

STATE OF NEW YORK

5403

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 13, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. SOLAGES -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to enacting the "Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act"

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act".

3 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new article 2-A to read
4 as follows:

ARTICLE 2-A

JACK REID LAW: PROTECT ALL STUDENTS ACT

Section 19. Legislative intent.

20. Definitions.

21. Bullying and harassment prohibited.

22. Applicability.

23. Grant program.

24. Severability and construction.

13 § 19. Legislative intent. The legislature finds that students' ability
14 to learn and to meet high academic standards, and a school's ability to
15 educate its students, are compromised by incidents of harassment includ-
16 ing bullying, taunting or intimidation. Recent studies have shown
17 alarming trends related to bullying: forty percent of middle and high
18 school students have been cyberbullied in their lifetime. Study after
19 study demonstrates that bullying impacts students' academic performance,
20 relationships, and mental and physical health. It is hereby declared to
21 be the policy of the state to afford all students in nonpublic schools
22 an environment free of bullying and harassment. The purpose of this
23 article is to foster civility in nonpublic schools and to prevent and
24 prohibit conduct which is inconsistent with a school's educational
25 mission.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 § 20. Definitions. For the purposes of this article, the following
2 terms shall have the following meanings:

3 1. "School property" shall mean in or within any building, structure,
4 athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained with-
5 in the real property boundary line of a nonpublic elementary or second-
6 ary school; or in or on a school bus, as defined in section one hundred
7 forty-two of the vehicle and traffic law.

8 2. "School function" shall mean a nonpublic school-sponsored extra-
9 curricular event or activity.

10 3. "Harassment" and "bullying" shall mean the creation of a hostile
11 environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including
12 cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and
13 substantially interfering with a student's educational performance,
14 opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being;
15 (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student
16 to fear for their physical safety; (c) reasonably causes or would
17 reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a
18 student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates, or would fore-
19 seeably create, a risk of substantial disruption within the school envi-
20 ronment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation
21 or abuse might reach school property. For purposes of this definition,
22 the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-
23 verbal actions.

24 4. "Cyberbullying" shall mean harassment or bullying as defined in
25 subdivision three of this section, where such harassment or bullying
26 occurs through any form of electronic communication, including if such
27 conduct occurs off school property against another school student.

28 5. "School" shall mean any nonpublic elementary or secondary school.

29 § 21. Bullying and harassment prohibited. 1. No student shall be
30 subjected to harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying, by other
31 students on school property or at a school function.

32 2. Upon a report of bullying, harassment, or retaliation, the princi-
33 pal or head of school, or the principal or head of school's designee,
34 must investigate promptly, communicate their findings with the victim
35 and take immediate steps and appropriate follow-up action to ensure that
36 such conduct has stopped and ensure the safety of the student or
37 students including retaliation against any individual who in good faith
38 reports such bullying or assists in the investigation.

39 3. Every school, subject to this section, shall adopt a written in
40 plain-language anti-bullying and harassment policy, which must be
41 published on the school's website or internal parent/student portal and
42 shared annually with employees, parents, and students. Such policy shall
43 include but not be limited to information on how bullying and harassment
44 is defined, how incidents will be reported, investigated, and docu-
45 mented, and an age-appropriate process for notifying the victim about
46 the final outcome of the investigation.

47 4. School employees who witness bullying or harassment, or receive an
48 oral or written report of bullying or harassment, shall promptly notify
49 the principal or head of school or the principal's or head of school's
50 designee, orally not later than one school day after such school employ-
51 ee witnesses or receives a report of bullying and harassment, and must
52 file a written report with the principal or head of school's designee
53 not later than two school days after making the initial oral report.

54 § 22. Applicability. 1. This section shall not apply to accusations of
55 bullying or harassment made against a school employee.

1 2. Nothing in this section is intended to infringe upon any right to
2 exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously
3 based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States
4 Constitution or under Article I, section eight of the New York State
5 Constitution.

6 § 23. Grant program. The department shall establish a Jack Reid Law
7 Compliance Grant Program to assist nonpublic schools with compliance
8 with this section of law. Such program shall provide eligible schools
9 with a one-time grant to be used to help such schools comply with this
10 section. The department shall develop an application process for
11 schools to apply for funds as well as program guidelines and eligibility
12 criteria. At a minimum the program shall allow eligible schools to apply
13 for up to fifty thousand dollars in funding and such funding may be used
14 for, including but not limited to, staff training, hiring consultants to
15 assist with developing a school's bullying and harassment policies,
16 implementing student focused anti-bullying programs, such as social
17 emotional learning curriculum, conducting a school climate survey, and
18 other uses as determined by the department.

19 § 24. Severability and construction. The provisions of this article
20 shall be severable, and if any court of competent jurisdiction declares
21 any phrase, clause, sentence or provision of this article to be invalid,
22 or its applicability to any government agency, person or circumstance is
23 declared invalid, the remainder of this article and its relevant appli-
24 cability shall not be affected. The provisions of this article shall be
25 liberally construed to give effect to the purposes thereof.

26 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.