



James Bowie High School

❖ Pride In Performance ❖

Thursday, October 19, 2017

Greetings Bowie High School Community,

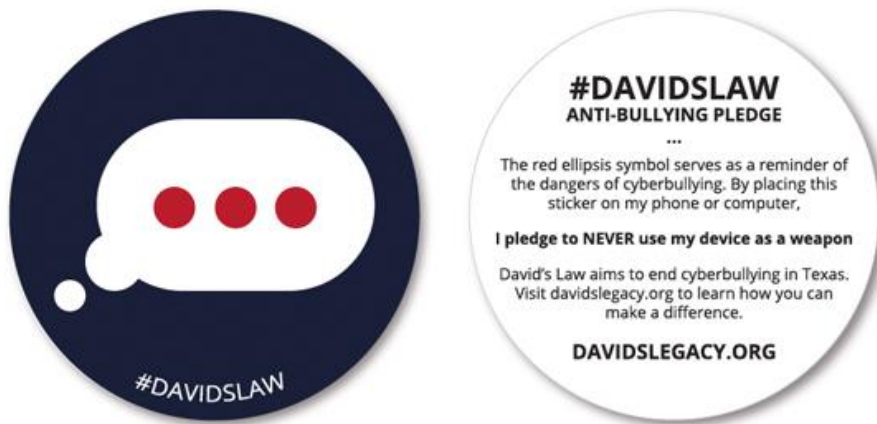
Over the past few weeks, our campus has focused on educating our students on anti-cyberbullying legislation that was passed in Texas over the summer known as [David's Law](#). We have asked the student body to support our campaign to end all bullying and cyberbullying at Bowie High School. Our students have participated in a variety of activities including small group sessions with freshmen counselors, and all students viewed a video during FIT that was created by our student leadership class. Last week we finished our campaign with a campus rally in the courtyard during both lunches where students signed the David's Law pledge. We encourage all families to speak with your children and discuss this very important issue.

We wanted all parents to have some talking points for your family discussion. Not only does the new legislation expand the definition of bullying, but also extends the school's authority to deal with cyberbullying off campus and outside of the school day, as well as makes it easier for the courts to issue injunctions against parents to stop bullying behavior. Below is helpful information on David's Law published by Walsh Gallegos, an Austin law firm that specializes in school law.

- 1. It makes it clear that bullying does not have to involve a pattern of repeated behavior. "A single significant act" might be sufficient to meet the definition of "bullying."*
- 2. Our definition of bullying has always required that there be an effect on the target. That effect could be physical harm, or the threat of it; or damage to property; or an "intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment." The new law adds to this, by stating that it is "bullying" if the behavior "materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school."*
- 3. Cyberbullying off campus is expressly included in the definition of bullying if it "interferes with a student's educational opportunities" or "substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity."*

As well as educating our student body, our administrative team has developed a protocol for handling situations of this nature. When a student comes to us with an allegation, each student involved is asked to fill out the Bullying/Harassment Complaint Form, and then administrators conduct an investigation into what was reported. After the investigation, the administrator has a few options to put in place in an attempt to solve the problem. These include a mediation agreement, student safety agreement, stay-away agreement, or the determination that the incident is a Title IX infraction with disciplinary consequences. All incidents will be communicated to parents. Please note that we must follow FERPA guidelines which limit our communication to only discussing information pertinent to your child.

Please note that if the bullying/cyberbullying is determined to violate [Chapter 37](#) (Safe Schools) law, a student who 1.) engages in bullying that encourages suicide; 2.) incites violence through group bullying; or 3.) releases or threatens to release “intimate visual material” of a minor or an adult student without consent, it will result in a removal to a DAEP. These instances will be reported to the campus SRO and possible charges can be filed that could result in a Class C misdemeanor.



I was fortunate enough to hear Michelle Obama speak at the invitation of Spredfast to a social media summit with a few of our student leaders. I wish that everyone at Bowie High School could have heard her message. The former first lady advised students to think before they post and reminded them to be kind. As a parent raising children who are digital natives, she commented on the power of smart devices and how little training we give children, however, the value proposition hasn't changed: we still need to treat others the way that we want to be treated. Please consider including some of that message in your conversations with your student as you set expectations and encourage your child to consider their virtual footprint and be a good digital citizen.

Sincerely,

Mark Robinson

Principal

James Bowie High School

Follow me on [Twitter](#) @robinson_mark_a

A Recognized School of Excellence