

HYDE PARK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

# **Project SAVE**

**Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act**

Presented to the Board of Education  
of the Hyde Park Central School District  
on April 26, 2001

**Project SAVE**  
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**I. Overview**

On July 24, 2000 Governor George Pataki signed legislation authorizing the provisions of Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education) to be implemented.

James R. Butterworth, Assistant Commissioner of the State Education Department, in a memo dated September 2000, stated that this legislation, “Provides a wide-ranging context within which school districts must address the critical issues of safety and security. It addresses issues related to student discipline and school violence by amending Education Law, Penal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Executive Law, and the Family Court Act”.

Various agencies and association share responsibility for implementation of Project SAVE requirements. Among these groups are:

**The State Education Department**  
**The Upstate Center for School Safety**  
**The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)**  
**School Administrators Association of New York State**  
**New York State Council of School Superintendents**  
**The New York State School Boards Association**  
**New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)**  
**The New York State Police**

Working collaboratively with individuals representing many of these groups, the Project SAVE Plan for the Hyde Park Central School District was developed. Commencing in September 2000 district administrators began attending information sessions regarding Project SAVE requirements. Plans for attainment of Project SAVE objectives by the deadline dates included with the legislation, began to be formulated. By December 2000 a timeline highlighting administrative responsibilities for the various components of the legislation, was developed.

A copy of that original outline is included as Appendix A.

Board of Education adoption of plan components is necessary to ensure that the Plan can be in effect by July 1, 2001. This document attempts to highlight the major provisions of Project SAVE which directly impact school district responsibilities. The outline of the various components of Project SAVE is organized to allow streamlined categorization of this complicated and complex Plan.

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**III. District Project SAVE Members**

**District Committee Representing  
The Board of Education**

David A. Burpee, Superintendent of Schools  
Rocco Cacchio, BOCES Safety/Risk Management Officer, Co-Chair  
Victor DeBonis, Director of Pupil Personnel Services  
Randall Gilbert, Principal, Haviland Middle School, Co-Chair  
Joseph Gordon, Director of Guidance/At-Risk Services  
Agnes Laub, Director of Math and Science  
Douglas Mayen, Director of Facilities and Operations, Co-Chair  
Carol Meissner, Principal, Ralph R. Smith Elementary School, Co-Chair  
Carole Pickering, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

**Additional District Committee Members  
Representing Each School**

Robert F. Bloom, Technology Teacher, Haviland Middle School  
Therese Fallon, Parent, PTA Member, Ralph R. Smith Elementary School  
Kathy Meyerson, Elementary Teacher, Violet Avenue Elementary School  
Margaret Robelee, Physical Education Teacher, North Park Elementary School  
Michael Stephan, Elementary Teacher, Netherwood Elementary School  
William Wall, Special Education Teacher, Roosevelt High School  
Judy Walsh, R.N., School Nurse, Hyde Park Elementary School

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## **IV. School Project SAVE Members**

### **FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL**

Officer Paul Caccia, Hyde Park Police; George Day, Parent; Joseph Gordon, Director of Guidance; Dave Grover, Teacher; Kim Hunt, Principal; Allison Kaase, School Monitor; Dr. Agnes Laub, Director of Math and Science; Nancy Morgan, Secretary; Robin Opstad, R.N., School Nurse; Dieter Schimmelpfennig, Dean of Students; Bill Wall, Chair, Teacher

### **HAVILAND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Officer Robert Benson, Hyde Park Police; Robert F. Bloom, Chair, Teacher; Joel Bogart, Parent; Linda Burke, Guidance Counselor; Rocco Cacchio, Dutchess County BOCES; Chief Bud Carey, Roosevelt Fire Department; Sue Cerulli, R.N., School Nurse; Debbie Frangk, Parent, Coach; Marie Lumb, PTA; Dr. Randall Gilbert, Principal; Trooper Joseph Lutz, New York State Police; Lisa Macklin, School Psychologist; Mary-Jo Sabia, PTA President; Linda Taylan, Teacher Assistant, PTA Council

### **HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Cathy Baker, Teacher; Rita Benson, Teacher Assistant; Susan Boyce, Teacher; Martha Boyko, School Social Worker; Bud Buckley, Teacher; Megan Cirrincione, Teacher; John Kegan, Principal; Mary Jane Montalto, School Psychologist; Janet Sabatino, Teacher; Mary Pat Steernberg, Teacher; Charie Valentine, Custodian; Judy Walsh, R.N., School Nurse; Ray Barnum, Interim Principal

### **NETHERWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Officer Robert Benson, Hyde Park Police Department; Carol Clark, Custodian; Nancy Elwell, Cafeteria Manager; Monica Malet, R.N., School Nurse; Michael Stephan, Chair, Teacher; Chief Charlie Tuttle, Hyde Park Fire Department; Ronald Van Kleeck, Principal

### **NORTH PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Mary Ann Caccoma, R.N., School Nurse; Sue Hrycum, Teacher Assistant; Eileen Kerins, Principal; Loretta Kingsburg, Teacher; Tish Lange, Teacher; Chief James McKenna, Hyde Park Police; Margaret Robelee, Teacher

### **RALPH R. SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Officer Robert Benson, Hyde Park Police Department; Amy Churchill, Teacher; Therese Fallon, Parent; Wayne Fallon, Custodian In Charge of Building; Carol Meissner, Chair, Principal; Margaret Qatani, Teacher; Gloria Robbins, School Social Worker; Lucille Walsh, Secretary to the Principal; Marianne Weaver, R.N., School Nurse

### **VIOLET AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Carol Amodeo, Teacher; Mary Bastian, Custodian In Charge of Building; Jamie Conway, Teacher; Anita Luke, Playground Monitor, Parent; Captain Jim Mauro, Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department; Kathy Meyerson, Chair, Teacher - Reports to District Committee; Carroll Rose, Teacher Assistant; Christine Sadoski, Secretary to the Principal; Cindy Scalzo, Teacher; Chief Mike Schmitt, Fairview Fire Department; James Welling, Principal; Cheryl Wilson, Teacher

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**V. Code of Conduct**

**“Section 2801, Code of Conduct on school property.”**

“The board of education, as defined in section two of this chapter, of every school district within the state, however created, and every board of cooperative educational services and county vocational extension board, shall adopt and amend, as appropriate, a code of conduct for the maintenance of order on school property, including a school function, which shall govern the conduct of students, teachers, and other school personnel as well as visitors and shall provide for the enforcement thereof. Such policy may be adopted by the school board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested parties.”

During the months of January, February, and March of 2001, preliminary deliberation on a revised code of conduct was initiated. Working with sample copies compiled from various state organizations (New York State Council of School Superintendents, School Administrators Association of New York State, and the New York State School Boards Association), the district administrators and district SAVE Committee reviewed the draft copies developed for the Hyde Park Central School District under the able leadership of Victor DeBonis.

After this preliminary stage, the code of conduct draft was reviewed by the HPTA leadership, PTA leadership, and representatives of the high school student government. The draft copy of the code was also reviewed by representatives of the Hyde Park Central District’s legal counsel. Appropriate modifications were made and the final copy recommended for adoption by the Board of Education, is attached as Appendix B.

Under regulations promulgated in support of Project SAVE, the Board of Education would amend, as appropriate, and adopt this code of conduct. It is the belief of the District Project SAVE Committee, and verified by district legal counsel, that the proposed code of conduct meets the requirements established by regulations applicable to Project SAVE legislation.

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**VI. Fingerprinting of Employees**

**A.11537(main bill) and S. 8239 (chapter amendment)**  
**“The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly,**  
**do enact as follows:”**

“AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to the protection of pupils in educational settings from abuse and maltreatment, and requiring the fingerprinting of prospective employees of school districts, charter schools and boards of cooperative educational services and teachers and administrators applying for licensure of certification.”

This portion of the Project SAVE requirements appears more cumbersome and unwieldy than many of the other components. Under the new fingerprinting requirements, overall supervision for compliance rests at the state level with the State Education Department.

In theory, each school district within the state of New York would first collect two sets of fingerprints from prospective employees. (Who, or what agency, would be responsible for securing these fingerprints has not yet been determined. There is no legislation mandating any one source to do the actual fingerprinting.) Both sets would then be sent to the State Education Department with a \$74.00 fee. The State Education Department would process the fingerprints and fee and then transfer one set of fingerprints to the Division of Criminal Justice Services. The other set would be sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D.C. Once clearance was received on all levels, a new employee could be hired.

Even from the limited scenario illustrated above, one can easily determine the many problems and difficulties inherent with the system as it is presently devised. There is discussion of modifications being made to this requirement, but as of yet, no official response concerning possible modifications has been received. Of limited consolation is the fact that school districts throughout the state are also experiencing difficulties in determining how to implement this section of Project SAVE legislation. Appendix C highlights some of these concerns.

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**VII. Civility, Citizenship, and Character Education Requirements**

**Section 801-a. “Instruction in civility, citizenship, and character education.”**

“The Regents shall ensure that the course of instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve includes a component on civility, citizenship, and character education. Such component shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. The regents shall determine how to incorporate such component in existing curricula and the commissioner shall promulgate any regulations needed to carry out such determination of the regents.”

The New York State Regents have not yet distributed to school districts, specific guidelines on how to incorporate the instruction of civility, citizenship, and character education into existing curricula. However, learning standards accepted for New York State already incorporate many of these components into their requirements.

The Hyde Park Central School District teachers and staff will promote the instruction of civility, citizenship, and character education through its reliance on Social Studies Learning Standards, the Health Curriculum, and individual staff and teacher interactions with students. We invite the parents and other Hyde Park Central School District members to also promote these values in our young people.

While technically, this segment of the Project SAVE legislation is not yet ready for compliance since the Regents have not provided the required direction, our community, through shared beliefs and values, can provide leadership in this area by valuing and using resources and tools already at our disposal.

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**IX. Health Education Requirements to Address  
Issues of Violence Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

**“Subdivision 4 of section 804 of the education law, as amended by  
chapter 447 of the laws of 1989, is amended to read as follows:”**

“b. The commissioner shall make available an interpersonal violence prevention education package for grades kindergarten through twelve, which package may consist of student pamphlets, parent pamphlets, videotapes and other informative materials to be distributed to school districts, and shall encourage the use of such materials as part of the health or other related curricula or programs.”

“c. The regents shall review the health curriculum requirements in existence on the effective date of this paragraph for the purpose of streamlining such curriculum and identifying any outdated components that may be eliminated or consolidated in order to ensure that students have sufficient time and instruction to develop skills to address issues of violence prevention and mental health. To the extent appropriate, the regents shall modify the existing curriculum to provide greater focus on the development of skills, by no later than the middle school, that are needed to recognize, cope with and address potentially violent incidents, including an understanding of student’s roles in emergency situations, what to do when confronted with another student who is experiencing a mental health problem, and other related skills designed to reduce the threat of violence in schools.”

The Office of the Commissioner has not yet provided the violence prevention education package for grades kindergarten through twelve. Nor is there an updated health curriculum listing revised requirements from the Regents. Completion dates for these items has not yet been established by the state agencies responsible. However, once these documents arrive, incorporation of mandated changes will be included in the Hyde Park Central School District educational programs.

In the interim, heightened awareness of safety issues is being accomplished through local effort. Each school has a building safety committee that includes members of the staff, parents, and community. Additionally, our present health curriculum focuses attention of young children on safety issues and continues that emphasis at the middle school level.

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**X. Enrollment of Youth Released from Residential Facilities,  
Court Notification Requirements,  
and Designated Educational Official**

**“Section 112 of the education law, as amended by chapter 63  
of the laws of 1994, is amended to read as follows:”**

“The department shall promulgate regulations requiring the cooperation of local school districts in facilitating the prompt enrollment of children who are released or conditionally released from residential facilities operated by or under contract with the office of children and family services, the department of mental hygiene and local departments of social services and in implementing plans for release or conditional release submitted to the family court pursuant to paragraph (c) of subdivision seven of section 353.3 of the family court act.”

**“The criminal procedure law is amended  
by adding a new section 380.90 to read as follows:”**

“Whenever a person under the age of nineteen who is enrolled as a students in a public or private elementary or secondary school is sentenced for a crime, the court that has sentenced such person shall provide notification of the conviction and sentence to the designated educational official of the school in which such person is enrolled as a student. Such notification shall be used by the designated educational official only for purposes related to the execution of the student’s educational plan, where applicable, successful school adjustment and reentry into the community. Such notification shall be kept separate and apart from such student’s school records and shall be accessible only by the designated educational official. Such notification shall not be part of such student’s permanent school record and shall not be appended to or included in any documentation regarding such student and shall be destroyed at such time as such student is no longer enrolled in the school district. At no time shall such notification be used for any purpose other than those specified in this subdivision.”

Superintendent David Burpee is the designated educational official for the Hyde Park Central School District. In that capacity he will ensure that the components related to court notification and enrollment of released students from residential facilities, will be followed.

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**XI. Statewide Uniform Violent Incident Reporting**

**Section 2802. “Uniform violent incident reporting system.”**

“2. The commissioner, in conjunction with the division of criminal justice services, shall establish a statewide uniform violent incident reporting system which public school districts, boards of cooperative educational services and county vocational education and extension boards shall follow.”

“3. The uniform violent incident reporting system shall require public school districts, boards of cooperative educational services and county vocational education and extension boards to annually report to the commissioner in a form and by a date prescribed by the commissioner, the ...information concerning violent and disruptive incidents that occurred in the prior school year.”

“4. The commissioner shall require a summary of such information to be included, in a form prescribed by the commissioner, in the school district report cards or boards of cooperative educational services report cards required by this chapter.”

The Commissioner of Education has not yet notified public school districts of the format to be used when reporting violent and disruptive incidents for the preceding school year. The required date to report those findings has also not yet been established although it is believed that BEDS data collection would probably be the suitable forum for sharing this type of information. BEDS data is routinely gathered during the first week of October each school year.

The reporting of these incidents on a district’s school report card will be a new requirement. How this will be noted and delineated has not yet been determined.

In preparation for these new reporting requirements, schools within the Hyde Park Central School District already keep records of all suspensions, noting the nature of the offense and other pertinent data. Additional requirements, when established by the Commissioner, will be incorporated into the format presently being used.

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**XII. Board Actions and Policies in Reference to Project SAVE**

The Hyde Park Central School District Board of Education has been an active participant in supporting Project SAVE initiatives since the legislative authorization of Project SAVE was enacted, just prior to the start of the 2000-2001 school year.

Board of Education actions and policies undertaken include:

- Becoming familiar with requirements affiliated with Project SAVE
- Authorizing the creation of a District Project SAVE Committee and appointing individuals to represent the Board of Education
- Authorizing the creation of Building Project SAVE committees under the auspices of building principals
- Reviewing periodic update status reports from the co-chairs of Project SAVE to ensure that guidelines and deadlines were being followed
- Authorizing new policies necessary to ensure compliance with Project SAVE initiatives

Specific Board of Education actions and policies are highlighted in Appendix D.

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**XIII. Omnibus School Violence Prevention Grant Program**

**Section 2814. “Omnibus school violence prevention grant program.”**

“Within amounts appropriated for implementation of extended day programs and school violence prevention programs, the commissioner is hereby authorized and directed to award grants on a competitive basis to school districts. Such grants shall be for one or more of the following pursuant to this section: school safety and violence prevention programs consistent with the purposes of the school safety plans required by section twenty-eight hundred one-a of this article and extended day activities defined in this section. School districts shall be prohibited from using funds awarded pursuant to this section to displace school district after-school funding in existence as of the effective date of this article.”

While initial inquiries have been made, no omnibus school violence prevention grant program has yet been developed by the Office of the Commissioner of Education.

There is no prospective date yet determined when such program will be available.

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**XIV. Protection for Employees Who Report Acts of Violence,  
Penalties for Assaults on Teachers and Students**

**“Section 3028-c. Protection of school employees who report  
acts of violence and weapons possession”**

“Any school employee having reasonable cause to suspect that a person has committed an act of violence while in or on school property, or having reasonable cause to suspect that a person has committed an act of violence upon a student, school employee or volunteer either upon school grounds or elsewhere, or having reasonable cause to suspect that a person has brought a gun, knife, bomb or other instrument capable of or that appears capable of causing death or physical injury upon school grounds who in good faith reports such information to school officials, to the commissioner, or to law enforcement authorities, shall have immunity from any civil liability that may arise from the making of such report, and no school district or school district employee shall take, request or cause a retaliatory action against any such employee who makes such report.”

In addition to the protection created in the modification of education law cited above, there are also stricter penalties for people who assault individuals while on school property. Effective November, 1, 2000, the nature of most assaults committed on school property was upgraded from misdemeanor status to that of felony assault.

Any individual who assaults a school employee on school grounds and any non-student who assaults a student on school grounds can now have that action charged as a felony.

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**XV. Comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan**

Under the able co-leadership of Douglas Mayen, Director of Facilities and Operations; and Rocco Cacchio, BOCES Safety/Risk Management Officer, much effort has been expended to ensure that the Hyde Park Central School District has a quality comprehensive district-wide school safety plan.

Accompanied by Randall Gilbert, another co-chair of the District Project SAVE Committee, all three individuals participated in a county-wide, three evening program focusing on safety issues in school settings, closely aligned to Project SAVE initiatives. During each of the three evenings, four hours daily were spent on identifying safety concerns in Hyde Park Schools, using Haviland Middle School as the prototype.

Additionally, “behind the scenes” work was done beyond what was assigned at the bi-weekly Project SAVE district meetings. The Hyde Park Central School District, Comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan is representative of the dedicated service provided by the numerous members of the Hyde Park Central School District Safety Committees, and our dedicated members of the various community fire, ambulance, and law enforcement agencies.

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**XVI. Building Level School Safety Plans**

Each school in Hyde Park has a building level Project SAVE Safety Team.

It was each building team's responsibility to ensure that an appropriate building level school safety plan was generated, particular for their building.

In addition to building level responsibilities, each building level Project SAVE team sent one representative to join the District Project SAVE Committee to ensure coordination and alignment with District expectations and needs.

Commencing in January, 2001, building level representatives joined District Project SAVE members in bi-weekly meetings. At these meetings discussions were held, problems reviewed, and solutions generated as the many tasks associated with Project SAVE became apparent. Assignments were distributed to assure that building level school safety plans were completed as required.

Each building level school safety plan is outlined in Appendix F.

Detailed copies of each building's plans will be kept on file at the local police agencies and with the State Police, as mandated by Project SAVE legislation.

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**XVIII. Summary**

Completing a project as complex and intricate as Project SAVE requires coordination and teamwork from a variety of agencies, departments, and schools. As with any legislation which requires interconnectedness among various state agencies, some hesitation occurred during the early months when every agency and school was trying to determine which part each played in the larger scenario.

It is unusual for legislation directly affecting education law to also have dramatic impact on penal law, criminal procedure law, executive law, and family court proceedings. Now, many months into the project, our school district has a better understanding of our own responsibilities and those of the other groups. Keeping the focus on making our schools safer, Project SAVE planning for the Hyde Park Central School District proceeded more smoothly than many first anticipated. This is due in large part to the overarching leadership, skill, and commitment of Superintendent, David Burpee who set the tone for Project SAVE by initiating contact with outside agencies and providing support for the many individuals within the school organization, to do the work required for this legislation.

Community agencies that contributed to the Hyde Park Central School District Project SAVE plan include:

**Hillside Fire Company, Fairview Fire Department  
Staatsburg Fire Department, Alamo Ambulance Service  
Hyde Park Fire Department, Roosevelt Fire Department  
Town of Hyde Park Police Department, New York State Police  
Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department, Hyde Park Rescue Squad  
Dutchess County Sheriff's Department, Fairview Rescue Squad  
Department of Emergency Rescue, Fairview Rescue Squad  
Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response  
Roosevelt Rescue Squad, Staatsburg Rescue Squad**

It is with sincere gratitude for the assistance of so many fine, hard working, and dedicated individuals, that this plan is being submitted to the Hyde Park Board of Education. It is hoped that schools throughout the district will be safer, more secure places of learning for the students entrusted in our care.

On behalf of all those whose efforts resulted in the completion of this project,

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Carol Meissner, Co-chair