

The Holyoke Community Charter School District

### **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

Submitted to the Holyoke Community Charter School Principal, Dr. Sonia C. Pope Anti-Bullying Task Force

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Revised 2022



To: HCCS Community Members

From: Anti-Bullying Task force

Re: Final Anti-Bullying Plan

The Holyoke Community Charter School placed its Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan on the schools website. The document may be accessed at <u>www.hccs-sabis.net</u> for review or you may contact the main office for a hard copy.

The following people formed the Anti-Bullying Task Force and worked diligently on this revision

Dr. Sonia Correa Pope, School Principal

Mr. Benjamin Torres, Deputy Director of Academics

Mr. Aaron Yosky, Academic Quality Controller

Mr. Robert Riddles, Academic Quality Controller

Mrs. Kristen O'Connor, Special Education Academic Coordinator

Mr. Kyle Callender, Student Management Coordinator

Mr. Troy Miller, Student Life Coordinator

Mr. Grant Herman, IT Coordinator

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Mr. Tom Paquin, Facilities Manager

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Please forward any feedback or questions to Dr. Sonia Correa Pope electronically <u>spope@hccs-sabis.net</u> or send note to the school. Thank you for your continued support in our efforts to make Holyoke Community Charter School a great place to learn.



### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

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### I. LEADERSHIP

- A. <u>Public involvement in developing the Plan</u>. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan was developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Consultation included, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the Plan was adopted by the school committee or equivalent authority. The school conducted a survey to gain input from the key stakeholders in regard to handling bullying prevention within the school. Prior to finalizing the plan the school allowed a period of public comment on the plan.
- B. <u>Assessing needs and resources</u>. Prior to the development of the plan the school surveyed key stakeholders to gain their perspective about the issue of bullying on our campus. Key stakeholders were identified as the students, parents, staff, and the board of trustees. A review of historical data related to bullying and other gateway behaviors was completed. A review of current curricula was conducted to determine what was needed to be acquired to satisfy the new legal mandate. The information collected was used as the steering guide for the development of plan.
- C. <u>Planning and oversight</u>. Plans should identify the school or district leaders responsible for the following tasks under the Plan: 1) receiving reports on bullying; 2) collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.



#### D. <u>Developing priority statements</u>.

The members of the Holyoke Community Charter School will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school or district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

### II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. <u>Annual staff training on the Plan</u>. Annually the staff will be trained on the details of the plan. This training will include the responsibility of the staff to report concerns to the principal of designee, as well as the protocol that will be followed after the completion of a formal report. This training will also include information relevant to the bullying prevention curriculum being taught within the school.
- B. <u>Ongoing professional development</u> Throughout the year the staff will receive professional development related to bullying prevention. These booster trainings will be utilized to reinforce the communities' commitment to bullying prevention as well as an avenue to bring forth new relevant information about bullying prevention. HCCS will utilize the staff training developed by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Coalition as well other trainings



Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of schoolwide and districtwide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- (ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.



C. <u>Written notice to staff</u>. The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

#### III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- A. <u>Identifying resources</u>. Within the school students will be able to access the counseling department, the student management department, and the student life department for support. These departments will collaborate to best serve the needs of aggressors, targets, and bystanders. The school will be utilizing social emotional learning curricula with an emphasis on bullying prevention as well as violence prevention on a school wide basis. Through the previously mentioned departments individualized plans will be developed to address the occasions when intensive services need to be implemented. The school will also be able to link families with outside services when appropriate.
- B. <u>Counseling and other services (including referral to outside services)</u>. Within the school there are culturally and linguistically appropriate resources which the students will be able to utilize through the Social Work, Student Management, and Student Life departments. In situations where more extensive services are needed to support the target, aggressor, affected bystander, or supports for a student's family member's referrals to local mental health agencies will be made. When making referrals the Social Work Department will take into consideration the preferences of the family related to location, service delivery model, and health insurance coverage. Student Management in concert with the Social Work department will be available to help targets reestablish their sense of safety, through emotional support, and the development of safety plans as needed. Based on need the school will utilize behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individualized curricula to support both targets and aggressors.
- C. <u>Students with disabilities</u>. As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be



included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

### IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Holyoke Community Charter School will be utilizing researched based curricula to educate students that are involved in bullying incidents. The curricula will focus on social emotional learning to address issues related to bullying.

- A. <u>Specific bullying prevention approaches</u>. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
  - using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
  - empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
  - helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
  - emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
  - enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
  - engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The plan will be reviewed on a school wide basis at the start of the year, and again periodically with specific populations as needed.

B. <u>General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts</u>. By introducing curricula that stresses a school wide approach to prevent bullying our staff will be pulling from the same resource cache. When students experience similar expectation across the board their will be a greater understanding that the school as a cohesive unit is place where bullying or other hurtful behavior is not tolerated.



- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

#### V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

A. <u>Reporting bullying or retaliation</u>. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. Reports made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and the student management office. and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in Spanish.



At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

### 1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

#### 2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

#### B. <u>Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation</u>.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, student life, or



on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. (Include locally established student safety planning policies and procedures here.)

### 2. Obligations to Notify Others

- a. <u>Notice to parents or guardians</u>. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- b. <u>Notice to Another School or District</u>. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. <u>Notice to Law Enforcement</u>. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with



the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. <u>Investigation</u>. The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school social worker, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. <u>Determinations</u>. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the



principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

#### E. <u>Responses to Bullying</u>

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;



- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the antibullying curricula and social skills building activities at home; and
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills

#### 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.



#### VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

- A. <u>Parent education and resources</u>. The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any other curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Parent Connection, PAC, Parent Seminar, or other related events.
- B. <u>Notification requirements</u>. Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in Spanish. The school or district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

### VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.



Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

#### VIII. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are based directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O.

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

<u>Bullying</u>, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

<u>Cyberbullying</u>, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

<u>Hostile environment</u>, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

<u>Retaliation</u> is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.



<u>Staff</u> includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.



### **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

1.	Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:				
2.	Check whether you are the:	Target of the	e behavior Reporter (not the target)		
3.	Check whether you are a:	Student	Staff member (specify role)		
		Parent	Administrator		
	Your contact information/te	lephone Num	ber:		
4.	If student, state your school	l:	Grade:		
5.	If staff member, state your school or work site:				
6.	<ul> <li>5. Information about the Incident:</li> <li>Name of Target (of behavior):</li></ul>				
7.	Witnesses (List people who s	itnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):			
	Name:		□ Student □ Staff □ Other		
	Name:		Student Staff Other		
	Name:		Student 🛛 Staff 🗌 Other		
wł			ding names of people involved, what occurred, and ecific words used). Please use additional space on		
	FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY				

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report:	Date:		
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)			
10: Form Given to:	_Position:	Date:	
Signature:	Date Received:		



#### **II. INVESTIGATION**

1.	nvestigator(s):Position(s):		······	
2.	Interviews:			
	Interviewed aggressor	Name:	_ Date:	
	Interviewed target	Name:	Date:	
	Interviewed witnesses	Name:	Date:	
		Name:	Date:	
3.	Any prior documented Incident	s by the aggressor? □ Yes □ No		
	If yes, have incident	ts involved target or target group previously?	□ Yes	□ No
	Any previous incide	ents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION	□ Yes	□ No
Su	mmary of Investigation:			

	(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)				
III. CON	CLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION	DN			
1. Findi	ing of bullying or retaliation:				
		□ <b>NO</b>			
	Bullying	Incident documented as			
	□ Retaliation	Discipline referral only			
2. Cont	acts:				
	Target's parent/guardian Date:	□ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date:			
	District Civil Rights Coordinator D	ate:Law Enforcement Date:			
3. Actic	on Taken:				
	□ Loss of Privileges	□ Detention (SL/ After School) □ Counseling Referral			
	□ Suspension □ Education □ O	ther			
4. Des	cribe Safety Planning:				
	Follow-up with Target: scheduled for	Initial and date when completed:			
	Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled	for Initial and date when completed:			
Report f	forwarded to Principal: Date	Report forwarded to Superintendent:			
Date	(If principal was not the investigator)				

Signature and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_