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City commission announces school violence hearings

By Kristen A. Graham INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

In the wake of violence against Asian students at South Philadelphia High, Philadelphia's Commission on Human Relations will hold a series of public hearings on school violence, officials announced today.

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The first hearing will be held on Jan. 28 at a recreation center in South Philadelphia. Students, parents, faculty, police and community members are invited to speak about their experiences with violence and recommendations for fixes on violence motivated by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and sexual orientation.

At the end of the hearings, the commission will issue a report to the Philadelphia School District.

"We see these public hearings as part of our mission to diffuse conflict and intergroup tensions in the city," said Rue Landau, executive director of the commission.

On Dec. 3, Asian students at South Philadelphia High were attacked by large groups of mostly African American students. Seven students required hospital treatment.

Activists say it was just one episode of continuing violence against immigrants. A police investigation continues, as does a district-ordered probe by a retired federal judge and a new investigation by the Pennsylvania state Commission on Human Relations.

A federal civil rights claim is also in the works.

Contact staff writer Kristen Graham at 215-854-5146 or kgraham@phillynews.com.

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