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Board of Regents Policy Statement on Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression

The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education recognizes that all educational agencies must provide all people and groups with full access to educational opportunities and barriers to student participation based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression must be identified and removed. The Board also recognizes that all students, without exception, have the right to attend a school in which they feel safe and able to express their identity without fear.

The Board recognizes that certain students, because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, have been subject to discrimination through abuse, harassment, bullying, and/or exclusion from full participation in educational activities. These conditions undermine the beliefs of the Board of Regents.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Board of Regents that no student shall be excluded from any educational program or activity or discriminated against, bullied, or harassed in any public educational setting based upon actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity/expression or through their association with people with the aforementioned characteristics. This policy shall include but is not limited to admissions, guidance services, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Each local school district is urged to review programs, services and activities to assure that such offerings are conducted in a manner that is free of inadvertent or intentional bias based upon sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression. Each local school district is required by law to address harassment and bullying based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression through the development and enforcement of appropriate student and staff behavior and disciplinary policies and to provide protections against reprisal, retaliation or false accusation.

Staff of the Rhode Island Department of Education will be available to assist school districts in the development and implementation of appropriate policies consistent with the Regents' Policy Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression.

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