We are aware of the pervasive and detrimental impact that bullying has within and on our schools. Coupled with ever-expanding technology, this important problem must be expediently addressed.

While we understand that the best way to prevent bullying is to focus on prevention and professional development, there are other elements to an effective bullying prevention model.

A litmus test for our bullying policy and procedures is the lessons learned from crisis communication from the airline industry. Schools learn from their business models and apply those principles from corporate experience to the operations of the schools. In this regard, I compared findings from the airline industry to bullying to determine if the standards are valid.

In the analysis of trends from air disasters, our school has operationalized the major principles learned from the airline industry:

1. **Appointing a liaison (such as a counselor or psychologist) to the victim and his/her family to ensure direct and accurate information and support, as well as to ensure appropriate follow-up.**

   *Corporate Model: Assigning one “caretaker” per “family” helped families cope.*

2. **Immediate focus on providing care and support to the victim within the family and school context (see above) while concurrently investigating and responding to the bully and bystander(s).**

   *Corporate Model: Family assistance teams are provided.*

3. **Upholding the professional standards of confidentiality.**

   *Corporate Model: Immediate notification to families.*

4. **Notification of not only the family (parents and guardians), but also the staff members on a “need to know basis”**

   *Corporate Model: Keeping families shielded from media is a protective act.*

5. **The primary gain is safe schools. The secondary gain reduces the potential of conflict and distrust between school and home.**

   *Corporate Model: Reduction in litigation*

Similar procedures were developed for bullying – we utilized our already existing Crisis Intervention Teams; we notify the victim’s family and immediately involve them in a solution; we protect confidentiality; we have a spokesman as “lead person” and liaison for the family.

The litmus test applied above gave us rich comparisons for our proposed policy and procedures for bullying prevention. We learn from business models that have experienced challenges and have applied these learned skills for our schools, in this case, bullying.

In our continued commitment to improving school safety, the District wanted to create practical guidelines so that all children, staff and faculty feel safe within the school and/or work environment. The mission reviews and significantly enhances our previous bullying policy and recommends practices for both the Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District. The scope of our mission creates a safe and comfortable school and work environment that addresses bullying, hazing, and harassment in new ways.