



Identity Safe and Inclusive School Program

A Guide to Eradicating Bullying and Intolerance and Creating Belonging

By BECKI COHN-VARGAS, ED.D.



A project of
NOT IN OUR SCHOOL
and **NOT IN OUR TOWN**
Working together to build safe,
inclusive, and accepting schools
and communities.

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The purpose of the Not In Our School *Identity Safe and Inclusive School Program* is to promote identity safe middle and high schools using research and evidenced-based strategies. Not In Our School (NIOS) combines a unique approach to schoolwide culture with student-led efforts and involvement of the entire community to prevent bullying and intolerance while ensuring safety, acceptance, and inclusion. The climate on any campus determines whether every child feels physically and emotionally safe, engaged, and respected (National School Climate Center, 2016a).

This model builds on NIOS's many years of experience and research on bullying. NIOS campaigns have been implemented at all academic levels from preschool to the university. These campaigns have varied in size from a single school to an entire district, and even in multi-district efforts. Our blogs and e-newsletter have showcased innovative NIOS initiatives and best practices. The *NIOS Quick Start Guide*, offering a simple model for student-led NIOS campaigns, has been downloaded by thousands of schools nationally.

This new *Identity Safe and Inclusive School Program* incorporates a comprehensive set of structured activities for middle and high schools. Focused on bullying prevention and school-wide initiatives, it creates an inclusive school climate, and comes with implementation and evaluation tools. With this guide, teachers can help students learn to promote kindness and empathy, reduce bullying, become “upstanders” rather than bystanders, and develop compassion and acceptance of others.



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The Working Group/Not In Our Town

P.O. Box 70232

Oakland, CA 9461

www.niot.org

info@niot.org

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Printed in the United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Not In Our Town wants to express our appreciation to all the students, educators, and parents who have participated in Not In Our Town activities over the last 20 years. They have shared so much of their passion, their creativity, and their modeled solutions along the way. Now, more than at any other time in the last two decades, our nation and the entire world are in need of sustained efforts to promote empathy and a climate of safety, acceptance, and inclusion. This NIOS *Identity Safe and Inclusive School Program* is dedicated to them.

The Working Group/Not In Our Town:

Harold Leffall Jr., *Executive Director*

Patrice O'Neill, *Executive Producer*

Editorial and Design Staff:

Barbara Nishi

Delores Dwyer

Juanita Carroll Young

Melania Khouie-Vargas

Taryn Smith

Special Thanks to Pro Bono Guide Editor:

Dolores Dwyer

Additional Content Contributors:

Anissa Gerdts

Gabrielle Banta

Janet Miedema-Grant

Kathe Gogolewski

Lynn Bravewomon

Mazique Bianco

Special Thanks To:

The Graham Family Foundation

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About Not In Our School

Not In Our School (NIOS) is a project that grew out of Not In Our Town (NIOT), which began as a film about one community that stood up to hate and intolerance. Over the last 20 years, NIOT has grown into a movement of people in towns and cities who are sharing their innovative strategies for preventing hate-based incidents and creating inclusive communities.

NIOS offers creative solutions to bullying and intolerance, with tools for creating a positive school climate that addresses bullying without blaming, but instead supporting the student who is bullied and then helps student bullies and others transform. NIOS has distinguished itself as one of the few bullying programs with a focus on equity and ways to prevent bias-based bullying. The *NIOS Identity Safe and Inclusive School Program* is unique because it emphasizes student-led activities that have been shown to work in other schools.

Since 2006, we have continued to develop the Not In Our School interactive website (www.niot.org/nios), which offers a wide range of resources for teachers and students to start their own on-campus initiatives. The website has an array of free, easily accessible online films, lesson plans, and activity guides.

The new NIOS Identity Safe and Inclusive School Program includes a comprehensive two-year plan for a school to create a safe and accepting climate, with measures to assure equity and identity safety for all students while addressing bullying and all forms of intolerance. The Program encompasses three areas: Schoolwide culture and climate, Student-Led Action, and Getting the Community involved.

We welcome your participation!