

## BULLYING RAMPANT IN NYC SCHOOLS

Written by Special to the Filipino Reporter  
Saturday, 05 March 2011 20:59

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The New York City Department of Education is not providing teachers sufficient resources and training to protect students from bullying and bias-based harassment, according to an overwhelming majority of city teachers surveyed in a report released by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), New York Civil Liberties Union, Sikh Coalition.

“Any staff training on harassment that my school did last year was conducted in a lackadaisical, perfunctory manner,” said Pat Compton, a longtime teacher at Lafayette High School in Brooklyn who retired at the end of the 2009-10 school year.

“While some information on harassment and bullying is presented as a single item at the staff conference at the start of the school year, it is always done very briefly, as a single point on the agenda. Not much has changed since the Chancellor’s Regulation was passed.”

The report, *Bullying in New York City Schools: Educators Speak Out*, summarizes the results of a survey conducted during the 2009-2010 school year of 198 city teachers and school staff representing 117 public schools in four boroughs.

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It assesses the Department of Education's (DOE) progress in enforcing Chancellor's Regulation A-832, which was issued in September 2008 to address student-to-student bullying and bias-based harassment.

The report also assesses the effectiveness of the DOE's "Respect for All" program, a diversity training initiative launched in 2007 primarily to combat homophobia in city schools that was expanded last year.

The vast majority of respondents reported that their schools have inconsistent procedures for responding to reports of bullying, leave it up to individual teachers to respond, or ignore incidents entirely.

"Given the lack of consistent procedures to implement the Chancellor's Regulation, it is critical that the DOE provide stronger guidance and more resources to ensure safe learning environments for our city's 1.1 million students," said AALDEF Executive Director Margaret Fung.

"We have long known that too many students suffer from bullying in their schools because of their race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation," said Amardeep Singh, director of programs at the Sikh Coalition.

"This report tells us why: Few teachers know that they have an obligation to protect students from bias-based bullying. The Department of Education must invest resources into ending this dynamic. Otherwise the city's good intentions to combat bullying are merely good intentions lacking substance."

Among the report's key findings:

- Only 14 percent of teachers and staff surveyed said they believe that the Chancellor's Regulation and the Respect for All program are "effective" or "very effective" in addressing bullying and bigotry in their schools.

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- Although the DOE's two-day Respect for All training is available to all k-12 teachers, only about 30 percent of respondents said teachers at their school were even offered training.
  
- Only about 31 percent of respondents said students in their schools received diversity or Respect for All training.

Respondents who were offered Respect for All trainings reported a lack of specific training on how to respond to bias incidents.

Teachers also expressed concerns that they would be unable to make use of the training because of a lack of commitment from administrators.