<u>Cheat Sheet</u>:
Choosing An Appropriate Bullying Prevention Program (see pages below for more detailed info)

<u>Here's what to look for:</u>*

Look for this:	Watch out for this:	But this is ok:
☐ Does the program address bullying specifically?	Programs that are really focused on something else (e.g., magic show, tumbling, literature) but purport to be about bullying	Programs may address social functioning along with bullying: e.g., PBIS, social competence, social skills & bullying
☐ Does the program publish, online or available by request, its outcomes research and evidence for effectiveness?	Programs that only offer testimonials or personal experiences as evidence of effectiveness. Programs that don't provide, or permit you to preview, samples of content.	Programs don't need to have double-blind random-assignment experimental research; they don't need to be published in journals; they don't need to be on the SAMSHA or any other list of approved programs
☐ Does an individual or organization with legitimate credentials offer the program?	Individuals who offer no information about their training and expertise, are trained in unrelated fields, or are only discussing personal experiences in their programs.	Programs don't need to be provided by universities or hospitals; others who publish outcomes research are fine. Nonprofits often partner with research organizations or academia.

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* These are difficult issues, as unproven programs can be very compelling and interesting, and individuals with no formal credentials may, at times, offer important information. The most important element is the existence of *some* type of research evidence of effectiveness apart from or in addition to testimonials. A program without any such evidence may be effective, but it could also be ineffective or even harmful – without any research, there is just no way to be sure.

Checklist:
Can I use the _____ Program and will it satisfy Massachusetts's bullying law?

Professional Development:

Be sure you are training different populations as they need:

- Everyone trained in your policy and procedures, and how to make a report

- Faculty and staff trained in how to recognize and respond to bullying and understanding cyberbullying

- Administrators trained in how to investigate (if necessary) and procedures developed in your new Plan

Choosing a speaker, trainer, or Train the Trainer program for Professional Development:

- The speaker must primarily address Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention
- If it is a Train-the-Trainer model, be sure that the Master Trainer has *legitimate* expertise (see next point);
- The speaker must have legitimate professional expertise in bullying/ cyberbullying prevention research/education:
    o Do they have an affiliation and credentials that denote professional credibility?
    o Are they an experienced trainer? Have they worked with schools training school faculty and staff?

  CAUTION * There are many individuals who style themselves as "bullying experts," particularly in the wake of the new legislation. Having personal experience with bullying does not make someone an "expert." Other credentials are necessary.

Checklist:
Can I use the _____ Program and will it satisfy Massachusetts's new bullying law?

Programs for the students (with parent component):

The law does *not* specify that you must use any particular program. However, the student program MUST …

- include parent education components.

- Be age-appropriate.

- Address bullying & cyberbullying prevention.

- Have been evaluated through research; and

- Have demonstrated a *positive impact*.

Generally, this does *not* limit you to specific programs but **you should ask** -

Question #1: Is the content of this program based on research-demonstrated best practices?

Question #2: Does this program have outcomes data that demonstrates a positive impact?

Question #3: Is the program offered by an individual or institution with appropriate and legitimate credentials?

There are no hard-and-fast rules about what programs meet these criteria, and there are no "acceptable programs" lists. State regulation agencies are interested in schools demonstrating that they are making *good-faith efforts* to utilize the best programs available. For example, it would be more difficult for a school to explain utilizing a program that has zero outcomes research, relative to a program that has outcomes research.