use across the district. At the elementary level, schools emphasize teaching and reinforcing respectful behavior during Morning Meeting through Wayfinder lessons, Open Circle, and Responsive Classroom. At the middle school level, bullying prevention lessons are typically delivered through Allied Arts health/SEL rotations, and both middle and high schools use Restorative Practices to address harm caused by social conflict and bullying. Many of these schools also offer mediation and peer mediation programs to strengthen positive peer interactions. In addition, schools use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to clearly teach expectations and reinforce the positive behaviors we want to see in all students.

The department is further developing a centralized, online, teacher-friendly library of lessons organized by grade spans (PreK–2, Grades 3–5, Grades 6–8, and High School) to allow for easier, more organized access for staff. Curricula include Wayfinder as the primary resource, along with BrainPOP Jr., Boston vs. Bullies, Random Acts of Kindness, the National Bullying Prevention Center, and The NED Show. The goal is to ensure that, at the start of the next school year, teachers have access to ready to use mini-lessons that can be implemented immediately to build skills and address classroom concerns. The core lessons for all will include the definition of bullying, roles in a bullying situation (target, bystander, bully), types of bullying (Physical, Verbal, Relational/Social, Cyberbullying, Damage to property) and prevention. Alongside this library, the department is creating a suggested scope and sequence of lesson topics for each grade span to support skill-building throughout the school year. This approach is designed to ensure developmentally appropriate instruction that builds students’ social awareness, empathy, conflict resolution, and positive peer relationships over time. Once the library is complete, the Mental Health Department will provide this information to all teachers PreK-12 to use throughout the school year.

In addition, as part of the Strategic Priority 2: Safe and Welcoming Schools, the district is designing a bullying prevention and peer-relationship pilot program connected to Initiative 2.1, of integrating social-emotional principles into its efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism. This work recognizes that peer conflict and bullying are frequently cited reasons for student absences. As part of this effort, Lowell Public Schools plans to offer bullying prevention and relational skills pilots to schools during the next school year to proactively address student relationships and improve engagement and attendance.

Finally, Lowell Public Schools is expanding family and community engagement around bullying prevention through a partnership with the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth (MPY). On

January 27, 2026, at 6:00 PM, MPY will offer a community presentation for all families at the **STEM Academy Cafeteria, 43 Highland Street**, designed to help parents/guardians understand the impact of screen time on their child's well-being while building skills for safe and responsible online behavior. The presentation will focus on developing healthy digital habits, online safety, and respectful communication, with a discussion of bullying and cyberbullying to reinforce prevention efforts at home and school.

Thank you to Andrew Rosenshine, and Amanda Delworth from the LPS Mental Health Department for their work on this response to motion and initiative.