An Examination of Policies, Programs, and Strategies
That Address Bullying in Virginia Public School Systems

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Dedication

To my husband, Rick, for all your faith, love and inspiration.

And, to my parents, Joan and Herb Kowitz, for your all your love and support.

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It is a privilege to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following people, each of whom has played a role in my educational and professional endeavors. First, I owe a debt of gratitude to my mentor and the director of my dissertation, Dr. Ben Howerton for all his guidance from the beginning of my doctoral program and through each phase of my candidacy. I would also like to thank Dr. Joe Emerson and Dr. William Johnson for their contributions while serving on my dissertation committee. I also feel compelled to thank Nancy Gilmore and Phyllis Higgins for always being there to answer questions and providing assistance.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

An Examination of Policies, Programs, and Strategies
That Address Bullying in Virginia Public School Systems

Bullying incidents in schools are getting more attention since the Columbine High

School shootings on April 20, 1999 in Littleton, Colorado. Many national and state

policies have been enacted since that fateful day. In Virginia, legislation passed by the

1999 General Assembly (§22.1-208.01) required local school boards to establish a

character education program in their schools. The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Act (2001) holds schools accountable for providing a safe learning environment. The

purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how the public schools in the

Commonwealth of Virginia are addressing bullying and to answer the following

questions: What policies and programs are public school administrators in Virginia

implementing to address bullying? What strategies and practices are public school

administrators in Virginia utilizing to address bullying? What future directions are

educational administrators of Virginia planning to take to address and reduce bullying?

Structured interviews by telephone and e-mail with school personnel responsible for

school safety and discipline in 12 out of 134 school systems in Virginia were utilized in

this qualitative study. Most of the questions in the interview protocol were open-ended.

The data revealed that all 12 school divisions that participated in this study had policies

and programs to address bullying. Eleven of the 12 school divisions reported having

strategies to address bullying and having future plans to promote positive student

behaviors and future directions for managing bullying. Results of this study also revealed

that there is a definite need for school systems to reexamine their current policies and

practices to address specific classroom interventions; to address cyberbullying; and, to

support all bullying victims, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Violence in schools continues to make newspaper headlines, especially after the

shocking, violent incident that occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado

on April 20, 1999. Although it was the goriest and most publicized incident of fatal

school violence, it was not an isolated one, because there have been many reported

incidents of fatal violence prior to and after the tragic event at Columbine High School

(Cullen, 2009; Nimmo & Scott, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). For

example, before the Columbine High School tragedy, there was the Moses Lake,

Washington incident, where a 14-year-old honors student named Barry Loukaitis dressed

in black and armed with three of the family's firearms opened fire on his algebra class at

Frontier Lake Junior High School on February 2, 1996, fatally shooting two of his

classmates and the algebra teacher (Egan, 1998). Cullen stated that in February 1997, a

sixteen-year-old in remote Bethel, Alaska brought a shotgun to high school and opened

fire killing the principal, a student, and injuring two others; furthermore, in October of

1997 a student in Pearl, Mississippi shot and killed two classmates in his school and

wounded seven others. In December, two more sprees erupted in remote locales:

West Paducah, Kentucky, and Stamps, Arkansas (Cullen).

Yogan (2000) reported that since 1992, there had been more than 211 school

deaths associated with violence; moreover, when the suspects and victims were identified

as small-town, middle-class, Caucasian children, the nation became alarmed. Eight days

after the Columbine tragedy on April 28, 1999, the prosperous farming community of

Taber of the province of Alberta, Canada was shocked when shortly after 1 p.m. a former

W. R. Myers student entered the school brandishing a .22-calibre semi-automatic rifle, a weapon commonly used for rodent control on farms (Bergman & Chisholm, 1999). The 14-year-old former male student continued down the hallway, confronted two 17-year-old students and shot them both, rendering one of them with fatal wounds (Bergman & Chisholm). Bergman and Chisholm stated that much like the case of the two teenage killers in Colorado, the young Taber gunman was described by most former classmates as a loner who was frequently the object of teasing and ridicule (during the past year he had been home-schooled). A more recent bloodbath occurred on Monday, April 16, 2007 by a solitary and troubled student, who went on a shooting spree at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, broadening the scope of school shootings to institutes of higher learning (Gibbs, 2007).

According to a report by the U.S. Secret Service, the assailants in more than two thirds of the school shootings experienced some form of bullying prior to the incident, and several assailants experienced bullying at school over a long period of time (Vossekuil, Reddy, Fein, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2000). Bullying is generally considered to be teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, stealing, or other direct attacks that are initiated by one or more students against a victim (Banks, 2000). School violence is not limited to the United States; in one study, 15 to 80% of the students from 37 nations including Australia, Austria, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and the United States of America reported their friends became victims of school violence at least once during the previous month of the study (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker, & Goesling, 2002). Additionally, with the tragic events of September 11, 2001, this great nation was further

disconcerted and America's sense of safety and security vanished (Garbarino & deLara, 2002).

Why are adolescents committing violent acts? Garbarino (Garbarino & deLara, 2002) interviewed the parents of Klebold, one of the school shooters in Littleton, Colorado; they claimed that their son was driven to desperate violence by the relentless bullying and emotional harassment (taunting) he experienced at Columbine High School. Other factors such as violence in the media, easy access to weapons, and lack of parental supervision are cited as contributors to school violence (Garrett, 2001; Gaustad, 1991). School systems and administrators have little control of these factors but can initiate and enforce policies that address bullying.

Overview

Until the Columbine tragedy, school administrators were generally reluctant to acknowledge that violence can occur at schools and did not associate bullying with violent incidents (Greenbaum, 1989). School administrators assumed incidents of bullying, fighting, and intimidation were events all children encounter and need to learn to handle themselves (Greenbaum). Bullying, cited as a factor causing violence to erupt in schools (Garrett, 2001), should be addressed to prevent the tragedies such as the one at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado (Garbarino & deLara, 2002). An immediate response to the Columbine shootings by the Clinton administration was to allocate federal funds to finance the development of plans and policies to reduce school violence (Garrett). In addition, since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), schools are being held accountable for creating safe environments for children. Has this accountability led school districts to be more proactive with policies,

programs, strategies, and procedures regarding safer schools, antibullying, and character education? The purpose of this study was to determine if and how Virginia school systems are addressing bullying in their policies, programs, strategies, and procedures.

Statement of the Problem

When the Columbine tragedy occurred, school administrators generally believed that the frequency of bullying in schools was increasing, and studies in 1999 supported this notion. The School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey of 1999 presented data indicating that 5.1% of 12- through 18-year-old students had reported being bullied at school within the previous 6 months (Addington, Ruddy, Miller, & DeVoe, 2002). That percentage was reported to be 8% by 2001, also over a 6-month time span (DeVoe et al., 2002). With that large percentage (one in twelve) admitting to having been bullied over such a relatively short time, the notion that bullying is prevalent in schools can safely be assumed to be valid, especially when one must realize that some underreporting is likely (Greenbaum, 1989). That large percentage also assures that many more students, who may not be victims of bullying, are witnesses to those actions (Greenbaum). The tragedy is that no child is a stranger to teasing, and the roles of victims, perpetrators, and witnesses can be quite dynamic from day to day and from one school year to the next (Garbarino & deLara, 2002).

The generally accepted notion that "it can't happen here" is difficult to overcome because past problems of violence in schools have been almost exclusively in crime-ridden areas and ghettos of major urban cities (Garbarino & deLara, 2002). Columbine is not an urban school in a high crime area; it is located in an affluent, suburban town in

Colorado. This fact prompted many school administrations to take a fresh look and realize that "it can happen here" (Garbarino & deLara). Regrettably, many school systems are still in denial and are not addressing the issue (Greenbaum, 1989). Misunderstandings still linger on the topic of school shootings and the students who commit such heinous acts (Dedman, 2007). The Internet has only compounded the problem as now bullies have a means off campus to torment their victims anonymously (Willard, 2007). The problem addressed in this study was whether Virginia school systems are in denial or are they addressing bullying through their policies, programs, strategies, and procedures.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how the public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia are addressing bullying. It was the goal of this qualitative study to explore and examine policies, formal programs, interventions, practices, and strategies that are being adopted to manage bullying in schools. This goal led to the formulation of the research questions used in this study. The primary research questions are the following:

1. How are school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia addressing bullying?

2. What policies and programs are public school administrators in Virginia implementing to address bullying?

3. What strategies and practices are public school administrators in Virginia utilizing to address bullying?

4. What future directions are educational administrators of Virginia planning to take to address and reduce bullying in their institutions?

Statement of Potential Significance

It was the goal of this study to conduct an examination and content analysis of the policies, formal programs, interventions, practices, and strategies that are being adopted to confront and reduce bullying (and violence). The most important goal to be achieved by school systems is to develop (a) strategies and programs to address bullying and reduce, and ultimately prevent, violence in and around schools and (b) comprehensive bully-proofing programs that continually emphasize creating an environment where all children can feel safe to help minimize the fear that bullies create (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli, 1997). Violence prevention programs at schools should also address students' beliefs about two important basic concepts: (a) that bullying is a problem in their school and (b) that something can be done to correct it (Khosropour & Walsh, 2001).

Before antibullying programs can be expected to have any chance of succeeding, school officials need to recognize and agree that a bullying problem exists in their schools. According to Weinhold (1999), school officials must learn how to identify and address the hidden aspects of the culture of violence that exists in their schools, which can be accomplishing by answering a series of questions detailed in the review of the literature for this study. It is also important to increase awareness of bullying and its effects in the school community (Rigby, 1995). Additionally, Rigby asserted that schools are unlikely to adopt useful policies and practices against bullying without a general

recognition among staff and faculty members that bullying is a serious problem for a substantial number of students.

Winters (1997) conducted a descriptive study examining levels of school violence and interventions to prevent school violence in Pennsylvania school systems. Survey instruments were mailed to the state's 501 superintendents. Winters experienced a low response rate and could not verify that the superintendents who did respond were forthcoming in their responses on the self-report questionnaire. Winters acknowledged that the instrument did not allow the superintendents to explain the specifics of the interventions or strategies they were using in their districts to prevent school violence. Analysis of the data revealed that violence levels in Pennsylvania schools mirrored the levels of schools in the rest of the United States. It was found that there were increasing occurrences of verbal intimidation and acts of bullying in Pennsylvania over the course of the study. Additionally, it was found that the problem of school violence was no longer limited to urban schools in Pennsylvania and that larger schools experienced more incidents of violence including verbal intimidation and bullying.

Bullying has been recognized as a contributing factor to violence in schools; therefore, bullying and bullying-prevention policies are important areas of research that warrant further exploration. The potential significance of this study is that it contributes to that body of knowledge and improves public awareness regarding what is and is not being done in public schools to address bullying.

Conceptual Framework

The development of this study stemmed from the works of others such as Olweus (1993, 2003), Brockenbrough (2001), Bennett (2008), Finn (2008), Livingston (2008), Waldron (2002), and Winters (1997). Each of these researchers studied various aspects of bullying, antibullying programs, and school violence in schools. For example, Olweus (1993) studied student perception of bullying. Bennett, Finn, and Livingston conducted studies on the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs. Specifically, Bennett investigated the effectiveness of the antibullying program, Take a Stand against Bullying; Finn evaluated the Olweus bullying prevention program; and Livingston conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of antibullying programs on students. Waldron studied how youth understand Columbine, school violence, and school safety in relationship to viewpoints that are presented in the mainstream media and by school officials. Winters conducted a descriptive study to discover the levels of specific types of violence along with the prevention and intervention strategies used to combat violence in each of the school districts in Pennsylvania. Brockenbrough investigated peer victimization and bullying among middle school students in Virginia, using a self-report survey. The works of each of the above researchers are briefly explained below as the conceptual framework of this study.

Olweus (1993) developed and utilized age-appropriate questionnaires, which were administered by teachers and completed anonymously by students in Norway. The questionnaire provided a definition of bullying, and it referred to a specific time period and offered fairly specific response alternatives, such as *about once a week*, and *several times a week*. The questionnaire included questions about the others' reactions to

bullying, as perceived by the respondents, such as the reactions and attitudes of peers, teachers, and parents. Olweus estimated that approximately 84,000 students, or 15% of the total enrollment in Norwegian primary and secondary schools, were involved in bully-victim problems *now and then*.

Brockenbrough (2001) carried out a quasi-experimental study investigating peer victimization and bullying among 416 middle school students in Albemarle County, Virginia, using a 69-item self-report survey that included measures of bullying, victimization, self-concept, attitudes toward aggression, peer or teacher support, school safety, and school adjustment before and after a bullying prevention program. Brockenbrough found no significant changes, but there were many limitations to her study, which she candidly explained. The school did not follow through on all the aspects of the prescribed antibullying intervention program. Brockenbrough did not report details of many pertinent aspects in the implementation of the Bully-Proofing Your School Program (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, Short-Camilli, 2000). Some questions about the program were left unanswered; for example, did Albemarle County Schools utilize Garrity's Bully-Proofing Your School Program as an instrument to implement a division-wide antibullying policy? When did the school division first implement this program?

Bennett (2008) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine the usefulness of a new short-term antibullying intervention program called Take a Stand against Bullying in middle schools. Data were gathered from 603 eighth-grade students from 2 Washington state middle schools. Bennett analyzed her results using factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedures, which generated statistically significant posttest group and gender differences following

intervention. Bennett's study findings supported other researchers' findings that school-wide bullying intervention programs result in reduced bullying and other related antisocial behavior among students.

Finn (2008) conducted a quasi-experimental study with control groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) utilizing pre and posttesting with over 800 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students from four elementary schools in a suburban school district in the State of New York. Finn's study used archival data that were collected at preintervention and postintervention points. Finn suggested that although the OBPP is often cited and recommended as an empirically validated "best practice" and model program of bullying intervention, generalizability of these findings may not be warranted, as published research of implementation of the Olweus program within the United States has revealed that the program may not be as effective with U.S. student populations; consequently, further research studies evaluating OBPP effectiveness with U.S. student populations is needed.

Livingston (2008) conducted a meta-analysis and content analysis study to evaluate antibullying program outcome results via systematic review of the literature on the effectiveness of antibullying programs, establish empirically validated components of effective antibullying programs, and provide evidence-based recommendations for the development of effective antibullying interventions. Livingston concluded that effective programs and noneffective programs cannot be distinguished by their program components because of many similarities and overlapping program components; however, one notable difference is that the top-rated programs emphasized quality of teaching, learning, and care for individual students, whereas the bottom-rated programs

emphasized restructure of the social environment by increasing adults' and students' awareness, involvement, and communication regarding bullying and victimization. Livingston noted that the component of caring for students may be a key factor in determining program effectiveness.

Waldron (2002) conducted a mixed-method qualitative study of how youth understand Columbine, school and youth violence, and school safety in relationship to perspectives presented in the mainstream media and by school officials. Data from the interviews with high school students provided a deeper understanding of how young people perceive violence and its impact on their lives. Waldron's study did not provide information about the level of school violence occurring in United States or the preventative measures being taken.

Winters (1997) conducted a descriptive study to discover the levels of specific types of violence along with the prevention and intervention strategies used to combat violence in each of the school districts in Pennsylvania. Analysis of the data revealed that violence levels in Pennsylvania schools mirrored the levels of schools in the rest of the United States. In addition, it was found that there were increasing occurrences of verbal intimidations and acts of bullying in Pennsylvania over the course of the study. The survey instrument Winters used did not allow the participants to explain the specifics of the interventions or strategies they were using to prevent school violence, but rather listed some general strategies and interventions and asked the administrators to check all that applied. This is an area that needs further study.

In Europe, a study led by Natvig, Albrektsen, and Qvarnstrom (2001) examined whether or not student-perceived social support, self-efficacy, and decision control are

related to school climate and number of bullying incidents. The results of a multiple logistic regression analysis indicated that an increasing degree of school alienation increases the risk of bullying behavior. Conversely, no significant association with school distress was noted. The results of this study may be generalized because the researchers used a large sample with an 85% response rate; furthermore, their results could be applied to the development of intervention strategies against bullying (Natvig et al.).

There was a need to examine strategies and programs that address bullying and effectively reduce and ultimately prevent violence in and around schools. According to Banks (2000), effective interventions must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone. Espelage and Swearer (2004) emphasized that bullying does not occur in isolation. Complex relationships among the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and culture contribute to this phenomenon. Administrators need to include the communities in their efforts to make schools safer because violence is most prevalent off school property and away from school facilities (Garrett, 2001). Some researchers emphasized the need to develop school-wide bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the school grounds, and train students in conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness techniques (Olweus, 1993; Smith & Sharp, 1994).

Summary of Methodology

In this qualitative study, the strategies and formal programs that were used to address bullying in the schools were scrutinized. A cluster random sample of twelve school systems of the 134 school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia were

used in the data collection process. School divisions from each of Virginia's eight regions were represented in this study. The targeted population interviewed in this study included administrators or other staff members in charge of safety and discipline policies in the school systems. First contact with each school system was made via telephone to introduce the study and to identify the appropriate personnel to interview: those who could answer the questions in this study. Next, a letter or e-mail communication with a copy of the interview protocol was sent to each of the appropriate administrators or other staff members. A structured interview protocol was designed to produce a representative account of how public school systems are addressing bullying: what strategies, programs, and policies are in place in the division to address bullying activities; and how school divisions are involving the faculty and staff, students, parents, and the community. Follow-up telephone calls were made to schedule interviews directly with those personnel in charge of school safety.

Limitations

This study has several limitations, the most significant of these being the restricted number of studies on the topic of bullying. The lack of available research from which to gather information on the topic of bullying hindered the depth of this study's review of the literature, thereby possibly creating a sense of superficiality for this document.

Another limitation was the restricted amount of time allotted for this study. Additional time would have allowed multiple contacts and would likely have resulted in the attainment of a larger number of responses. Efforts were made to attain a broad

sample spectrum; interviews were conducted with school administrators of urban, suburban, and rural school systems, with varying student enrollment totals. Although the participants were assured orally and in writing that their responses would be kept anonymous throughout the study, the possibility exists that some participants might not have been forthcoming in their responses because of the sensitive nature of the items in the interviews. School administrators are typically hesitant to express negative aspects of their programs or to acknowledge lack of programs (Garbarino & deLara, 2002).

Working Definitions of Bullying and Other Related Terms

Many definitions of bullying exist. Bullying is considered to be teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, stealing, or other direct attacks that are initiated by one or more students against a victim (Banks, 2000). Bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. Bullying is behavior in which one attempts to gain power over or to dominate another person (Weinhold, 1999). Olweus (1993), generally considered to be the "founding father" of research on bully-victim problems, defined bullying or victimization as a phenomenon in which a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Professor Rigby (1995) of the University of South Australia stated that bullying can be usefully defined as repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful individual by a more powerful individual or group.

In this study, the U.S. Department of Justice (2001) definition of bullying is used in the interviews. The U.S. Department of Justice stated that bullying among children encompasses a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time, which can take

three forms: physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, or taking personal belongings), verbal (taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, or making threats), or psychological (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation). Bullying involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group attacking those less powerful (U.S. Department of Justice).

With the dawning of the computer age and growth of online communication, bullying has reared its ugly head in the form of cyberbullying. Willard (2007) described cyberbullying as sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies. According to Belsey (n.d.), cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying is addressed in detail in the body of the literature review.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Bullying among schoolchildren is a very old and familiar occurrence with which many educators are acquainted; however, researchers only began to study bullying systematically in the 1970s (Olweus, 2003). Research has been conducted in the following areas: student perceptions of violence, teasing, and bullying; the problem of bullying, especially among middle school students; and schools' implementation of certain antibullying strategies or programs (Brockenbrough, 2001; Khosropour & Walsh, 2001; Limper, 2000; Olweus, 1993; Waldron, 2002; Winters, 1997). To create an environment where all children can feel safe, consistent bullying intervention programs

need to be implemented. An effective program consistently applied eliminates the fear

that bullies create and develops a foundation in which students that are recognized can

work to create a positive culture with caring behaviors (Garrity et al., 1997). Applicable

literature on school violence and bullying that was studied and reviewed to lay the

foundation for this study is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

School violence and bullying are issues that continue to make newspaper headlines, especially following the violent incident that occurred at Columbine High School on April 21, 1999, when images of frightened children running from a school surrounded by dozens of police clothed in bullet-proof vests and armed with high-caliber weapons were sent instantly around the globe and remain a chilling testimony of the terrible events that unfolded that day (Nimmo & Scott, 2009, p. 24). According to Weinhold (1999), on April 21, 1999, this great nation hit a largely invisible iceberg known as the "culture of violence." Nimmo and Scott stated, "In the end, I believe the most crucial factor leading to the Columbine tragedy was that many young people today have been raised in a culture where there is a complete lack of moral or spiritual exposure." Although the tragic event at Columbine High School was one of the goriest and consequently the most publicized incidents of school violence, tragically it was not an isolated one.

A year earlier, on March 25, 1998, Andrew Golden, an 11-year-old 6th grader clad in camouflage clothing, came into Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas during 5th period, pulled the fire alarm then joined Mitchell Johnson, a 13-year-old 7th grader, who was already in position on a wooded hill overlooking the school (Bragg, 1998; Fox & Harding, 2005). The two boys killed four girls and a teacher and wounded 11 other people (Bragg; Fox & Harding). Bragg explained that the attack left residents of Jonesboro, a town of approximately 46,000 about 130 miles northeast of Little Rock, in

shock, reeling, and wondering why the shootings happened. Some wondered if the students were copying their crime from previous headlines.

Six months prior to the Jonesboro tragedy on October 1, 1997, a horrific incident occurred in which a 16-year-old student in Pearl, Mississippi, stabbed his mother to death and then drove to school, where he shot his former girlfriend and another girl and wounded seven others (Bragg, 1998). Soon thereafter on December 1, 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal walked into Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky, and opened fire on a student prayer group (Bragg; Fox & Harding, 2005). A few days later on December 15, 1997, Joseph Colt Todd, a 14-year-old, eighth-grade student hid in a tree and shot two students outside his high school in Stamps, Arkansas, a town in the southwestern part of the state (Bragg); Joseph's lawyer said he had been bullied (Bragg).

According to a report by the United States Secret Service that came out shortly after the Columbine tragedy, assailants in more than two thirds of the school shootings experienced some form of bullying prior to the incident, and several assailants experienced bullying at school over a long period of time (Vossekuil et al., 2000). In the final report of the United States Secret Service's Safe School Initiative, Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, and Modzeleski (2002) stated that one key finding in school violence was that "many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack" (p. 35). According to the researchers, the taunting and suffering experienced by these adolescents would have warranted legal implications for harassment or assault if these events had occurred in a workplace instead of a school (Vossekuil et al., 2002). Dedman (2007) of MSNBC reported, "Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted or injured by others prior to the attack and said they had tried without success to get someone to intervene.

Administrators and teachers were targeted in more than half the incidents." Dedman

reported 10 myths about school shootings that are disclosed in this chapter.

In the review of the literature presented in this chapter, bullying and

cyberbullying are defined, a brief history of bullying in schools in the 20th century is

reported, insights into bullying in the 21st century and its implications are conveyed,

research on bullying and school violence is analyzed, and antibully policy around the

world, in the United States, and in the Commonwealth of Virginia is discussed.

Defining Bullying

As noted in the introduction, many definitions of bullying exist. Bullying is

considered to be teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, stealing, or other direct attacks

that are initiated by one or more students against a victim (Banks, 2000). Bullying may

also be more indirect, causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional

exclusion. Bullying is behavior in which one attempts to gain power over or to dominate

another person (Weinhold, 1999). Olweus (1993), who is generally considered to be the

"founding father" of research on bully-victim problems, defined bullying or victimization

as a phenomenon in which a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative

actions on the part of one or more other students. Professor Rigby (1995) of the

University of South Australia stated that bullying can be usefully defined as repeated

oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful individual by a more powerful

individual or group.

In this study, the U.S. Department of Justice (2001) definition of bullying is used

in the interviews. The U.S. Department of Justice stated that bullying among children

encompasses a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time, which can take three forms: physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, or taking personal belongings), verbal (taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, or making threats), or psychological (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation). Bullying involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group attacking one who is less powerful (U.S. Department of Justice).

With the dawning of the computer age and growth of online communication bullying has reared its ugly head in the form of cyberbullying. Willard (2007) stated that cyberbullying consists of sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies. According to Belsey (n.d.), cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying is addressed in detail in the body of the review of the literature.

<center>Historical Background of Bullying and School Violence</center>

<center>*The First Half of the 20th Century*</center>

The 1930s

Bullying and school violence are not brand new issues. Bullying was featured in American film shorts circa the 1930s in the character of "Butch" on the *Little Rascals*. Ramsey (1996), the developer of Our Gang Online, explained that everyone remembers the tough-guy in grade school; however, on the *Little Rascals*, one name clearly comes to

mind as synonymous with bully and that is Butch! You can ask anyone who even

casually remembers the *Little Rascals* who Alfalfa's nemesis was, and they will tell you

that it was Butch. Clearly, it is not just the heroes and good guys that leave an impression

(Ramsey).

The 1950s

As American schools evolved and changed, bullying and school violence were

still major issues, as Rothstein (1998) discussed in his book:

> Surely, one might think, at least 1950s schools were safe. But a 1958 *Life*
>
> magazine cover story charged that students in American cities "terrorize
>
> teachers…[and] it often takes physical courage to teach." A former teacher, Evan
>
> Hunter, fictionalized his experiences, including student assaults on teachers, in a
>
> 1953 book, *Blackboard Jungle*, which was made into a film…. (p. 13)

Even the television sitcom *Happy Days* and the movie *Grease* that were set in the 1950s

portrayed tough, bully-like characters such as "the Fonz," and "Danny Zuko"

respectively.

A respected author, Peretti (2000), described his mortifying school experiences as

a student in the late 1950s in his book, *The Wounded Spirit*. Peretti was born with a

condition called cystic hygroma, a lesion caused by a mass of dilated lymphatics due to

the failure of embryonic lymphatics to connect with the venous system. Corrective

surgery complications occurred, namely a swelling tongue that hung out of Peretti's

mouth and oozed a fluid that blackened as it made contact with the air. Even with

multiple surgeries to correct Peretti's tongue, it was still oversized, making it difficult for

him to talk and to eat, thereby causing his growth to be stunted. Peretti started school as

the small kid who talked funny; the teasing and ridicule commenced in kindergarten. Peretti described his kindergarten year:

Going to kindergarten was almost like being at home. The teacher was kind and loving, and she never said a word about my disfigurement. At first, most of the children were kind, too, or maybe they were just as awed by the school experience as I was, so I didn't receive many snide remarks. As the year went on, however, the teasing began.

Children can say the funniest things. They can also say some of the cruelest things imaginable. Even at that young of age, the kids seemed compelled to remind me about my scab-covered tongue hanging out of my mouth. By the end of my kindergarten year, I'd had quite enough of school and didn't want to return. (p. 48)

Peretti (2000) did return to school and he continued to endure the teasing and taunting. Peretti understood that his childhood was not an isolated case and that many adults carry unhealed wounded spirits since their childhood. Vivid childhood memories continued to haunt Peretti as he reflected in his book:

At the time of this writing, I'm close to fifty years of age, but I still remember the names and can see the faces of those individuals who made my life a living hell, day after day, during my childhood. I remember their words, their taunts, their blows, their spittle, and their humiliations. As I review my life, I think of all the decisions I shied from, all the risks I dared not take, all the questions I never asked, all the relationships I didn't pursue, simply because I didn't want to be hurt again.

Moreover, I am haunted by the tragedy of Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999. We've heard the many theories and pontifications on why two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, strode into Columbine High School and massacred their schoolmates and a teacher. I'm sure the theories about violence on television and movies, violent video and computer games, the availability of guns, and the unavailability of parents all have their legitimate place in the discussion. I don't pretend to know with certainty what was happening in the hearts and minds of those young killers, and yet…I remember the thoughts I had, sitting alone in the school library after D. H. picked me up by my neck or sitting alone on the street curb, eyes watering after P. B. sprayed deodorant in my face. I remember what I wished I could do if only I had the strength, the skill in martial arts, or the advantage that a baseball bat might give me over the bullies who bludgeoned and batted me around verbally and physically. (pp. 67-68)

Clearly Peretti's memoir demonstrates that bullying is not a new phenomenon in schools today. Bullying was as much a reality for many children in the first half of the 20th century as it is in the 21st.

The Second Half of the 20th Century

The 1970s – Early 1990s

Regrettably, bullying and school violence are growing and evolving. Violence at school has been the subject of national study since the 1970s, when the Safe Schools Study, a federally funded 3-year study to assess the level of violence and crime in American schools, was conducted by the National Institute of Education (Addington et al., 2002). Gaustad (1991) stated that school crime and violence had been major concerns

of educators and the public since the early 1970s; however, some evidence suggested that violent crime was probably increasing. In 1989, 3.4% of students reported violent victimization at school, including physical attacks or taking property from the student by force, but in 1995 that percentage increased to 4.2% (Chandler, Chapman, Rand, & Taylor, 1998). The Department of Education in California (as cited in Gaustad, 1991), the first state to require school districts to keep statistics on school crime, reported that assaults in the schools increased by 16% within the 4-year time span from the 1984-1985 school year to the 1988-1989 school year; furthermore, incidents of weapons possession rose by 28%. The National School Safety Center estimated in 1987 that 135,000 boys nationwide carried guns to school (Gaustad).

Clearly, there was a growing concern in the late 1980s to early 1990s that something needed to be done to decrease school violence. In a short Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) digest article, Gaustad (1991) suggested that schools must work to improve discipline and physical security; however, these measures are not enough to halt school violence. Gaustad asserted that educators must go further and attack the roots of violence. Gaustad offered four reasons for increasing violence: weapon availability, increasing gang activity, drug trafficking, and violent home lifestyles.

The 1990 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 1 in 20 senior high school students had carried a firearm, usually a handgun, and 1 in 5 had carried a weapon of some type during the 30 days preceding the survey (Centers for Disease Control, 1991). Another survey of 10 inner-city high schools in four states found that 35% of male and 11% of female students reported carrying a gun (Sheley, McGee, & Wright, 1992). Kissell (1993) reported of a study of 1,004 rural school students conducted in southeast

Texas; the study revealed that 6% of male students had taken guns to school, and almost 2% reported that they did so almost every day. In addition, 42.3% of those surveyed reported that they would be able to get a gun if they wanted one. In a study conducted by Callahan and Rivara (1992), more than one third (34%) of urban high school students in Seattle reported having easy access to handguns, and 11.4% of males and 1.5% of females reported owning a handgun. One third of those who owned handguns reported that they had fired at someone. Furthermore, almost 10% of female students reported a firearm homicide or suicide among family members or close friends. Another study from the southeast U.S. found that 9% of urban and suburban youth owned a handgun (Larson, 1994).

The sharp escalation in youth homicide rates and the role of gangs in fostering serious interpersonal violence during the 1980s and early 1990s led to heightened concern on the part of gang researchers (Blumstein, 1995; Maxson & Klein, 1990). Esbensen and Huizinga (1993) surveyed youth in the Denver area and found that gang members reported two to three times as much delinquency as nongang offenders. Battin and his colleagues, Hill, Abbott, Catalano, and Hawkins (1998), extended this research further by demonstrating that the influence of gang membership on offending holds even when accounting for association with delinquent peers. Battin et al. concluded that their results were consistent with an ''enhancement'' effect of gang membership on delinquency. They found that prior delinquency was positively associated with gang membership; however, gang membership predicted subsequent delinquency even after controlling for prior delinquency and delinquent peers. Maxson, Gordon, and Klein (1985) conducted an early evaluation of such differences in a comparison of gang and

nongang homicides in Los Angeles, a so-called ''chronic'' gang city. They found

significant differences between gang and nongang homicides with respect to several

characteristics of the setting and participants. For example, gang homicides were more

likely than nongang incidents to occur in public areas and involve firearms. Victims and

offenders in the gang events were younger and less likely to know one another than in the

nongang cases, and the total number of participants was greater in the gang homicides

(Maxon et al., 1985). According to Rosenfeld, Bray, and Egley (1999), gangs may

directly facilitate violence by virtue of the public and participatory nature of gang

conflicts. Gang activities range from defending neighborhood turf to armed robbery,

extortion, alien smuggling, and arms and drug trafficking (Johnson & Muhlhausen,

2005).

Stephens (1998) noted that understanding youth violence is a complex issue that

is affected by a wide variety of social, economic, political and individual factors.

Researchers and youth-serving professionals have identified many risk factors that

contribute to violence, such as a history of victimization and perceptions of isolation

(Stephens). Stephens acknowledged that the factor, perceptions of isolation, is very

complicated, with many possible causes, including economic deprivation, lack of growth

and enrichment activities, lack of nurturing role models, family disorganization, and lack

of meaningful rituals such as shared mealtimes, birthday celebrations, and family outings.

Schools, however, have been either unaware or reluctant to acknowledge violence

as a problem. Greenbaum (1989) explained in his publication *Set Straight on Bullies*:

Teachers frequently may not even be aware about most student victimizations. An

educator in a knife-wielding criminal's school district said, "There is a code of

silence. A youngster who gets beaten up doesn't want a reputation as a wimp who runs to the teacher. It's very difficult to get around that…."

Evidence indicates that parents and teachers may not really know how much fighting and other types of violence go on among kids. Even if they do know, some adults tend to take the attitude that they shouldn't interfere, that it's just something all children go through. (p. 13)

A study conducted in 1983 revealed that teachers did relatively little to put a stop to bullying at school (Olweus, 1993).

In her inspirational memoir, Blanco (2003) presented the horrific details of the shunning, taunting, and physical abuse she endured from the mid 1970s to the early 1980s. Blanco's account began with a fifth-grade experience, when Blanco defended disabled children and was coerced to tattle on her so-called friends, Jo Ellen and Greg, who were taunting the disabled children. As she recalled, Blanco was eschewed by her peers:

By the next day, it was all over school that I had ratted on Jo Ellen and Greg. The principal suspended them both for a week. No one would talk to me. I was in anguish. During recess, everyone ignored me. Later that afternoon, I found spoiled food from the garbage bin stuffed inside my bookbag. (p. 34)

As Blanco continued through school, the taunting and teasing became not only more pronounced but also physical. In the second semester of her eighth-grade year, Blanco was required to dissect fetal pigs for her science class; she refused to do this task even though her science teacher, Mr. Blatt, stressed that it was an absolute requirement. She walked out of science class and went straight to Mr. Gibbs, the principal, who

sympathized with Blanco and spoke with her science teacher about doing an alternative assignment. The following is Blanco's (2003) account of events that transpired the next day:

> The next day, Mr. Gibbs called me back to his office during homeroom. "I had a chat with your teacher," he explained, handing me a sheet of paper with several topics written across the top. "Mr. Blatt has agreed that if you do a fifteen-page paper on any one of these subjects, he'll give you the extra credit necessary to make up for the dissection. But you still have to attend class." "Oh, Mr. Gibbs, thank you!" I said. "By the way, Jodee [Blanco's first name], between you and me, I'm proud how you handled yourself. One day, that inner strength of yours will serve you well." I hoped so. But right now, it was making my life hell.
>
> As expected the ridicule started that day the moment I entered the lab. "Hey, Jodee," yelled one of the guys in the class, ripping one of the fetal pigs out of its bag, and hurling it at me. "Want me to cut you some bacon?" The small pink corpse hit me in the chest, splattering formaldehyde all over my blouse. I stood there, motionless, too humiliated to speak. "Maybe she'd like a pork chop instead," someone else shouted from the back of the room. Before I could respond, Mr. Blatt walked into the room. When he saw the state of my blouse, he chastised the class briefly, then handed me a bathroom pass. The rest of the afternoon dragged on unbearably. (pp. 114-115)

Blanco decided to endure the last semester, but unfortunately this was only the beginning of misery for her. Blanco (2003) continued:

The hardest part for me was riding the bus to and from school. My friends from the neighborhood were following Greg and Rickie's lead. They turned on me and never let up. Every day it was more of the same.

"Jodee's a wuss, Jodee's a wuss," they would chant over and over. Sometimes one of them would hold me down while two or three of them threw dirt and gravel on me. One morning on the way to the bus stop, I saw them scouring a construction site and then stuffing something into their bookbags. Not realizing what they were up to, I continued making my way to the corner to wait for the bus. As they approached, Reese dug his hand into his pocket and extracted what looked like a small chunk of cement. He held it up for me to see, then pulled back his arm as if he were pitching a baseball and whipped it at me. I sprang to my right to avoid being hit, but I wasn't fast enough. I winced as it smashed into my shoulder. How could Reese do that to me? I had helped him feel included in our crowd by finding that sugar-free candy for him. Hot tears stung my cheeks. Suddenly, tiny, jagged hunks of mortar were being hurled at me from all sides. My hands over my face, I tried to run home, but the assault was too relentless. "Please stop, you guys," I pleaded. My knuckles and wrists were swollen and bloody. Red welts covered my skin. I didn't know which was worse, the physical or the emotional agony. My assailants, having had their fill of fun, finally stopped. (p. 116)

Blanco endured not only this incident, but many more, each progressively worse.

Educators need to accept that these violent acts are crimes; and, the fact that minors commit these acts of violence on minors does not make them less than crimes.

Under the euphemism of "bullying" lies a much broader, more serious affair

(Greenbaum, 1989). Greenbaum explained,

> We see instances of assault and battery, gang activity, threat of bodily harm,
>
> weapons possession, extortion, civil rights violations, attempted murder and
>
> murder. Everybody knows these are crimes. The fact that they were committed on
>
> school grounds by students does not make them less than crimes. (p. 11)

One explanation is that it is quite possible that adults are simply unaware of the

incidents of bullying. Sometimes the adults have not even observed the upsetting

situation (Garbarino & deLara, 2003). Gaustad (1991) pointed out that adults may not

have been aware of bullying and violence in their schools because the attackers naturally

preferred to act where adult witnesses could not see and hear. Children did not want to be

"tattletales" so they did not report problems, and therefore, administrators often remained

none the wiser of many violent incidents. Greenbaum (1989) noted that the student, as

part of an institution, is under severe peer pressure and the effects of outdated traditions

that say one doesn't go running to the teacher or principal with problems. Unfortunately,

some adults choose to remain unaware as a way to avoid doing anything about situations

they believe they cannot control (Garbarino & deLara).

In the late 1980s, Portland, Oregon needed to become proactive in its measures to

prevent violent acts in the schools following a 1987 high school shooting death.

According to Gaustad (1991), curricula that had been used to teach nonviolent ways of

resolving conflict represented a promising preventative strategy; Gaustad noted that

Portland schools used a program produced in Seattle, Washington: Second Step: A

Violence Prevention Curriculum. The program lessons work to build empathy and to

teach impulse control and anger management. Similar programs began to emerge throughout the eastern United States, for example, the Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents, developed by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health, (Gaustad). Peer conflict management, another measure that was used at elementary, middle, and high school levels, evolved from successful peer tutoring programs. In peer conflict management, volunteer conflict managers provide training in problem solving and communication skills, which give students the skills to act as mediators for conflicts among fellow students. Whether or not these measures are successful in preventing school violence and bullying remains to be seen; therefore, an evaluation of these programs lends itself to a worthwhile study.

The Late 1990s

After several publicized school shootings beginning in 1996, people began to raise the question: Why are adolescents doing this? "I'm not sure that anyone knows why," responded Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center (as cited in Bragg, 1998). Stephens continued, "The standard response is to blame everyone in society, the parents, the schools, but one of the things we do know is that the perpetrators of crimes in many cases were first victims of abuse or neglect themselves" (as cited in Bragg). Stephens (1998) cited the following in his report:

> Understanding youth violence is a complex issue which is affected by a wide variety of social, economic, political and individual factors. Researchers and youth-serving professionals have identified many risk factors that contribute to violence. Perhaps the top two such factors are a history of victimization and perceptions of isolation.

Past victimization. Research involving schoolyard bullies indicates that about 80% of bullies were first victims of bullying from parents, peers, siblings, or others. Many victims become perpetrators of crime in response to their own experiences with ridicule, physical punishment, torment, or abuse. The combination of a student's being both a victim and a perpetrator makes it more difficult to understand and sort through the causes of violent behavior. The way youngsters are treated by parents is perhaps the most influential predictor of child behavior. Most psychologists agree that bullying and aggression are learned behaviors. If the behaviors are learned, the implication is that they can be unlearned.

Youngsters who feel isolated, neglected, ignored, and ridiculed. This factor itself is complicated. Some suggested causes of perceptions of isolation and neglect include (a) economic deprivation that distances children and youth from peers who have advantages and comforts they lack; (b) lack of growth and enrichment activities such as conversation with family members, childhood reading experiences, exposure to social activities with family members and friends, and preschool classes; (c) lack of nurturing role models and persons who can serve as caring supervisors, mentors, or advocates; (d) youngsters' perceptions that they are not understood and not appreciated; (e) conflicts and isolation due to perceived differences among the culture of the family and varieties of cultures in the school or larger community; and (f) family disorganization and lack of meaningful rituals (for example, shared mealtimes, birthday celebrations, and family outings). (n.p.)

Dr. Garbarino (Garbarino & deLara, 2002) interviewed the parents of Klebold, one of the school shooters in Littleton, Colorado, and concluded that their sensitive son was driven to desperate violence by the relentless bullying and emotional violence he experienced at Columbine High School. Nimmo (Nimmo & Scott, 2009), the mother of Rachel Scott (one of the 12 victims at Columbine High School) stated, "Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were two very misguided, very misdirected, and very lost souls…. Just about everybody gets picked on at school or in life, but those boys fed their hurts and insecurities until they became a powerful hate" (p. 155). Klebold represents only one case of a student driven to violence that can be cited. Garbarino & deLara clearly emphasized throughout their book that no child is a stranger to teasing. The roles of victim, perpetrator, and witness can be quite dynamic from day to day and one school year to the next.

Millions of adolescents and teenagers wake up every day dreading to go to school because they worry about facing emotional violence, a form of bullying; nonetheless, most of them decide they can or must cope with their feelings of trepidation (Garbarino & deLara, 2002). Garbarino & deLara (2002) described one incident that occurred on February 14, 2001, whereby one student, 18-year old Getman, could no longer endure. Getman decided on that particular winter day that he would face the same agony he had faced daily since fifth grade armed with his father's shotgun, a pistol, and a gym bag full of homemade bombs. Fortunately for everyone, two female students saw Getman when he first got off the bus and perceived that something was very wrong. One of them talked to Getman while the other ran to get help. By the time helped arrived, Getman was ready to give up his weapons. Constant bullying led to this near tragedy.

Dedman (2007) of MSNBC compiled a list of 10 myths about school shootings, using data from a 2002 study by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education, whereby the researchers studied case files and other primary sources from 37 attacks by current or former students and interviewed 10 of the perpetrators. Many revelations were disclosed in the following information compiled by Dedman:

Myth No. 1. "He didn't fit the profile."

In fact, there is no profile. "There is no accurate or useful 'profile' of students who engaged in targeted school violence," the researchers found. The stereotypes of teens in Goth makeup or other types of dress are not useful in preventing attacks. Just as in other areas of security—workplace violence, airplane hijacking, even presidential assassination Chapter too many innocent students will fit any profile you can come up with, and too many attackers will not. "The demographic, personality, school history, and social characteristics of the attackers varied substantially," the report said. Attackers were of all races and family situations, with academic achievement ranging from failing to excellent. Most, but not all, have been male, though that fact alone doesn't help an adult rule in or out someone as dangerous.

Myth No. 2. "He just snapped."

Rarely were incidents of school violence sudden, impulsive acts. Attackers do not "just snap," but progress from forming an idea, to planning an attack, to gathering weapons. This process can happen quickly, but sometimes the planning or gathering weapons are discoverable. Although the researchers point out that there is no "type of student" who is likely to commit such violence, there are "types of

behaviors" that are common to planning or carrying out the attacks. This pattern, they say, gives some hope of intervening before an attack.

Myth No. 3. "No one knew."

Before most of the attacks, someone else knew about the idea or the plan. "In most cases, those who knew were other kids: friends, schoolmates, siblings and others. However, this information rarely made its way to an adult." Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused concern or indicated a need for help.

Myth No. 4. "He hadn't threatened anyone."

Too much emphasis is placed on threats. Most attackers did not threaten anyone explicitly ("I'm going to kill the principal"), and most threateners don't ever attack anyone. But less explicit words can reveal an intention, the researchers say. A child, who talks of bringing a gun to school, or being angry at teachers or classmates, can pose a threat, whether or not an explicit threat is made.

Myth No. 5. "He was a loner."

In many cases, students were considered in the mainstream of the student population and were active in sports, school clubs or other activities. Only one-quarter of the students hung out with a group of students considered to be part of a "fringe group."

Myth No. 6. "He was crazy."

Only one-third of the attackers had ever been seen by a mental health professional, and only one-fifth had been diagnosed with a mental disorder. Substance abuse problems were also not prevalent. "However, most attackers

showed some history of suicidal attempts or thoughts, or a history of feeling

extreme depression or desperation." Most attackers had difficulty coping with

significant losses or personal failures.

Myth No. 7. "If only we'd had a SWAT team or metal detectors."

Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were over

well before a SWAT team could have arrived. Metal detectors have not deterred

students who were committed to killing themselves and others.

Myth No. 8. "He'd never touched a gun."

Most attackers had access to weapons, and had used them prior to the attack. Most

of the attackers acquired their guns from home.

Myth No. 9. "We did everything we could to help him."

"Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted or injured by others prior to the attack,"

and said they had tried without success to get someone to intervene.

Administrators and teachers were targeted in more than half the incidents.

Myth No. 10. "School violence is rampant."

It may seem so, with media attention focused on a spate of school shootings. In

fact, school shootings are extremely rare. Even including the more common

violence that is gang-related or dispute-related, only 12 to 20 homicides a year

occur in the 100,000 schools in the U.S. In general, school assaults and other

violence have dropped by nearly half in the past decade. (pp. 1-2)

Myth No. 9 was most illuminating because it revealed that bullying plays a role in school

shootings and that the shooters perceived that no one was intervening to address the

bullying.

The School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey of 1999 presented data indicating that 5.1% of the study group, 12- through 18-year-old students, reported they had been bullied at school within the previous 6 months (Addington et al., 2002). By 2001, that percentage was reported to be 8% by a comparable study group (DeVoe et al., 2002). With that large a percentage (one in twelve) admitting to having been bullied over such a relatively short time, the notion that bullying is prevalent in schools can safely be assumed valid, especially when one acknowledges that some underreporting is likely. According to Greenbaum (1989), only about one third of all violent crime committed or attempted by youths is actually reported to authorities. Victims usually regard such incidents as "private" or report that they "took care of it" themselves (Greenbaum).

Students in lower grades are more likely to be bullied than are those in higher grades; for example, 10.5% of sixth graders in 1999 reported being the victim of bullying compared to 1.2% of twelfth graders (Addington et al., 2002). In 2001, 14% of students in the sixth grade reported being bullied, compared with 2% of students in 12th grade (DeVoe et al., 2002). Banks (2000) explained that direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in the middle school or junior high school years, and decline during the high school years; however, although direct physical assault appears to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant.

Bullying Into the 21st Century

Overview of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying

Through the advancement of technology that has accompanied the turn of the century, bullying has reared its ugly head as what is being termed cyberbullying. Cyberbullying and cyberthreats exist in various forms that involve information and communication technologies or activities (Willard, 2007). Cyberbullying consists of sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies (Willard). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) detailed cyberbullying as a form of bullying:

Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. The following are examples of cyberbullying, when they are intentional, repeated, and result in harm to another:

- Sending text messages over the internet or using a cell phone

- Posting text, images, audio, or video to a Web page

- Sending or posting text, images, audio, or video on or over the Internet or through a cell phone network

- Sending a picture or video via the Internet or using a cell phone (p. 121)

Willard (2007) used the following terms to better delineate the various types of cyberbullying activities: flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, exclusion, cyberstalking, and cyberthreats. These terms and definitions may vary from one body of literature to another primarily because these activities seem to overlap or be interrelated.

Flaming and Trolling

According to SocialSafety.org (n.d.), flaming is the posting of derogatory remarks on someone else's webpage or instant messaging nasty remarks to someone. It is the argumentative and intimidating interaction between Internet users and usually occurs within the social context of a discussion board, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), or even through e-mail; in other words, flaming is online fighting filled with bad language (SocialSafety.org). Willard (2007) defined flaming as follows:

 Flaming is a heated, short-lived argument that occurs between two or more protagonists. Flaming generally includes offensive, rude, and vulgar language, insults, and sometimes threats. A longer series of such messages is called a "flame war," which can lead to a direct threat. Flaming generally occurs in public communication environments such as discussion boards, chat rooms, or games. Flames erupt between individuals or a small group of protagonists who are arguing and insulting each other, with bystanders occasionally trying to either fan or douse the flames. A series of private angry messages, sent via e-mail or IM (instant message), could also be considered flaming. (p. 6)

 According to Hinduja and Patchin (2009), flaming typically involves sending or posting hostile, angry, or mischievous messages intended to "inflame" the emotions and sensibilities of others. Hinduja and Patchin defined flaming as sending angry, rude, or obscene messages directed at a person or persons privately or at an online group; furthermore, these comments or messages do not productively advance or contribute to the discussion at hand but instead attempt to wound another person socially or psychologically and to assert authority over others.

The concept of trolling is very similar to flaming, except that the latter is directed at another participant (or other participants) in the discussion, whereas trolling is directed at the subject of discussion (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Trolls attempt coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to a person by inciting arguments, stirring controversy, and causing disruption in online contexts (Cheng, 2009). Hinduja and Patchin defined trolling as deliberately and disingenuously posting information to entice genuinely helpful people to respond (often emotionally), often for the purpose of inflaming or provoking others.

Flaming generally is a short-lived event between protagonists, and the social power between the protagonists is usually well-balanced; however, flaming is unlike most forms of bullying, which are defined as repeated acts and interactions between individuals with different levels of social power (Willard, 2007). Nonetheless, the language used in flaming events can become extremely strong and include statements such as "I am going to kill you"; students need to know that flaming will be considered a cyberthreat and grounds for suspension, expulsion, or even arrest (Willard).

Harassment

The ongoing sending of offensive messages to an individual target is considered harassment (Willard, 2007). Messages of this nature are typically sent via personal communication channels, including e-mail, instant messaging, and text messaging (Willard). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) defined harassment as unsolicited words or actions intended to annoy, alarm, or abuse another individual. Harassment can occur in public communication environments and usually lasts longer than a flame war (Willard). Willard emphasized that the targets are constantly receiving hurtful messages whenever

they go online or check their phones; the harm inflicted by harassment is mostly one-sided as in a cyberbully's sending offensive messages to a target. According to Willard, it is this one-sidedness that distinguishes harassment from flaming.

Denigration, Impersonation, Outing and Trickery, and Exclusion

Willard (2007) defined denigration as speech about the victim that is harmful, untrue, or cruel; this harmful speech is posted online or sent to others. The reason behind denigration is to damage the reputation or to interfere with interpersonal relationships of the target. Willard explained that this activity includes the spreading of gossip and rumors. Impersonation occurs when the cyberbully gains the ability to impersonate the target and post material that reflects poorly on the target or interferes with the target's interpersonal relationships. The cyberbully, feigning friendship, gains access to a target's password to a site such as MySpace or Facebook. Willard stated that often the exchange of passwords is considered evidence of true friendship among youth, especially among teenaged females. Outing, as explained by Willard is publicly posting, sending, or forwarding personal communications or images, especially communications or images that contain intimate personal information or that are potentially embarrassing. According to Willard, an outing of a sexually suggestive or explicit image may occur within the context of a failed relationship; furthermore, trickery can occur as part of an outing. An innocent target can be tricked into thinking that a communication or sending of images is private, when in reality the cyberbully's intention is to trick the target into disclosing something embarrassing that will be shared with others or used as a threat. Willard defined exclusion as actions that specifically and intentionally exclude a person from an online group, such as an instant message (IM) "buddies" list. Denigration, impersonation,

outing, trickery, and exclusion are all cyberbullying activities, whereby specific actions are directed toward an innocent target or victim.

Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking consists of repeatedly sending harmful messages that include threats of harm, are highly intimidating or extremely offensive, or involve extortion (Willard, 2007). Cyberstalkers may also try denigration to destroy the reputations or the interpersonal relationships of their targets. Willard stated that the line of demarcation between harassment and cyberstalking is not clear; however, a possible indicator that this line has been crossed is when a target begins to fear for his or her safety and well-being. Direct cyberstalking almost always occurs in personal communication environments, whereas indirect cyberstalking includes communications sent to others for the purpose of denigrating the target or placing the target in an unsafe situation. The termination of, or problems within, an online or in-person sexual relationship are frequently linked to cyberstalking. Willard suggested that this intimacy between the target and the victim may have given the cyberbully access to very personal material that can be used by the cyberbully against the target, thereby rendering the victim reluctant to report the cyberbully.

Cyberthreats

Cyberthreats are essentially threats made online or through some other form of electronic communication. Willard (2007) explained specifically:

> Cyberthreats are either threats or "distressing material"—statements that make it sound like the writer is emotionally upset and may be considering harming someone else, harming himself or herself, or committing suicide.

Jeff wrote in his blog: "I'm a retarded [expletive] for ever believing that things would change. I'm starting to regret sticking around. It takes courage to turn the gun on your self, takes courage to face death."

Celia met Andrew in a chat room. Andrew wrote: "bring a gun to school, ur on the front of every…. i cant imagine going through life without killing a few people…. people can be kissing my shotgun straight out of doom…. if i dont like the way u look at me, u die…. i choose who lives and who dies."

Greg set up an anonymous IM account and sent a threatening message to his older sister suggesting that she would be killed the next day at school.

Sometimes when teens post what appears to be a threat, they are joking. Other times, the threat could be very real. (p. 260)

The examples demonstrate that cyberthreats can be roughly classified into two categories: direct threats and distressing material. Willard (2007 offered the following definitions:

Direct threats are statements of intent to hurt someone or commit suicide. Direct threats generally contain information about an actual planned event. Distressing material is online material that provides clues that the person is emotionally upset and may be considering hurting someone, self-harm, or suicide. Sometimes, the lines of distinction between these two types of cyberthreats are vague. (p. 11)

Cyberthreats and cyberbullying are very much a reality for today's students. What are the implications of this reality?

Implications of Cyberbullying

Academic research on cyberbullying and cyberthreats is quite limited; however, Willard (2007) uncovered some findings in traditional bullying research that provided insight regarding incident rates of cyberbullying:

Fight crime: Invest in Kids reported in 2006 the results of a survey of 1,000 U.S. youth. Key findings: One-third of all teens (12-17) and one-sixth of all children (6-11) had mean, threatening, or embarrassing things said about them online. Ten percent of the teens and 4 percent of the children were threatened online with physical harm. About half of children told their parents, but only 30 percent of teens told their parents. Forty-five percent of the children and 30 percent of the teens indicated that the cyberbullying occurred at school.

The Crimes against Children Research Center released its second Youth Internet Safety Survey in 2006. (An earlier study had been released in 2000.) This survey of youth between the ages of 10 and 17 revealed that 9 percent of youth reported they had been harassed online. Fifty-eight percent of the targets were girls. Sixty-eight percent of the girls received "distressing harassment." Seventy-two percent of the harassment happened to teenagers. Half of the harassers were known to be male; 21 percent were known to be female. Forty-four percent of the harassers were off-line friends or acquaintances. Three percent of the incidents occurred at school.

The Kowalski and Limber study asked about both traditional bullying and cyberbullying incidents in the preceding two months. Twenty-five percent of girls and 11 percent of boys reported being electronically bullied at least once within

that period, while 13 percent of girls and 8.6 percent of boys electronically bullied someone at least once. In comparison, only 12.3 percent of girls and 14.1 percent of boys reported having been bullied at school at least two or three times a month in the last couple of months. Just over 5 percent of girls and 8 percent of boys admitted to having bullied others at school at least two or three times a month in that period. This study provides a helpful side-by-side analysis that allows for a comparison of the two forms of bullying.

Media Awareness Canada conducted a 2005 study titled "Young Canadians in a Wired World, Part II." Among the findings were that 34 percent of students in grades 7 to 11 reported being bullied, while 12 percent reported having been sexually harassed. Among those who reported being bullied, 74 percent were bullied at school, and 27 percent were bullied over the Internet. For those reporting sexual harassment, the situation is reversed: 47 percent said they were harassed at school, while 70 percent were harassed over the Internet. Of those young people who reported being sexually harassed over the Internet, over half (52 percent) said it was someone they knew in the real world.

A 2004 survey of youth and their parents in the United Kingdom, conducted by UK Children Go Online, revealed that 31 percent of youth between the ages of 9 and 19 had received unwanted sexual comments and that 33 percent had received nasty comments sent via e-mail, chat, instant message, or text message. This study also revealed that parents underestimate the potential concerns. Only 7 percent of parents thought their child had received sexual

comments, and only 4 percent thought their child had been bullied online. (pp. 31-32)

Dendy (2008) conducted a study to determine the prevalence of cybersex and alcohol addiction in a sample of college students. The implication of her study is that cybersex may be emerging as a problem for college students. Leahy (2008) discussed the truth about sexual addiction in his book *Porn Nation*. Leahy cited many examples on the realities of this addiction; here are two related to the use of the Internet:

> The Department of Homeland Security's deputy press secretary faces charges of using the Internet to seduce a detective he thought was a 14-year-old girl. The man sent the detective "hard-core pornographic movie clips" and used the chat room service "to have explicit sexual conversations," some of which the sheriff's office said "are too extraordinary and graphic for public release."
>
> Police wondered where two girls, ages 11 and 12, who had posted photos of themselves nude on the Internet, got the idea. They said they were influenced by pornography on the Internet. Photos of the girls were downloaded and distributed at their school. (p. 10)

Often enough one hears similar stories or reads newspaper headlines about similar events; however, there is very little research on this phenomenon, especially as it concerns school-aged children. Willard (2007) continued:

> The limited research on cyberbullying appears to present the same difficulties as research on traditional bullying and harassment—different studies resulting in different incident rates. It is probable that some of the different results are related

to the differences in labeling for specific acts. A question phrased "Has anyone bullied you online?" may receive a different response from "Has anyone spread hurtful rumors or gossip about you online?" Additionally, there are concerns related to assessing the intensity or impact of the reported incidents. Simply asking about incidents will not effectively distinguish between a student who received one or two harmful messages and a student who was the subject of a "We hate [name of student]" Web site upon which many other students posted hurtful comments. Research in the future, including needs assessment activities by a school district, will provide more accurate insight if young people are asked about specific activities and impacts, rather than using labels such as "bullying" and "harassment."

Despite the difficulties in determining incident rates and impacts, however, it clearly appears that cyberbullying is as great a concern as traditional bullying, if not greater. (pp. 31-32)

The prevalence of cyberbullying is a growing concern. Research conducted by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) suggests that a sizable percentage of young people experience cyberbullying as victims, bullies, or bully-victims. Hinduja and Patchin discussed research they found as well as studies they conducted:

In one of the earliest studies (conducted between the fall of 1999 and the spring of 2000), online aggression and victimization were examined through a telephone survey of 1498 regular Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17 along with their parents (Ybarra & Mitchell). In that research, Internet harassment was defined as "an overt, intentional act of aggression towards another person online,"

while victimization was defined as "whether anyone had used the Internet in the previous year to threaten or embarrass the respondent by posting or sending messages about him or her for other people to see" and "whether the respondent ever felt worried or threatened because someone was bothering or harassing him or her while online" (Ybarra & Mitchell).

Findings of this study indicated that 19% of youth respondents were involved in either giving or receiving online aggression in the previous year. Specifically, 4% of regular Internet users were the victims of online harassment, 12% were aggressors, and 3% were both aggressors and victims. The vast majority of offenders (84%) knew their victims in person, whereas only 31% of victims knew who was bullying them (Ybarra & Mitchell, as cited in Hinduja and Patchin, 2009). This finding suggests that cyberbullying is not typically a random event among strangers—in most cases; at least cyberbullies know who they are targeting.

A subsequent study conducted in 2001 by the National Children's Home, a charitable organization in London, surveyed 856 youth between the ages of 11 and 19 and found that one quarter had been victims of cyberbullying. Specifically, 16% had received threatening text messages via their cell phones, 7% had been bullied in online chat rooms, and 4% had been harassed via e-mail (National Children's Home, as cited in Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). In a 2005 follow-up study of 770 youth in the same age range, 20% of respondents revealed that they had been bullied via electronic means. Almost three fourths (73%) stated that they knew the bully, whereas 26% stated that the offender was a stranger. Another interesting finding was that 10% indicated that another person had taken a picture of them via a cell phone camera, consequently making them feel

uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened (National Children's Home, as cited in

Hinduja & Patchin).

Patchin and Hinduja (as cited in Hinduja & Patrchin, 2009) described their first

study:

In our first study (data collected in the spring of 2004), we analyzed an online

sample of 384 respondents 17 years of age or younger from around the world to

determine their experiences with the following cyberbullying behaviors:

bothering someone online, teasing in a mean way, calling someone hurtful names,

intentionally leaving someone out of something, threatening someone and saying

unwanted sexually related things to someone. Overall, approximately 30 percent

of respondents reported being the victim of cyberbullying, 11 percent reported

bullying others while online, and almost half (47 percent) witnessed

cyberbullying. We subsequently replicated this initial study in 2005 among a

larger sample (about 1, 400 adolescents) and found that over 32 percent of boys

and over 36 percent girls have been victims of cyberbullying, while about 18

percent of boys and 16 percent of girls reported harassing others in cyberspace.

(pp. 46-47)

Hinduja and Patchin (2009) discussed two more studies to provide additional

background for their research. Williams and Guerra (as cited in Hinduja & Patchin)

completed a study in 2005, in conjunction with a statewide bullying prevention initiative,

assessing the prevalence of various types of bullying among 3,339 youth in 5th, 8th, and

11th grades. They found that verbal bullying (70.7%) was most common, followed by

physical bullying (40.3%) and then Internet bullying (9.4%). Hinduja and Patchin cited

the same Kowalski and Limber study that Willard (2007) cited; however, Hinduja and Patchin noted that the 3,767 middle school students from six middle schools reported that the most frequently used mediums for cyberbullying were instant messaging (66.6%), chat rooms (24.7%), e-mail (24.2%), and Web sites (23.4%). Hinduja and Patchin then discussed their latest study:

> In our most recent classroom-based survey, we asked 1,963 middle school students whether or not they had experienced cyberbullying. At the beginning of the survey, we informed them that "cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through e-mail or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don't like." Note that this definition is slightly different from the one used…. We wanted to define it for the students in a way that they would easily understand.

> When asked about specific types of online harassment and aggression, almost 43 percent of the students had experienced at least one of the following in the previous 30 days:

> - Received an e-mail that made you upset.
> - Received an instant message (IM) that made you upset.
> - Had something posted on your MySpace that made you upset.
> - Been made fun of in chat room.
> - Had something posted on a Web site that made you upset.
> - Had something posted online that you didn't want others to see.
> - Been afraid to go on the computer.

While some of the above behaviors may not fit neatly under our definition, they

may be considered cyberbullying if experienced by peers repeatedly over time.

The point is that if you ask students if they have been cyberbullied and they say

no, you may need to inquire further about the specific types of behaviors they

have experienced while online. (pp. 48-49)

The point of sharing all these studies is to illustrate the widely ranging estimates

regarding how many adolescents have experienced online aggression or have

cyberbullied others. Hinduja and Patchin (2009) offered the following explanations for

the wide range: First, many of these studies targeted respondents of varying ages; second,

these studies employed different survey methodologies; third, some youth were selected

at random, whereas others were selected deliberately because they were members of

some larger group; fourth, different studies utilized different reporting periods; and fifth,

one of the biggest differences among these research endeavors was the way cyberbullying

was defined. Hinduja and Patchin asserted that the data reveal a trend of increasing

cyberbullying victimization and offending, stating, "We have to do our part to ensure

these lines do not continue to increase in the next decade of the 21st century" (pp. 49-50).

Clearly, it is important to determine exactly whom is being targeted by bullies and

cyberbullies.

Targets of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Victim-Offender Relationship in Cyberbullying

It is important to investigate the relationship between those who are victimized

online and their aggressors. Hinduja and Patchin (2009) asserted that offline bullying by

and large involves adolescents who know each other. They raised two very noteworthy questions:

Is cyberspace just another setting in which traditional bullying can take place, albeit without the immediate threat of physical harm and face-to-face interaction? Or is cyberspace emboldening individuals (for one reason or another) to harass and mistreat others with whom they have no previous relationship or contact? (p. 57)

Hinduja and Patchin (2009) found that victims of cyberbullying nearly always know or have some idea who is harassing them. The following is a personal account of a 16 year-old girl from Australia shared by Hinduja and Patchin:

The person who bullied me online was an ex-friend whom I knew very well. She called me names and went behind my back and spread rumors about me. She heavily bullied one of my best friends to the extent where my friend could have been suspended from school. She tried to ruin my friend's reputation. (p. 58)

Hinduja and Patchin deduced from their data that victims and cyberbullies know each other; further, traditional bullies are using computer-based communication to extend and expand their reach. The question that needs to be addressed is the following: Exactly whom are bullies targeting?

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students

There is a growing concern that there is a certain population of students that are being targeted by bullies and cyberbullies, namely lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students. According to the National Education Association (NEA, n.d.), there is only one real issue for educators:

Educators are responsible for our students' safety and education. We must ensure

that everyone is given the opportunity to achieve and thrive. We know that

students are more likely to learn and succeed in safe, supportive environments.

Unfortunately, safety can be an issue for children and teens who are seen as

different because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. From the earliest

grades, students routinely use homophobic language, and verbal taunts often

escalate to physical confrontations. (p. 1)

Pascoe (2007) found that homophobia was rampant, with blatant antigay

practices. Pascoe examined the dynamics of masculinity among high school boys in her

ethnic study. School ceremonies and traditions such as dances, yearbook photos, rallies,

and graduation celebrated heterosexual gender differences. Pascoe discovered the

following:

Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) members had to struggle to get their club approved

and have it recognized in school announcements. Several gay pride events, such

as the Day of Silence and the celebration of National Coming Out Day, were

barred from the campus. The school authorities didn't protect the most vulnerable

gay students, who were teased, taunted, and eventually threatened out of school.

(p. 161)

Pascoe (2007) suggested some policy changes to facilitate more equitable

conditions for adolescents; she emphasized that legal protections need to be in place to

shield students such as those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered. Pascoe

urged educators to take the following proactive steps to make schools more equitable:

They [educators] need to create learning and social environments that are more

supportive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and other non-normatively

gendered youth. Administrators can modify both the social organization of the

school and the curriculum content so that they are less homophobic and gender

normative. Including a range of sexual and gender identities in school rituals and

curricula will indicate to both the LGBT and non-normatively gendered students

as well as straight and normatively gendered students that school authorities do

not tolerate gender- and sexuality-based harassment or violence.

Schools can modify homophobic and sexist environments in several

ways—by placing affirming posters in their classrooms, providing support for

GSAs, sponsoring assemblies and speakers, and reorganizing highly gendered

school rituals. Allowing the formation of GSAs is an especially effective and

simple way to support LGBT, gender-variant youth and their allies. (p. 169)

Pascoe also suggested that school administrators seriously examine the role of

rituals such as dances, proms, and homecoming events. Pascoe stressed that the messages

conveyed to students through these rituals should not be that the school advocates and in

fact demands heterosexualized gender difference; rather the rituals should be organized to

reflect the diversity of gender and sexual identities among students (p. 171). Pascoe

suggested developing and using gender-neutral homecoming titles, allowing students to

take same-gender dates to school dances and formals, and applying clothing expectations

equally to male and female students; Pascoe stated that "girls should not be required to

wear different colored robes for graduation, nor should they be forced to wear revealing

off-the-shoulder drapes for their senior pictures" (p.171).

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN, 2005), the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students, posted results of a survey conducted by Harris Interactive. The report, "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers," included findings from the survey, which examined over 3,400 students aged 13-18 and over 1,000 secondary school teachers, exploring the students' and teachers' experiences with bullying and harassment as well as their attitudes about this issue in America's schools. The aforementioned online survey was conducted between January 13 and January 31, 2005; it revealed that bullying was common in America's schools, and that some students were frequent targets for verbal and physical harassment. The following findings were reported:

1. Two thirds (65%) of teens reported that they had been verbally or physically harassed or assaulted during the previous year because of their perceived or actual appearance, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, race or ethnicity, disability, or religion.

2. The reason most commonly cited for being harassed frequently was a student's appearance; four in ten (39%) teens reported that students were frequently harassed for the way they looked or their body size.

3. The next most common reason for frequent harassment was sexual orientation. One third (33%) of teens reported that students were frequently harassed because they were or were perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

The survey found that LGBT students were three times as likely as non-LGBT students to say they did not feel safe at school (22% vs. 7%) and 90% of LGBT students

(compared to 62% of non-LGBT teens) had been harassed or assaulted during the
previous year.

The majority (57%) of students who experience harassment in school, regardless
of demographics or reasons for the harassment, never report these incidents of
harassment to teachers or other school personnel (GLSEN, 2005). Although most
teachers report that they would feel comfortable intervening if they observed harassment
and many say they frequently have intervened, the reason that one in ten students (10%)
do not report these incidents is because they believe teachers or staff do nothing or are
powerless to improve the situation. Two thirds (67%) of LGBT students who have
experienced harassment never report such incidents, and they are more than twice as
likely as non-LGBT students to say that it is because school staff will not do anything or
things will continue (23% vs. 9%). (p. 1)

Dr. Dana Markow, senior director of the Youth and Education Research Practice
at Harris Interactive, stated,

As "From Teasing to Torment" is the first national survey on bullying in
America's schools that includes anti-LGBT bullying and harassment, it is
particularly striking that this type of harassment is only second to physical
appearance in terms of severity and frequency for students overall, regardless of
their sexual orientation or gender expression. (GLSEN, 2005, p. 1)

The NEA (n.d.) also posted information from GLSEN's "From Teasing to
Torment" to emphasize the alarming statistics; NEA reported its commitment to
reversing these trends and addressing the needs of LGBT students by posting resources to
educate people about LGBT students and creating a manual called *Strengthening the*

Learning Environment: A School Employee's Guide to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Person Issues, which provides resources for creating a safe school environment for all students. Shores (2007), who conducted a qualitative study on the impact of belonging to the GSA in high school, discovered that GSAs have a positive effect on a student's sense of safety and feeling of belonging. Prior research has shown how important these organizations have become in the lives of the members of these clubs, as well as the dire need for students who identify themselves as LGBT to have a refuge from the oppressive society in which they live. Shores stated, "Although controversy still clouds the judgment of some school administrators in form of fear of the unknown, unhappy parents, and unwanted publicity, hundreds of schools per year acknowledge and work to serve all students, including those who consider themselves to be LGBT" (p. 5). Shores concluded that further research is urgently needed on LGBT issues in education because suicide rates, bullying, and ostracism are phenomenally high (p. 159). Solutions to resolving all forms of bullying emerge through understanding; to better understand bullying and school violence, one needs to examine the pioneering research in bullying and school violence.

Research in Bullying and School Violence

Pioneer Research in Bullying

In the Beginning

Olweus (1993) stated that although many are acquainted with "bully/victim problems," it was not until the early 1970s that efforts were made to study the issue systematically. These research studies started in Scandinavia, as indicated by Olweus's

study; then in the late 1980s to early 1990s some public and research attention was given

to bullying in other countries such as the United States, Japan, England, the Netherlands,

Canada, and Australia. In his book, Olweus discussed his more recent studies, including

ways to address the issue of bullying. In approximately 1983, Olweus developed and

utilized age-appropriate questionnaires, which were administered by teachers and filled

out anonymously by students. In this survey research study, the questionnaire provided a

definition of bullying, and it referred to a specific time period and offered fairly specific

response alternatives, such as *about once a week* and *several times a week*. The

questionnaire included questions about the others' reactions to bullying, as perceived by

the respondents, such as the reactions and attitudes of peers, teachers, and parents.

Participants

In connection with a nationwide campaign, all students in primary and secondary

schools in Norway were invited to complete the questionnaire (Olweus, 1993). Olweus

estimated that about 85% actually participated, from which he selected representative

samples, using valid data from 715 of the schools comprising about 130,000 students

across Norway, for a closer analysis. This number was almost a fourth of the entire

student population in the relevant age range (ages 8 to 16). Olweus asserted that this set

of data provided good estimates of the frequency of bully-victim problems within

different schools, grades, and genders. Olweus reported that in the same academic year he

conducted a parallel study using the same questionnaire with 17,000 students in Grades 3

through 9 in three cities in Sweden; this study was designed to permit comparison with

the data collected from three Norwegian cities of approximately the same size (p. 11).

Results of the Norwegian Study

Olweus (1993) estimated that approximately 84,000 students, or 15% of the total in the Norwegian primary and secondary schools, were involved in bully-victim problems "now and then." Olweus presented detailed results of his survey research study:

This percentage (15%) represents one student out of seven. Approximately 9%, or 52,000 students, were victims, and 41,000, or 7%, bullied other students with some regularity. Some 9,000 students were both victim and bully (1.6% of the total of 568,000 students or 17% of the victims). In calculating the percentages above, I have drawn the line at "now and then." For a student to be considered bullied or bullying others, he or she must have responded that it happened "now and then" or more frequently. (p. 13)

Given these compelling data, it is clear that bullying was a large problem in Norwegian schools. Olweus (1993) mentioned that data from other countries such as Sweden, Finland, England, United States of America, the Netherlands, Japan, Ireland, Spain, and Australia indicated that this problem also reflected similar or higher prevalence rates.

Information regarding how often teachers tried to intervene when a student was being bullied surfaced via the questionnaire (Olweus, 1993). Olweus stated that roughly 40% of bullied students in the primary grades and almost 60% in secondary school reported that teachers tried to "put a stop to it" only "once in a while" or "almost never" (p. 20). Approximately 65% of the primary students that were bullied said that the classroom teacher had not talked with them about the bullying; furthermore, about 85% of the secondary students that were bullied responded the same way. Olweus explained that he obtained similar results from the students who bullied others. He concluded that

the teachers (in 1983) did relatively little to put a stop to bullying at school, according to both the bullied and the bullying students. Olweus's data showed that the teachers also made only limited contact with the students involved in the bully-victim situations to talk about the problems, especially with the older students and students at the junior high school level. This trend in the data, in which teachers of older students limited their contact with students involved in the bully-victim situations, needs to be studied further to provide explanation. The lack of adult supervision gives bullies the environment necessary to prey on their victims. Students overwhelmingly report that teachers and other adults on the school grounds do not have a clue about how many actual incidents of physical and emotional violence and harassment occur in the course of the day (Garbarino & deLara, 2002). Many bullies hide their bullying (Garrity et al., 2000).

Olweus' (1993) questionnaire also contained questions related to home communication about bullying. Olweus reported that about 55% of the bullied students in the primary grades responded that "somebody at home" had talked with them about bullying; in the secondary grades the percentage was reduced to about 35%. This number was considerably lower for the students who reported having bullied others. Olweus concluded that parents of students who were bullied and, in particular, who bullied others, were relatively unaware of the problem and talked with their children about it only to a limited extent.

Results of the Comparison Study Between Norway and Sweden

Olweus (1993) found great similarities between the two countries, with some interesting differences. Olweus explained in detail one of the primary differences:

One marked finding is that the Swedish students were more exposed to indirect bullying in the form of social isolation and exclusion from the group than the Norwegian students. Of the Swedish primary school students, 18% (grades three through six), as compared with scarcely 13% of the students in corresponding grades in the Norwegian schools, reported that "other students didn't want to spend recess with them and they ended up being alone." There seems to be more loneliness and isolation among the Swedish youngsters. (p. 22)

The Swedish students were also victimized more directly and more frequently than Norwegian students (Olweus, 1993). This particular study indicates that the bully-victim problem is a bit more prevalent in Sweden than in Norway. Olweus illuminated the problem of bullying in his landmark studies, but he did not delve into the statistical analyses of the studies in his book; therefore, a complete analysis of his results cannot be conducted.

Olweus's (1993) methodology was sound and reliable as he ascertained that the questionnaires he developed were age-appropriate for the two populations he was studying, primary and secondary schools. Olweus created English versions of the questionnaires, so that education researchers in the United States, England, Australia, and other English-speaking countries could utilize the instruments as tools to measure bullying in their schools. Olweus reported a good response rate, 85%, in the Norwegian study. He did not specify the response rate he obtained in the parallel study in Sweden; he did note that he studied 17,000 students in Grades 3 through 9. Based on this limited information about the parallel study in Sweden, the results used for comparison of the Norwegian study must be regarded with caution.

Key Studies on Bullying

Peer Victimization and Bullying Prevention Among Middle School Students

Brockenbrough (2001) conducted a quasi-experimental study investigating peer victimization and bullying among 416 middle school students in Albemarle County, Virginia, using a 69-item self-report survey that included measures of bullying, victimization, self-concept, attitudes toward aggression, peer or teacher support, school safety, and school adjustment. Brockenbrough reported that the survey was administered before and after the school had completed a bullying prevention program, as recommended by Olweus (1993). Brockenbrough's study was designed to examine three primary questions: What is the nature and extent of bullying problems among students? Is involvement in bullying problems related to measures of self-concept or other measures of emotional or school adjustment? Do the bullying prevention efforts have a significant impact on students?

A total of 416 students successfully completed the pretest questionnaire in the fall of 1999, and 390 students successfully completed the posttest questionnaire in the spring of 2000 (Brockenbrough, 2001). The survey, which Brockenbrough constructed using items from previous, valid instruments, consisted of components similar to those discussed in Olweus' studies, as well as a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. It was designed to measure levels of physical, verbal, and relational bullying and victimization. Before the survey was administered to the students, they were asked to read the survey carefully and to answer questions honestly. Brockenbrough assured the students that their responses would be used only for research purposes.

As part of Garrity's Bully-Proofing Your School Program, school counselors guided groups of approximately 20-25 sixth graders for three 45-minute sessions (Brockenbrough, 2001). During these sessions, students were taught the curriculum of the bully-proofing program. The program involved discussions regarding the concept of bullying; it provided students with strategies on how to cope with bullying and how to help others who are being victimized. As part of the same bully-proofing program, seventh and eighth graders were in the same-size groups (20-25 students for three 45-minute sessions) for similar curricula, but with age-appropriate instruction.

All the school counselors involved in the bully-proofing program were asked to complete a log of bullying prevention efforts implemented throughout the school year. These counselors were asked to record the date and length of each curriculum session or group intervention and to describe the material covered in the session; they were also asked to record school-wide activities, programming, collaboration or training meetings with parents or staff, and meetings related to Garrity's Bully-Proofing Your School Program. According to the log, no school-wide activities or meetings related to the bully-proofing program took place. Brockenbrough (2001) found no significant changes related to the bully-proofing intervention program.

Brockenbrough (2001) candidly discussed the limitations of her study. There was no control group to compare with the treated group; therefore, causality cannot be inferred. The Bully-Proofing Your School Program (Garrity as cited in Brockenbrough) was not completely implemented and did not include important program components such as school-wide activities, parent participation, and intensive small group interventions. The instrument used might not have been sensitive enough; it was also

limited by time constraints. Examining antibullying programs and their effectiveness in

middle schools are areas of research that need to be explored further. Brockenbrough did

not specifically describe everything that was involved in the Bully-Proofing Your School

Program. Questions about the program were left unanswered: For example, did

Albemarle County Schools utilize Garrity's Bully-Proofing Your School Program as an

instrument to implement a division-wide antibullying policy? When did the school

division first implement this program?

It is important for schools to implement comprehensive programs that address

bullying and effectively reduce and ultimately prevent violence in and around schools.

Before this can be done, however, school officials need to recognize that they have a

bullying problem. An initial survey of students and adults can help make them aware of

the extent of the problem, justify intervention efforts, and serve as a benchmark to

measure the impact of improvement in school climate once other intervention

components are in place (Olweus, 1993; Banks, 2000). According to Banks, effective

interventions must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the

perpetrators and victims alone. Some researchers have emphasized the need to develop

school-wide bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the school

grounds, and train students in conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness

techniques (Olweus; Smith & Sharp, 1994).

Bullying Among Ninth Graders: An Exploratory Study

A study by Harris, Petrie, and Willoughby (2002) provides some insight

regarding the perceptions and observations of ninth-grade students about bullying in their

schools; the researchers offered some recommendations to help school administrators

reduce bullying in their schools. The study conducted by Harris et al. was part of a larger study on bullying, in which 1,000 students in Grades 5-10 in a suburban southern school district of approximately 16,000 students were surveyed. Harris and colleagues surveyed 134 ninth graders to obtain answers to the following research questions: How often does bullying happen? Where or when does bullying happen? What kind of bullying do students experience? How do students feel after being bullied? Whom do students tell about the bullying incident and what is the outcome after they report the bullying incident? The ninth-grade students participating in this study attended two large high schools that enrolled a total of 1,400 students in Grade 9 (Harris et al.).

In the study by Harris et al. (2002), bullying was defined as the actions of someone who repeatedly and deliberately hurts or frightens someone weaker than themselves through hurtful teasing, threatening actions or gestures, name-calling, hitting, or kicking. The survey form included a reminder that a fight or quarrel between two students of about the same strength is not considered bullying. The method used by Harris and her colleagues to conduct the study was described as follows:

> The school district gave permission for the researchers to survey students in sixth-period physical education classes. The students' regular teachers monitored the anonymous, self-administered, forced-choice questionnaire at the end of the fall semester. The questionnaire was completed by 52 boys and 82 girls. Of the participants, 42% were African American, 24% were Hispanic, and 32% were White, proportions consistent with the district enrollment by ethnicity.
>
> The survey, which is available in English and Spanish, was adapted and revised from the Peer Relations Questionnaire (Rigby & Slee). The principal

investigators revised this instrument for use in the United States and conducted

pilot tests in several rural Southern schools with populations of less than 1,000.

After the pilot tests, the investigators revised the survey again to pursue emerging

issues not addressed in the first revision. The 30-item questionnaire asked

students about bullying on their campus within the past year, such as how often

does bullying occur? Where does it occur? Who [*sic*] do students tell? And how

concerned about bullying do students consider the adults on their campus to be?

Most responses were multiple-choice, based on a 3-point scale. The questionnaire

included three open-ended questions intended to develop richer descriptions of

bullying incidents and explore student suggestions to decrease bullying.

Investigators entered data into a software program called Statistical Package for

the Social Sciences (SPSS-version 10.0) for reporting frequencies and

disaggregating information. (pp. 7-8)

The results of this descriptive study indicate that over 75% of the students

surveyed had observed some form of bullying in their schools (Harris et al., 2002).

Regarding how often the participants themselves were bullied, 10% of the students

indicated they were bullied at least once a week, 11% indicated that they experienced

bullying generally less than once a week, and 79% of the students had not been bullied

within the past year. Bullying at lunchtime was observed by 82% of the students

sometimes or often; this finding is not surprising as there is generally less adult

supervision during this time. On the other hand, 69% of the students reported that

bullying occurred sometimes or often in the classroom. Harris and her colleagues

reported the following results regarding the kinds of bullying experienced by the students

in the study:

Students were asked to identify how often they had been teased in a hurtful way,

called hurtful names, left out of group activities, been threatened, or been hit or

kicked during the past year. More than 41% of the students reported sometimes or

often being called a hurtful name, and 38% of the participants reported sometimes

or often being teased. More girls (26%) indicated being called hurtful names and

teased (23%) than boys (15%). Participants indicated that they had been

threatened (23%) or hit or kicked (22%) sometimes or often. Nearly twice as

many boys as girls indicated being threatened or hit or kicked, which is consistent

with earlier research (Olweus & Rigby as cited in Harris et al.). An interesting

finding is that one third of boys cited sometimes or often being left out of

activities as compared to only one fifth of the girls. Typically, girls report this

type of bullying in greater numbers than boys (Olweus & Rigby). (p. 9)

When students reported their feelings about being bullied, their responses indicated that

only 7% of the study participants felt mostly sad or miserable after being bullied (Harris

et al.). When students were asked if they ever stayed home from school because of

bullying, 8% reported staying home at least once or twice; 22% had thought about

staying home, but had not done so (Harris et al.).

Harris and her colleagues (2002) reported the following results with regard to

their last research question, which asked whom students told about bullying incidents as

well as the outcomes of reporting the bullying incidents:

Of the 49 students who indicated they had been bullied at school, 40% told a

friend, and 17% told their mother. Only 2 (4%) students told a teacher, and 17%

never told anyone about being bullied. When students who had been bullied

asked what happened after they told someone they had been bullied, only 25%

indicated that things got better. Of these bullied students, 23 (47%) said that they

told someone and things did not change, and 16% told someone and reported that

things got worse. Only 25% of students felt that their administrators were

interested in trying to stop bullying. Although nearly half (46%) said that they did

not know if administrators were interested in trying to stop, 28% said they did not

believe that they were. Many students (44%) indicated that they did not know if

their teachers were interested in trying to stop bullying, and 21% perceived that

their teachers were not interested. This finding is consistent with bullying

literature; Glover, Gough, Johnson, and Cartwright found that up to 13% of

students believed that teachers would not be interested in trying to stop bullying.

(p. 10)

Harris and her colleagues asserted that it is not enough simply to acknowledge

that bullying takes place at schools. Principals must lead the effort to reduce bullying on

their campuses; furthermore, according to Harris et al., the principal should conduct an

annual survey, share the survey findings with the staff and with parents, openly discuss

the problem of bullying with students, increase supervision in problem areas of the

school, provide training for all faculty on how to support students and how to respond to

bullying, adopt policies for dealing with bullies and victims, and build a positive school

climate that promotes trust and respect for all.

Bullying in American Schools: A Social-Ecological Perspective on Prevention and Intervention

Espelage and Swearer (2004) combined the groundbreaking results of their own theoretical and research efforts with that of leading scholars and practitioners in the field to produce a 385-page volume on understanding bullying in American schools. According to Espelage and Swearer, much of the available knowledge about bullying behaviors had been derived from research conducted over the past several decades in Europe, Australia, and Canada; for the past decade, such research in the United States lagged behind research in other countries. Espelage and Swearer wished to fill this void with their volume by forwarding research about bullying across contexts that had been conducted with participants in the United States. The volume was divided into five key sections: (a) individual characteristics associated with bullying; (b) peer characteristics associated with bullying; (c) classroom characteristics associated with bullying; (d) beyond the classroom—considering school climate, family relationships, social support, and innovative school partnerships; and (e) effective prevention and intervention programs.

Espelage and Swearer (2004) proposed in their introductory chapter that a social-ecological framework within bullying occurs and needs to be discussed first:

> We will argue that bullying has to be understood across individual, family, peer, school, and community contexts. Bullying and victimization are ecological phenomena that are established and perpetuated over time as the result of the complex interplay between inter- and intra-individual variables (Swearer & Doll). In order to develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention

programs, we must understand the social ecology that establishes and maintains bullying and victimization behaviors. (p.1)

Espelage and Swearer candidly discussed the methodological limitations of their examination of bullying among U.S. youth; however, they emphasized that despite these limitations their study provided an important contribution to the body of research on bullying among U.S. youth:

For example, in most research samples in the United States, active parental consent must be obtained. This research protection will undoubtedly influence the demographics of the participants…. Additionally, with the recent media attention given to school violence in the U.S.; many state legislatures have mandated bullying policies at the local and state levels. How might these policies affect research conducted on bullying in our schools? For example, a Secret Service analysis of targeted school violence found that 71% of the school shooters in the U.S. (from 1974 to 2000) reported being chronically bullied (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski). How might this connection between school violence and bullying affect research conducted on bullying in our schools? Research policies, legislative mandates, and school shootings appear to be unique contextual factors related to studying bullying in the United States.

Only one large-scale study on bullying in the United States has been conducted (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt). In this study, 15,686 6th- through 10th-grade students completed surveys on bullying…. Bullying behaviors were found to occur more frequently in middle school than in high school, and boys were more likely than girls to be involved in the bullying

dynamic. Additionally, bully-victims displayed the most pervasive negative psychosocial outcomes. There was no difference in bullying across urban, suburban, and rural areas. However, while this is an important study conducted in the United States, bullying was assessed using only a self-report questionnaire. (p. 2)

Espelage and Swearer (2004) asserted that bullying does not occur in isolation. Complex relationships among the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and culture contribute to this phenomenon. One needs to envision the individual as being part of a family, then as a part of a peer group and school, then as part of the community, and finally as part of a culture.

Espelage and Swearer (2004) explained the social-ecological framework of bullying that is the crux of the entire mega-study in the following manner:

The individual is at the center of his or her social ecology. The individual involved in bullying may be involved as a bully, bully-victim, victim, or bystander. Individual factors will influence participation in bullying. For example, how might gender mediate the engagement in bullying? The bully, bully-victim, victim, or bystander exists within a family. How might the family influence bullying behaviors? Modeling of bullying between siblings or caregivers can influence the development of bullying and/or victimization in the individual. The social ecology also includes the peer group and the school. How might school climate effect bullying and/or victimization? If the individual attends a school where a pro-bullying climate exists, then he or she may be more likely to be involved in bullying. If the individual's peer group supports bullying, then the

individual may be more likely to engage in these behaviors. Extending outward, the community encompasses the school, peer group, family, and the individual. How might the community support or inhibit bullying? Finally, culture encompasses the aforementioned contexts in the social ecology. How might cultural norms and beliefs support or inhibit participation in the bully/victim continuum?

Ecological-systems theory purports that all individuals are part of interrelated systems that locate the individual at the center and move out from the center to include all systems that affect the individual (Bronfenbrenner)…. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the child is an inseparable part of a social network comprised of four interrelated systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The child is at the center of, and actively involved with, this interplay of systems…. Bronfenbrenner's theory will provide the framework for both the research described in this book and the prevention and intervention suggestions that logically follow from the research. (pp. 3-4)

Espelage and Swearer (2004) pointed out that "there are over 300 published violence prevention school-based programs; however, less than a quarter of these programs are empirically validated" (p. 5). Schools need to be able to choose a program to best serve their school dynamics, but how? Espelage and Swearer believed that schools must conduct a thorough multi-level assessment to determine their particular bullying dynamic; based on this assessment, schools can identify programs that may be used successfully in their particular school and community. Information about two of the

research studies analyzed and discussed in Espelage and Swearer's volume is presented in the following sections.

Empathy, Caring, and Bullying: Toward an Understanding of Complex Associations

How children think about the feelings of others was the focus of the "Individual Characteristics Associated with Bullying" section of Espelage and Swearer's (2004) volume. Espelage, Mebane, and Adams (2004) emphasized that "students struggle between the desire to 'fit in' and the desire to not hurt others" (p. 37). They continued,

> However, the association between empathy and bullying is not always
> straightforward. For many years, research has documented that empathy does
> prosocial behavior, yet the link between empathy and aggression has been
> explored less, and findings have been less conclusive…. Despite the inconsistent
> findings in the extant literature, there is general consensus that attending,
> fostering, and promoting empathy in children and adolescents could relate to the
> development of prosocial behavior and of the prevention of aggressive behavior.
> (p. 38).

Espelage et al. (2004) described their study as one that addresses some gaps in extant literature; however, they pointed out that it does not represent a gold standard:

> [The study] demonstrates the types of research questions that remain and the
> complexity of the connection between empathy and bullying and other forms of
> aggression. Here, empathy is conceptualized as multidimensional and analyses are
> conducted on bullying as well as fighting and relational aggression. We examine
> the associations among gender, empathy and bullying across the bully-victim
> continuum. In addition, positive attitude toward bullying is tested as a mediator

between empathic concern/perspective-taking and bullying in order to attempt to replicate the findings of Endresen and Olweus. (p. 42)

The study participants were students at a Midwestern school; the data represent the first part of an ongoing longitudinal investigation of bullying during early adolescence. Espelage et al. (2004) wrote,

In the early fall of 2002, parental permission forms were sent to all 289 students registered at a Midwestern school and parents were asked to sign and return the consent form only if they did not want their child to participate in the study. Of the 289 students, 268 (93%) were granted permission from their parents to participate and were present on the day of data collection. (p. 42)

The participants were required to complete the study survey during a 45-minute free period. The students were monitored by two trained members of the research team; one of the two read each item and response item aloud. According to Espelage et al., the reader's speed varied based on the grade level of the classroom; students were allowed to ask questions if they had difficulty understanding any words. The study survey contained three sections: (a) demographic questions, (b) bullying-aggression and victimization scales, and (c) empathy scales and an attitude-toward-bullying scale. According to Espelage et al., the survey included self-reported measures of bullying, fighting, and victimization experiences and a measure of relational aggression.

Espelage et al. (2004) summarized their results as follows:

This study has illustrated the complexity of understanding the role of empathy on bullying and other forms of aggression. While males and females differed only slightly in their level of bullying and fighting, females reported more caring acts,

empathy, and greater perspective-taking ability than males. However, it is important to note that the strongest gender differences emerged for the affective dimensions and lowest for the cognitive dimension of perspective-taking. Important differences also emerged for the concept of relational aggression, which is often considered to be "female aggression." Although males and females did not differ in their self-reports of relational aggression, empathy was found to be highly associated with relational aggression for females only. That is, high amounts of empathy are associated with less relational aggression in females, but there is no association for males. In addition to this, empathy was found to be an inhibitor of bullying and fighting for females, but only negatively correlated with bullying for males. Fighting appears to be explained by different characteristics for males. Our findings that the impact of each empathy component appears to differ for males and females is consistent with the view that the structure and function of empathy differ between genders (Feshbach). (pp. 53-55)

The researchers noted that future research should identify potential mediators and moderators that might better explain the association between these constructs; furthermore, it would be important to consider how bully-victim subtypes differ in their level of empathy before implementing an empathy training module (Espelage et al., 2004).

The Effects of School Climate on Changes in Aggressive and Other Behaviors Related to Bullying

Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, and Johnson (2004) conducted an interview study to examine the effects of four dimensions of school climate on concurrent behaviors related to the bullying process in a longitudinal sample of more than 500 youths attending over

250 schools. The researchers believed that the effectiveness of school programs to eliminate or reduce bullying is contingent upon the identification and modification of features of school climate. Kasen et al. explained the background and method of their study:

> In order to attribute independent school effects to actual changes in behavior, we include parallel baseline bullying measures obtained 2½ years prior to bullying measures outcome, and concurrent measures of closeness of the relationship between youth and mother and parental use of harsh, power-assertive punishment. Age, sex, and socioeconomic status (SES) also are controlled. The data used to examine school bullying come from the Children in the Community (CIC) Study, and ongoing longitudinal investigation of individual, familial, and environmental childhood risks for behavioral and emotional disturbances from childhood through early adulthood.

> In 1975, 976 families were randomly selected on the basis of residence in one of two New York upstate counties and having at least one child between ages one and 10 in the household. Mothers were interviewed about family background characteristics, parenting practices, and the target child's temperament and behavior. Mothers were re-interviewed and the target child interviewed in three follow-up waves with an expanded protocol; data used in the current study are drawn from the first follow-up (F1), conducted in 1983, and the second follow-up (F2), conducted in 1985-1986, when the children were mean ages 13.5 and 16.0, respectively. In all, about 800 youths have been followed: this sample is 51% female; 91% White and 8% African-American/Black; resides in urban, suburban

and rural areas; and spans the entire range of socioeconomic statuses.

Demographic characteristics are representative of the population from which the

sampling took place (Cohen & Cohen).

At F1, 721 youths were in school; by F2, 213 either had completed high

school (94.7%) or dropped out (5.3%). Only the remaining 508 youths (256 girls,

252 boys) still in school at F2 were included in the analyses. Mean ages of the

study sample at F1 (12.5 years, SD 1.78) and F2 (14.9 years, SD 1.93) correspond

roughly to early and middle adolescence, respectively. The majority attended

public schools (90%); the others were in attendance at private or parochial

schools. Grade levels ranged from 5 through 12 at F2.

In both follow-ups, mothers and youths were interviewed separately but

simultaneously in their homes by trained lay interviewers. The study protocol

included an assessment of psychiatric disturbances, personality traits and

disorders, and parent-child interactions. Youths also were interviewed about their

peer relationships, school context, and work experiences.

All analyses were controlled for age at outcome, gender and family

socioeconomic status (SES) at F1…. To control for concurrent influences

(parental characteristics and child rearing methods) on bullying behaviors,

measures of closeness of the relationship between mother and youth and parental

use of harsh punishment at F2 are included in the analyses…. At F2 youths

responded to 45 items assessing social and emotional features of their school

environment; items reflect the school process characteristics described by Rutter.

(pp. 194-195)

Kasen et al. used simultaneous regression analysis to examine the independent effects of

school climate on each outcome scale. Partial regression coefficients were adjusted for

age at outcome.

Kasen et al. (2004) found that baseline rates of prior bullying-related behaviors

and internalizing problems were highly predictive of those same behaviors 2½ years later.

There was a strong association between parenting factors and changes in the student

outcomes. Kasen et al. explained that "a warm supportive relationship with mothers was

associated with the decline in all bullying-related behaviors and internalizing problems,

whereas harsh parental punishment was related to increases in internalizing and

externalizing problems and aggression" (p. 204). Kasen et al. continued discussion of

their results:

Dimensions of school climate were associated with changes in bullying-related

and internalizing problems independent of the substantial effects of those same

prior behaviors and problems, and concurrent parental influences. As expected,

adolescents attending schools high in conflict and, albeit to a lesser extent, high in

informality and social facilitation, increased in bullying-related behaviors over the

2½-year interval; furthermore, the negative effects of high levels of conflicts

escalated in schools with high levels of informality and social facilitation.

On the other hand, schools high in learning focus and high in granting autonomy

to students were, in effect, a positive force, being associated with declines in

bullying-related behaviors and, for autonomy, with a decline in internalizing

problems. There was no evidence that granting students autonomy in schools

where learning was not a priority would increase bullying behaviors; however, a

high learning focus with minimal autonomy may be more effective when student

rebelliousness or anger is problematic. Schools with highly organized and

supportive school climate where learning is a priority may be particularly

advantageous for high-risk children with educational or psychosocial difficulties

(Maughan). (pp. 204-205)

Current Studies on the Effectiveness of Bullying Prevention Programs

Take a Stand Against Bullying: Evaluation of the Efficacy of a School-Wide Program for Middle School Students

Bennett (2008) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine the usefulness

of a new short-term antibullying intervention program, Take a Stand against Bullying

(TASAB) (Sullivan & Bennett, 2001), in middle schools. Bennett measured changes in

student participants' ($N = 603$) self-reported bullying and anxiety by both bullies and

victims. Specifically, Bennett studied eighth-grade students ($N = 323$) from 12 intact

classrooms in a Washington State middle-income suburban school who were randomly

assigned to comparison ($n = 177$) and intervention ($n = 146$) groups. As a second

comparison group, another sample of eighth-grade students ($N = 280$) were assessed at a

nearby middle school with similar demographics. A posttest only and a pretest-posttest

comparison group design was used. The independent variables were group and gender.

The dependent variables included scores on two self-report surveys; one assessed

bullying behaviors and fear (School Violence Environment Survey), and the other

measured fear and anxiety related to bullying (School Violence Anxiety Scale).

Bennett (2008) analyzed her results using factorial ANOVA and MANOVA

procedures, which generated statistically significant posttest group and gender differences

following intervention. The group receiving no intervention reported greater mean scores

in overall bullying behaviors and fears related to such behaviors than groups receiving varying degrees of intervention. Additionally, boys self-reported more bullying behaviors, including both physical and verbal bullying perpetration and victimization, than girls. Then, using a MANOVA with repeated measures, significant time (pretest, posttest) by group (intervention, comparison) differences were found. These results tentatively support the TASAB (Sullivan & Bennett, 2001) program as a useful bullying intervention program.

Bennett (2008) grounded her study by reviewing several theories in child development that attempted to explain the phenomenon of aggression and bullying, namely (a) Bandura's social cognition and social learning theories that address human motivation and the roles and actions played by an individual's cognitive, self-reflection and self-regulatory processes in relation to psychological and social functioning; (b) Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological theory that emphasizes the importance of environmental factors on the development of children; and (c) social dominance theory that proposes that children seek dominance and hierarchy when they see that such behaviors earn them or their peers a higher degree of social status or standing. Bennett also examined theories of targeting-victimization such as the attribution theory that addresses the victim's self-blaming cycle. Bennett stated that school children are often preoccupied with conforming to group behavior and gaining peer acceptance. Bennett explained that the TASAB program uses a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention that includes all school staff, the school resource officer, students, and families; furthermore, the TASAB program empowers students to change bullying behaviors and create a safer school environment. Bennett evaluated the efficacy of the

TASAB program in her study and found that students reported decreases in bullying behaviors reflected in most posttest intervention scores. Bennett stated,

> Analysis of current school-based intervention programs revealed that whole-school programs that include outlawing bullying, victim education programs, increased adult supervision, and the involvement of parents, bystanders, bullies and victims in the intervention process can also help to decrease bully and victim behaviors (Gazelle & Ladd, 2002; Randle, 2002). The broad-based TASAB program used in the present study appears to complement these findings. (p. 177)

Bennett (2008) reported that her study supports the theory that a whole-school approach intervention program can foster a reduction in bullying behaviors; furthermore, Bennett's results suggested moderate to strong changes in student fears and behaviors following intervention. Bennett pointed out that her study may have had internal validity issues, whereby events other than the intervention itself, such as attrition, affected the study results; however, Bennett had used a large sample size that more than likely rendered such validity issues minimal. Bennett discussed other various limitations to her study and explained how she addressed them. Bennett's study contributed to other researchers' findings that school-wide antibullying intervention programs result in reduced bullying and other related antisocial behavior among students. Bennett concurred that more research should be conducted to investigate whether or not specific intervention programs can help to ameliorate the negative effects of bullying and other antisocial behavior.

An Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Finn (2008) asserted that whole-school antibullying programs attempt to reduce bullying behaviors by making systematic, school-wide changes; an example of a whole-school intervention is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). Finn explained that the Olweus program had been researched worldwide; however, few published studies that examined the effectiveness of this program in U.S. schools existed (p. 62). Finn conducted a quasi-experimental study with control groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the OBPP, utilizing pre and posttesting with over 800 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students from four elementary schools in a suburban school district in the State of New York. Finn's study used archival data that were collected at preintervention and postintervention points. Finn explained:

> Two of the elementary schools (T1 and T2) received the OBPP and two schools
> (C1 and C2) received their regular education program. In the pretest condition,
> school T1 had 208 third, fourth, and fifth grade students, T2 had 229, C1 had 225
> and C2 had 158. In the posttest condition, school T1 had 208 third, fourth, and
> fifth grade students, T2 had 234, C1 had 209 and C2 had 150. (p. 25)

Finn pointed out that participants were analyzed between-group as procedures curtailed the possibility of analyzing individual participant changes.

Finn (2008) hypothesized that the treatment group would report significantly lower levels of bullying behaviors compared to the control group; the hypothesis was tested by conducting an ANOVA of three factors with two levels each: gender (girl, boy), time (pre, post), and condition (treatment, control). There was no significant reduction in rates of reported bullying behavior attributable to any of the design factors; however,

females' reports of victimization decreased from pretest to posttest following implementation of the OBPP. Finn discussed the following limitations of the study:

> There were limitations to this study that must be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, use of archival data impeded the research in several ways, specifically as it pertains to data collection. Collecting the data so that each student could be identified from pretest to posttest (e.g., using ID numbers to remain anonymous) would have enabled a within-subject design to determine if the students with higher rates of reported bullying or victimization received significantly lower scores post-intervention. Unfortunately, the way the data [were] collected precluded this possibility; so, although there were no significant reductions in bullying overall and female-only significant reductions of victimization, it is unclear whether the OBPP helped students who needed it the most (e.g., those who reported engaging in the most bullying and those who reported being the most victimized).

> Questionable treatment integrity was also a limitation for this study. Attempts were made to gather fidelity data, but this could not be accomplished as described above. Step-by-step, manual interventions, such as the OBPP, have been identified as a way in and of itself to help ensure treatment integrity. A problem with manual interventions is that treatment integrity tends to be assumed rather than measured; however, it also makes it easier for an outside observer to monitor the presence or absence of particular steps. Although formal data could not be obtained, it was indicated by the director of pupil personnel that while

treatment school 1 had difficulty with fidelity due to administration issues,

treatment school 2 embraced the program and maintained fidelity throughout.

Another limitation was that homogeneity of the sample limits generalizability and

external validity. The population of students in the school district studied was

primarily white and middle to upper-middle class. Furthermore, the low incidence

of reported bullying behaviors and victimization among the sample at the pretest

phase reduced the possibility of finding significant decreases of these behaviors

during post-testing. (pp. 71-72)

Finn (2008) suggested that although the OBPP is often cited and recommended as

an empirically validated "best practice" and model program of bullying intervention,

generalizability of these findings may not be warranted, as published research of

implementation of the Olweus program within the United States has revealed that the

program may not be as effective with U.S. student populations; consequently, further

research studies evaluating OBPP effectiveness with U.S. student populations were

recommended. Finn also suggested that future evaluations of the OBPP include

anonymous identification of individual students, as a single-subject design would enable

evaluators to explore the effects of the intervention on those who are specifically

identified as bullies or victims (p. 75).

A Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Programs on Students

Via systematic review of the literature on the effectiveness of antibullying

programs, Livingston (2008) conducted a meta-analysis and content analysis study

evaluating antibullying program outcome results to establish empirically validated

components of effective antibullying programs and to provide evidence-based

recommendations for the development of effective antibullying interventions. Livingston stated,

>The identification of effective components was based on meta-analytic evaluation of two primary questions:
>
>>1. Is there a significant impact of anti-bullying interventions observed on a synthesis of available outcome studies?
>>
>>2. Can effective programs and non-effective programs be distinguished by effective components?
>
>These questions were explored in the context of a systematic synthesis and meta-analytic evaluation of outcome studies of anti-bullying programs from 1991 to 2007. (p. 7)

Livingston (2008) identified 265 studies to be examined; however, utilizing inclusion criteria, the number of studies was reduced to 30 studies. Livingston used the following criteria in her selection process:

1. Anti-bullying intervention and prevention programs designed to prevent and/or reduce bullying behavior.

2. Anti-bullying programs used to target students between Kindergarten and 12th grade.

3. Anti-bullying programs conducted at a school site.

4. Anti-bullying programs targeting physical bullying, nonphysical bullying (verbal bullying, direct nonverbal bullying, indirect nonverbal bullying), sexual bullying, and/or damage to property.

5. Outcome reports of bullying behavior measured by observable and reported documentation

6. Results in each study reported with adequate data for meta-analysis and content analysis. (p. 42)

Livingston (2008) followed coding procedures for the meta-analysis designed to extract the relevant information from each eligible study. Livingston read through each study and created a table with the appropriate responses from each. Livingston explained:

Data [were] entered appropriately according to the author and year of study, the name of the implemented program, location of where the intervention took place, targeted grade level, utilization of random assignment, number of participants in treatment and control groups or treatment group only, measurement design (pretest and posttest or posttest only). The type of program (packaged or customized), model of intervention, and school personnel involved is [*sic*] discussed in greater detail according to coding criteria. (p. 44)

Livingston (2008) detailed exactly what was meant by packaged or customized type of program, model of intervention, and school personnel involved in the methodology chapter of her study. She stated that each study was examined for various measures of bullying behavior reported in the form of outcome data (p. 46). Livingston found 18 dependent measures of bullying observed across the 30 studies, which were collapsed into four categories: reported frequency of bullying and victimization (Factor A), personal responses to bullying incidents (Factor B), general attitudes about bullies and victims (Factor C), and program impact on personal growth for victims (Factor D). Livingston used Comprehensive Meta Analysis (CMA) Version 2.0 as the meta-analysis

software package to store, calculate, and analyze effect size estimates for this study. After the meta-analysis was conducted, a total of 30 studies were used for content analysis. Livingston systematically identified components of program success by utilizing calculated effect sizes of each study. She ranked the studies according to the number and magnitude of their effect size estimates, whereby programs having the largest number of significant positive effects were compared to programs with the lowest relative number of significant effects.

Livingston (2008) discussed the characteristics of the studies she analyzed. Of the 30 studies reviewed, three studies had implemented the Olweus bullying prevention program, two studies had implemented Bullyproof, and two studies had implemented a peer support program; the remaining 23 studies examined various types of programs. Livingston learned that 12 of the 30 studies utilized packaged programs in which the intervention included a prescribed set of instructions, guidelines, and procedures for schools to use; the remaining 18 studies were customized studies, in which an amalgamative method was adopted consisting of various theories and methods, many from packaged programs. Livingston reported,

Of the 30 studies, 11 utilized a whole-school approach where the target group was the entire student population and activities were implemented at the school level, class level, and individual level. Ten studies used a classroom guidance approach designed to engage all students in classroom discussions to increase awareness and actively engage students in addressing bully/victim problems. Three studies utilized a combination of classroom guidance and individual approaches, which targeted students in particular classrooms and focused on bullies and/or victims

directly involved in bullying. Six studies used an individual approach that focused

on bullies and/or victims who were directly involved in bullying. (p. 54)

Livingston (2008) reported that the antibullying programs that were investigated

indicated 57% positive treatment effects on frequency of bullying and victimization,

personal responses to bullying incidents, general attitudes, and growth for victims

(Factors A-D), with a moderate positive net effect size of 0.67; furthermore, regarding

particular antibullying programs, the Donegal antibullying project, the Non-Violent

Campaign, and the Professional Development Program reflected 100% large positive

treatment effects. Livingston stressed that these programs have promising treatment

effects in efforts to reduce school bullying behavior. Livingston also reported the

following results of her study:

It is concluded that effective programs and non-effective programs cannot be

distinguished by their program components based on many similarities and

overlapping program components. The basic principle of both the top and bottom

ranked programs is that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

However, one notable difference is that the top rated programs emphasized that

quality of teaching, learning, and care for individual students, while the bottom

rated programs emphasized a restructure of the social environment through

increasing adults' and students' awareness, involvement, and communication of

bullying and victimization. Based on this finding, the component of caring for

students may be a key factor in determining program effectiveness. (p. 82)

Livingston (2008) discussed the identification process of effective antibullying

programs and the components that made these antibullying programs effective:

 Studies were ranked according to the total effect size, which consisted of positive and negative outcomes and size of effect. Of the thirty studies, 17 had net positive effects across measures, 4 studies had no net effect, and 9 studies had net negative effects. Programs that ranked in the top three were compared with programs ranked in the bottom four. The top three ranked studies were examined for effective components. This included the following programs: (1) Donegal anti-bullying project; (2) Non-Violent Campaign; and (3) Professional Development Program. The bottom four anti-bullying programs included the following: (1) Olweus Bullying Prevention Program; (2) Bully Court; (3) Ways to Minimize Bullying; and (4) James H. Bean School Bullying Prevention Program.

Components of the top three effective anti-bullying programs were grouped together and divided into four categories: (1) Basic Principles; (2) Personnel Involved; (3) Methods of Intervention; and (4) Materials. The programs emphasized the following basic principles: bullying is not tolerated, combination of firm anti-bullying attitudes with co-operation with parents, quality of teaching and learning in school, and care for individual students. Personnel involved included school staff, teachers, parents, students, and pupil-welfare group. The pupil-welfare group may include the head teacher, representative of the teaching staff, school psychologist, school welfare officer, school doctor, and school nurse. Methods of intervention included bullying awareness and "Peace Day" assemblies, school conference day, meetings with staff, parents, bullies, and victims, school-parent teamwork, training of the entire school staff, consultation, questionnaire survey at the school, class, and individual levels, supervision during

breaks, staff-student mentoring, class meetings and rules against bullying behavior, anti-bullying activities and lessons in the classroom, bully court, peer mentors and friendship teams, counseling, and a discipline system. Materials used during program implementation included articles in the school bulletin for parents (to assist parents in helping their student fend off bullying and how to ask for help) and community (anti-bullying programs and activities). Anti-bullying activities such as Friendship Circle, role-playing, and journal reflections were included. In addition, anti-bullying strategies such as conflict resolution, role-playing, discussion groups, and response training were referenced during program implementation. Also included in the curriculum were anti-bullying lessons such as learning the consideration of others, how to express feelings without hurting, solving problems respectfully, and supporting peers as an active bystander. (pp. 83-84)

Livingston (2008) asserted that the success of an antibullying program depends primarily on whether or not the program meets the needs of the school; therefore, it is important to choose a program after a needs assessment has been conducted to ensure the goals of the program meet the goals of the school. Livingston shared questions, which were adapted from the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (1994), to be considered when selecting a program:

1. Is the program research-based?

2. Does the program use a comprehensive curriculum developmentally tailored to be age-specific? Does the program build on what is learned each year?

3. Does the program include practical lessons and activities in addition to

information?

4. Is the program comprehensive, involving parents, peers, all school staff, and

the entire community?

5. Does the program use culturally sensitive material appropriate for students

from a wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds?

6. Does the staff find the program satisfying and valuable? Does it include staff

training?

7. Is the program cost efficient?

8. Can the program be incorporated into the curriculum? Is it incorporated into

the safe schools or violence prevention program?

9. Do students find the program meaningful and enjoyable? (p. 87)

Livingston (2008) concluded that the use of program components found in the

bottom ranked programs will not determine ineffectiveness or negative treatment

outcomes, just as implementing components of the identified effective programs will not

guarantee program success, because of the many similarities in program components

among the top and bottom ranked programs. Livingston asserted that factors affecting

program implementation may begin with the quality of staff training and the extent to

which the program is viewed as important; furthermore, these factors may in turn affect

the extent to which the entire school community is involved, committed, and engaged

with any antibullying program. Rigby (as cited in Livingston) stated that the commitment

of a school to a program and strong involvement by staff in its implementation appears to

be an important and possibly crucial factor in reducing bullying. According to Smith,

Schneider, Smith, and Ananiadou (as cited in Livingston), programs that are

systematically monitored during implementation tend to be more effective than programs

without any monitoring. Livingston added that another factor related to how relevant the

program is to the targeted population, as some program components may appear more

relevant in addressing bullying issues than others. After reviewing the literature and

conducting the meta-analysis study of available antibullying programs, Livingston made

the following recommendations for educators:

1. It is recommended that schools properly conduct a needs assessment to

    determine the seriousness of bullying and determine what measures of bullying

    behavior to target.

2. It is recommended in selecting an anti-bullying program that school faculty,

    counselors, and teachers evaluate the basic principles, goals, and key components

    to determine if the program adequately meets the needs of the school.

3. It is recommended in program implementation that a blueprint or set of

    guidelines and instructions be examined and properly executed according the

    program and needs of the school. In addition, consultation services from trained

    professionals may offer beneficial services such as providing guidance and

    support to teachers, counselors, and school faculty.

4. It is recommended that schools continuously evaluate how a program is being

    implemented and to what extent it affects the school climate during program

    implementation. If necessary, changes should be made accordingly. For example,

    are the staff and students committed, engaged and excited about the program?

5.   It is recommended that schools utilize effective program components found from this study, which may provide a clearer understanding of what contributes to program effectiveness and enhance program success. (pp. 90-91)

Livingston (2008) did not mention any limitations of her study; however, she did make the following recommendations for further research:

1.   It is recommended that more research is provided regarding how to properly conduct program implementation. This may include a variety of implementation procedures and strategies, keys to program effectiveness, pitfalls to avoid, ways to properly conduct program evaluation, and ways to ensure program success.

2.   It is recommended when studies model their intervention after an established program that researchers expand on what particular methods of program implementation and intervention were used and identify any changes as a result of meeting the needs of their school (versus restating original program key elements). In addition, providing data on how these changes affected program outcome would greatly contribute to existing research.

3.   It is recommended that studies not only target frequency of bullying and victimization, but additional measures of bullying and victimization behavior. Such conclusions may equip schools with better selection criteria to meet the appropriate needs of the students and school environment.

4.   It is recommended that research provide more stringent selection criteria on how to best choose an anti-bullying program in order to meet the needs of the school and ensure positive outcomes.

5. It is recommended that more research is needed on effective program

components and how they affect program success.

6. It is recommended that a greater percentage of programs provide results based

on systematic research evaluation. (pp. 91-92)

Effectiveness of antibullying programs was examined in the studies conducted by

Bennett (2008), Finn (2008), and Livingston (2008) as part of this review of the

literature; however, bullying is just one aspect of the larger issue of school violence. In

the following section, key studies of school violence are reviewed.

Key Studies on School Violence

In the Wake of Columbine: How Youths Make Meaning

Waldron (2002) conducted a mixed-method qualitative study of how youth

understand Columbine, school and youth violence, and school safety in relationship to

perspectives that are presented in the mainstream media and by school officials. The

research questions Waldron used to guide her study were the following:

How do youth understand Columbine, school violence, and school safety? How

can we understand youth as social actors who actively sustain, negotiate, and

resist dominant and hegemonic ideologies about youth and schooling? How do

institutional arrangements, such as the media and educational systems, influence

their perspectives? How do relations of race, class, and gender pattern the

experiences of teens and shape their understandings of youth and school violence,

and school safety? (p. 36).

Waldron (2002) conducted in-depth interviews with 31 high school youths at two

different public school systems. Initially, Waldron encountered great difficulty in getting

a second school site at which she could talk with students about Columbine or school violence as she was conducting her study barely a year after the tragic incident in Columbine. She was met by negative responses from school officials who justified their responses with general comments such as, "But we don't have any violence in our schools. Perhaps you should consider another school." After finally securing a second school site, Waldron began her research on students during the spring of 2000, shortly after the 1-year "anniversary" of Columbine.

Both of the high schools that Waldron (2002) used in her study were located about 20 miles from major cities, but their ethnic populations and sizes were vastly different. One school had a population of 1,294 students of which 99% were African American, six students were White, one was Asian American, one was Native American, five students were identified as multi-racial, and there were no Hispanic students. The other school had only 793 students: 83.6% White, 10% Asian American, 4.9% Hispanic, 1.3% African American, and 0.1% Native American.

In addition to interviewing students, Waldron (2002) conducted interviews with the vice-principals in charge of discipline, a counselor at each school, and a police officer that worked in one of the schools. It soon became apparent to Waldron that observations made in the hallways, cafeteria, teacher lunchrooms, and parking lots created an important layer to her study, in addition to school policies and student handbooks. Institutional ethnography was utilized to better understand the actualities of the everyday lives of teenagers, including the ways in which youth made meaning of schooling, violence, and the media. The use of institutional ethnography in a specific situation

uncovered the ways in which the everyday lives of the students were affected by social organizations.

Waldron (2002) investigated how the local lives of the teenagers were organized and expressed within the social relations of the larger social and economic processes of society. The study focused on how the dynamics of race, class, gender, and sexuality gave rise to cultural practices. Waldron's analysis was also influenced by the methodologies of intersectional and ethnographic approaches; therefore, she was able to explore the relationship between structure (race, class and gender) and biography (individual accounts) separately, together, and simultaneously.

One of the most curious findings in Waldron's (2002) study was how students perceived the meanings of the two terms "urban" and "suburban"; furthermore, it was interesting to note how the adult school community and mainstream media used the term urban as code for poor and working class people of color and suburban as code for White and middle class. These terms were translated in the students' presentation of themselves through their clothing. Waldron stated, "How they dressed, who they were friends with, how they talked, and to a lesser extent, where they lived, was central to how kids negotiated being 'urban,' 'ghetto,' 'suburban' or 'uppity'" (p. 226). Dress is important; in Columbine it was the "trench coat" that was identified with the White, middle-class boys who randomly killed other students and subsequently became identified with alienated youth (Waldron). Waldron found that the significance of clothing was also connected to larger issues of social control, resistance, and power relations.

Dress codes were the most extensive of all rules listed in the handbooks at both schools, but they were worded with terminology that left a great deal to adult

interpretation (Waldron, 2002). School administrators justified the language of the dress

code to discourage "gang clothing," but clever and defiant students found ways to

circumvent the rules. For example, as Waldron stated, "a group of poor and working class

African American boys wore black hooded sweatshirts with 'Turner Park Clique'

airbrushed on the front," and "technically did not break school rules" (p. 227).

Although the youth in Waldron's (2002) study tended to define school violence as

homicides or weapons-related acts, they experienced a range of violence along a

continuum, including physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and racial acts. Waldron found

that hidden forms of violence were pervasive at the schools studied and were most often

not reported. Often students were aware of the power imbalance within the school, which

was sometimes part of the reason they failed to report violent incidents; this phenomenon

was extremely prevalent when adults committed the violence. Waldron discovered that

bureaucracy, hierarchy, and rigid power structures of schools often sustained systemic

violence.

Waldron (2002) paid close attention to the complex nature of youth and their

various understandings of violence. The student responses revealed critical interpretations

of both the media and popular culture. This phenomenon is evident in the following

discussion by Waldron about the youth's responses:

They rejected how mediated representation of youth culture often trivialized their

lives and they critiqued the over-simplistic, unrealistic, or exaggerated

representations of youth…. When discussing the coverage of Columbine, two

Latino students presented their own ability to filter mediated messages when they

stated that youth had a "one in a million" chance of being killed at school. As they

rejected the dominant discourse that school violence was endemic in high schools,

they also demonstrated their knowledge that the media tends to over-generalize….

White students at North Central tended to be critical of politicians and reporters

who blamed violence in popular culture for the Columbine shootings because this

trivialized their intelligence. African American students at South River criticized

media coverage, comparing suburban to urban schools, saying that Black schools

received unwarranted attention for any type of problem that occurred there. For

example, when a person who was not even a student was caught shooting a gun

off in the woods behind South River High School, the "news helicopters were

swarming" above all day "just because it's a Black school." (pp. 243-244)

Waldron (2002) was careful to maintain her presence at the schools in a manner

that did not bias the study, for example, by having the students use her first name and

dressing more casually than the other adults in the schools. One central location was used

to conduct the interviews with the students in the first school, but Waldron did not have

that luxury in the second school. Each interview took about an hour. Waldron was

consistent in interviewing a diverse group of students with varying cultural and

socioeconomic backgrounds in each school. She was able to establish positive rapport

with the students by relating to their interests; furthermore, she kept her questions open-

ended, even though she began each interview with an interview guide. By practicing

active listening techniques Waldron was able to realize that the students' disjuncture,

hesitations, and tentative talk were signals for requests for understanding.

As Waldron (2002) read through her data, she began coding for certain words,

phrases, behaviors, events, and thought processes of the students to reveal patterns in the

data. By utilizing open coding, Waldron identified and formulated codes for any and all ideas, themes, or issues, no matter how varied. Then she began to focus her coding as distinct categories emerged. Waldron stated, "The fields that encompassed violence became narrower, such as 'gun violence,' 'fights,' 'oppression,' 'emotional abuse,' and 'rivalry'" (p. 57). The analysis concentrated not only on what the students said but also on what they did not say. Waldron's qualitative study provided deepened understanding of violence and its impact on young people's lives. She consistently addressed and answered the research questions of her study; however, Waldron's study also raised additional questions worthy of further exploration, such as how much violence is in America's schools and what is being done about it?

Levels of Violence in Pennsylvania Public Schools

Winters (1997) conducted a descriptive study to discover the levels of specific types of violence as well as the prevention and intervention strategies used to combat violence in each of the school districts in Pennsylvania. The major research questions of Winters' study were the following: What types and levels of violence are prevalent in Pennsylvania? What is the relationship of school location to levels of violence? What efforts are being made to control and prevent school violence? What is the relationship of school location to prevention and intervention programs? What is the relationship of school size to prevention and intervention programs?

Winters' (1997) descriptive study was mixed in nature as opened-ended questions in the survey were analyzed quantitatively. The researcher mailed out a valid survey instrument, which was designed to allow primarily check-type answers to facilitate completion, to 501 superintendents; two of the six closed-form questions were Likert-

scaled. The initial return rate of the survey instrument was only 45.3% (226 surveys), but after a second mailing, the return rate increased to 65.1% (326 surveys). The independent variables were school location (urban, suburban, and rural) and school size, as determined by enrollment. The dependent variable for this study was the number of respondents selecting each violence level or category of use of prevention strategies. Winters analyzed the relationship of levels of specific types of violence to school location and size of the public schools, as well as the types of prevention and intervention programs being used. Response frequencies were determined, and chi-square analyses comparing school location and size to other variables were completed (Winters).

Analysis of the data revealed that violence levels in Pennsylvania schools mirrored schools in the rest of the United States, but there had been more verbal intimidation and bullying in Pennsylvania over the previous 3 years (Winters, 1997). Furthermore, school violence was no longer a problem limited to urban schools in Pennsylvania; larger schools experienced more incidents of violence including verbal intimidation and bullying. Winters also discovered that there was increased violence at the middle school or junior high school level.

The results of the Pennsylvania study may be biased; Winters (1997) pointed out that nonparticipation of public school districts in Pennsylvania, such as the school district of Philadelphia, could have skewed the results, especially for urban districts. Also school administrators may not have been forthcoming on the self-report survey, reporting what they thought the researcher wanted to know, not being honest, or simply lacking insight into the problem. Results of this study, therefore, may not be generalizable to other schools outside Pennsylvania. Furthermore, Winters' survey instrument did not allow the

participants to explain the specifics of the interventions or strategies they were using to prevent school violence, but rather listed general strategies and interventions and requested that the administrators indicate all that applied. A study that employs an instrument to collect details about schools' use of programs and practices to prevent violence and bullying would be worthwhile. The problem of bullying and school violence is not only an issue here in the United States, but it is also an international issue. Strategies and policies that are being implemented and utilized in the United States and elsewhere around the world are discussed in the next section.

Bullying and Bullying Prevention in the United States and Around the World

Okie (2001) reported in the *New York Times* that 30 % of U.S. students in Grades 6 through 10 are involved in moderate or frequent bullying—as bullies, as victims, or as both—according to the results of the first nationally representative survey on the frequency of such behavior among American children (p. A8). More than 15,000 students were surveyed, and 9% of the students reported that they bullied other children once a week or more often; another 11% said they sometimes bullied others; 8% reported that they were bullied at least once a week; another 9% said they were sometimes bullied; and about 6% of students in the survey reported that they were both victims and bullies (Okie). According to Okie, the results, which were published in the April 25, 2001, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, indicated that bullying was about as frequent among American schoolchildren as it was among children in England, Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands, but about 50% more frequent than in Scandinavian countries (p. A8).

Bullying is clearly not only a problem in the United States; it has become a concern in many countries. On the basis of a nationwide survey in Norway, Olweus (1993) estimated that 15% of the total students in the country's primary and junior high schools were involved in bully-victim circumstances. More recently, a conference was held in Europe, the European Conference on Initiatives to Combat School Bullying, in the Barbican Center of London, England, in May 1998. Information found on Bully Online (n.d.), a Web site of the United Kingdom National Workplace Bullying Advice Line, indicated that at least 16 children commit suicide in the United Kingdom (UK) each year because they are being bullied at school. According to that Web site, all schools in the UK are legally required to have an antibullying policy. In 1998, data were gathered to shed light on the extent of the problem of bullying and violence in French schools ("France"). It was found that 47% of the country's 10- to 15-year olds were involved in verbal abuse and 20% were involved in physical violence; however, only one incident in 64 led to a disciplinary hearing. This document reported that the Ministry of Education, on November 5, 1997, published a plan aimed at combating violence in schools. In 1992 an extensive and representative study on bullying in the Netherlands concluded that 385,000 children were being bullied in schools (Mooij, as cited in Limper, 2000). In the Netherlands, parents initiated a program to combat bullying (Limper).

A Study on Bullying in Norway

Natvig et al. (2001) investigated whether or not student-perceived social support, self-efficacy, and decision control are related to school climate and number of bullying incidents. The results of this survey research study were based on data from 885 adolescents of 1,022 eligible students in seven Norwegian schools, representing a reliable

response rate of just over 85%. The participants in the questionnaire were in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades; 438 of the participants were boys and 447 were girls. Written and informed consent for participation in the study was obtained from their parents; furthermore, the Norwegian Data Inspectorate approved the study.

The questionnaire used in this study was a modified version of the instrument originally created for a World Health Organization Cross-National Survey (Natvig et al., 2001). Natvig et al. stated that the information used from the instrument was related to bullying, stress experience (represented by school alienation and school distress), self-efficacy beliefs, social support, and decision control. For the assessment of bullying, the term was defined for the students; then the students were asked how often they had taken part in bullying other students in school during the school term and how often they had been victims of bullying. For the assessment of school alienation, eight descriptive statements were used in which students responded with degrees of agreement or disagreement. To assess school distress, students were asked to respond, using a frequency scale, to three questions, each of which described an emotional experience of work at school. For the assessment of self-efficacy, Natvig et al. noted that the students responded with degrees of agreement or disagreement to 21 descriptive statements such as the following: "I am a confident person"; "I know how to tell people if someone is bullying me at school"; and "I know how to cooperate in class." Descriptive statements were also used on the instrument to assess social support and decision control; students responded with degree of agreement or frequency.

Natvig et al. (2001) performed specific statistical analyses dependent upon the information that was collected: Chi-square tests were used to analyze differences between

various groups in proportions of students' reporting having bullied; ANOVA and

multiple logistic regressions were used to analyze associations between the psychosocial

factors and the risk of bullying behavior. Of the 885 students with complete data for all

variables considered, a total of 80 (9.2%) reported having bullied at least "sometimes"

during the term. Between schools, these percentages ranged from 4.3% to 18.9%;

furthermore, the prevalence among boys was more than twice that among girls (13.3% vs.

5.0%), with the overall difference between the genders being statistically significant. The

results of the multiple logistic regression analyses indicated that an increasing degree of

school alienation increased the risk of bullying behavior, but no significant association

was found for school distress. Natvig et al. asserted that the results of this study could be

applied to developing intervention strategies against bullying, thereby decreasing the

degree of school alienation.

A Study on Bullying in Canada

The most important and obvious research goal is to explore comprehensive

programs that address bullying to reduce and ultimately prevent violence in and around

schools. Atlas and Pepler (1998) indicated in their descriptive research study that a

systemic approach to understanding the dynamics of bullying could lead to an effective

way to reduce bullying. They adopted a systemic-developmental model for studying

bullying and victimization. A systemic-developmental framework incorporates the

assessment of a wide variety of factors that may contribute to the development of

aggressive behavior (Cairns & Cairns, as cited in Atlas & Pepler).

From one public school in metropolitan Toronto, 27 children (19 boys, 8 girls)

identified by teachers as aggressive and nonaggressive were targeted for filming (Atlas &

Pepler, 1998). The 27 children were identified from the total number of 190 students ($N =$ 190) in eight classrooms (Atlas & Pepler). Atlas and Pepler used an extension of a naturalistic study on peer relations of aggressive and nonaggressive children observed on the playground and in the classroom. Survey and observational data were collected with a specific focus on the nature of bullying and victimization within the classroom context. Bullying noted in the videotaped observations of children's interactions in the classroom was coded using the developmental framework. Atlas and Pepler coded for individual characteristics, features of the dyadic interactions, and the social-ecological variables. They also observed and recorded data on the duration of each incident, type of aggression (verbal, physical, or both) used in each episode, and type of bullying (direct, indirect, or both) used in each incident.

Atlas and Pepler (1998) found there were 68 episodes of bullying on 28 hours of videotape, for an average of 2.4 bullying episodes per hour. Only episodes that were both audible and observable were used in the analysis; otherwise, episodes were eliminated. The average duration of the bullying incidents was 26 seconds, with a range of 2 to 227 seconds. Verbal aggression (e.g., name-calling) was observed in 53% of the episodes, physical aggression was observed in 30%, and a combination of verbal and physical aggression was observed in 17% of the incidents. Direct bullying (face-to-face confrontation) occurred more frequently than indirect bullying or both types.

For the individual characteristics analysis of bullies and victims, Atlas and Pepler (1998) observed 42 of 190 students in bullying interactions as either bullies or victims in the classroom. Of the 42 students, 14 children were observed bullying other students, 17 children were being victimized, and 11 students were observed as being both bully and

victim depending on the incident. Students who were identified as aggressive in this study were significantly more likely to be involved as bullies in bullying incidents than were nonaggressive students. For the analysis of the bully-victim dyadic interactions, differential height and weight between the bully and victim were coded for each incident. Atlas and Pepler coded for peer involvement, peer intervention, teacher intervention, and structure of the classroom to complete the social-ecological factor analysis. Peers participated in a variety of roles in 85% of the bullying incidents, ranging from active involvement to passive onlooking. Peer intervention occurred 14% of the time when the peers were aware of the bullying episodes; teachers intervened 11 times in the 15 bullying incidents (73%) in which they were judged to be aware of bullying interactions. One objective of this study was to describe the structure of the classroom and learning activities during which bullying occurred (e.g., teacher-led tasks, group tasks, or solitary tasks). A chi-square analysis of the expected frequencies of bullying based on the total time filmed in each of the categories revealed a significant association with classroom activity. It revealed that 65% of bullying interactions occurred when students were engaged in solitary tasks, 23% occurred during group tasks, and 12% occurred during teacher-led tasks.

This descriptive study revealed that (a) bullying is pervasive in the classroom, (b) teachers are generally unaware of bullying, and (c) the peer group is reluctant to intervene to stop bullying (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). The limitations of this study included the following: (a) A small sample size was used, (b) participants were observed only in the classroom, and (c) school climate data were not available to analyze the extent to which school climate influenced the bullying problems in the school. The results of this

study were not generalizable to other schools; however, the external validity of the

methods used by the researchers, including the observations, was relatively high.

According to Atlas and Pepler, the theoretical model suggested that a wide array of

variables influence bullying behavior in the classroom.

A Study on Perceptions of Bullying in the United States

Khosropour and Walsh (2001) emphasized that one cannot assume that what

students' perceive as bullying is considered by these same students to be a problem in

their school. The violence prevention program at a school should address these students'

beliefs about bullying and ensure that something can be done to correct such a problem

(Khosropour & Walsh). In their qualitative study, Khosropour and Walsh examined how

fifth graders perceived and described problems they experienced or witnessed in their

schools. The researchers conducted interviews with 40 volunteer students from four

schools in Texas. After transcribing the interviews, they coded the data independently.

Every student interviewed by Khosropour and Walsh (2001) mentioned some

form of "verbal aggression." Boys and girls mentioned "physical aggression" at similar

rates; however, girls were twice as likely as boys to mention "isolation." Most of the

children used the word "teasing" to refer to a subtype of verbal aggression bullying.

Khosropour and Walsh stated, "Students' responses suggest that the word 'teasing' has

perhaps replaced the word bullying, at least when problems are not physical in nature" (p.

19). Both girls and boys described bullies and their victims mostly in terms of their

physical and behavioral characteristics. The researchers discovered that "more than twice

as many girls as boys acknowledge[d] that bullying is a problem in schools" (p. 20);

however, many of the same students who described incidents of bullying at their schools

during the interview stated that bullying was not a problem at schools. Both boys and girls equally suggested "education/discussion" and "adult intervention" as solutions to bullying; however, boys were more likely than girls to offer "punish the bully" as a solution. Khosropour and Walsh found that "an important difference between the two groups was in the percentages of mentions that 'nothing can be done about bullying'" (p. 21).

Khosropour and Walsh (2001) identified the limitations of their study: (a) The children's responses to the interview questions were biographical in nature rather than generating the intended general conceptualizations of bullying; (b) there may have been a Hawthorne effect in two of the four schools, in which antibullying intervention had taken place only weeks before students were interviewed; and (c) data were collected and recorded only from interviews, whereas observations of student-to-student bullying incidents would have provided a richer context for interpreting students' responses and comments. The study conducted by Khosropour and Walsh did not have strong external validity because the participants were not randomly selected; however, the data analyses were reliable and somewhat generalizable. Implications generated from the study include the following: (a) Educational programs designed to eliminate bullying in schools should use the children's own terminology about bullying and teasing, and (b) a violence prevention program at a school needs to address student perceptions of bullying (Khosropour and Walsh).

A comprehensive bullying-prevention program that continually emphasizes creating a safe school environment eliminates the fear that bullies create in students (Garrity et al., 1997). In their article, Garrity et al. discussed five key components that

should be included in a bully-proofing program to create a safer school environment: (a) a systems approach, (b) staff training, (c) classroom intervention, (d) intervention with bullies, and (e) support for the victims. Garrity et al. stated the following:

> The most valuable part of this comprehensive program is its involvement of the "caring majority"—the 85% of students who are neither bullies nor victims but who stand helplessly by as their classmates get beaten up emotionally or physically. Developing the intervention skills of the caring majority is crucial in setting a positive tone in a school; these students give strength and support to the victims and defuse the power of the bullies. The caring majority is the most powerful weapon in creating a safe and caring school environment. (p. 241)

Furnishing the student population with the expertise they need to transform the overall climate of the school is necessary to encourage a significant impact on school violence (Garrity et al., 1997). Before this can be done, however, school officials need to recognize that they have a bullying problem. According to Weinhold (1999), school officials must learn how to identify and address the hidden aspects of the culture of violence that exists in their schools; they must consider and answer the following questions:

> Do you have a plan in place to recognize and promote students' positive acts of kind and pro-social behavior each day at your school? Are there more opportunities at your school for students to be recognized for positive, pro-social behaviors than opportunities to be recognized for negative and anti-social behaviors? How do you think students would answer this question? Does your faculty or staff have established ways to recognize and support the positive and

kind acts that they do at the school? Do you have a school-wide policy for dealing

with bullying? Have you developed an effective way to reduce or eliminate

student-to-student putdowns? Does your school teach conflict resolution skills to

all students? Has your school been able to significantly reduce the number of

discipline referrals? Does your school have a peer mediation program to help

students settle disputes peacefully? Is your school as safe as it could be? Does

your school have an emergency disaster plan in place? (p. 9)

According to Weinhold, school officials who answer "no" to any of these questions need

to create kinder and safer schools.

It is also important to increase awareness of bullying and its effects in the school

community (Rigby, 1995). Rigby asserted that schools are unlikely to adopt useful

policies and practices against bullying unless there is a general recognition first among

staff and faculty members that bullying can signify a serious problem for a substantial

number of students. It is important to try to link bullying awareness with the curriculum.

Rigby noted that links with the curriculum can strongly reinforce the antibullying policy

and that content relevant to problems of abuses of power can be included in a variety of

subjects, such as social studies, English and history.

Federal Policy Addressing Bullying and School Violence

In the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the federal government of the

United States addresses the problem of bullying and school violence (P. L. 107-110,

2002). "Making Schools Safer for the 21st Century" is a key component in NCLB (Bush,

2001). Bush articulated the incentives proposed in NCLB:

Teachers will be empowered to remove violent or persistently disruptive students from the classroom. Funding for school will be increased to promote safety and drug prevention during and after school. States will be allowed to give consideration to religious organizations on the same basis as other nongovernmental organizations when awarding grants for after-school programs. Victims of school-based crimes or students trapped in persistently dangerous schools will be provided with a safe alternative. Additional funds will be provided for Character Education grants to states and districts to train teachers in methods of incorporating character-building lessons and activities into the classroom. (p. 6)

Throughout the United States, legislatures are addressing bullies with new laws; for example, the Colorado legislature in the spring of 2001 passed a law mandating that every school district in the state have an antibullying policy in place (Zehr, 2001). Other states that have either passed laws or have bills pending requiring schools to have antibullying policies are New Hampshire, West Virginia, Illinois, New York, and Washington (Zehr). It is, therefore, evident that the United States is taking the issues of school safety, school violence, and bullying seriously.

Bullying Prevention Policy in Virginia

On April 6, 2000, the *Code of Virginia* was amended (§9-173.21), creating the Virginia Center for School Safety within the Department of Criminal Justice Services and establishing its duties: (a) providing training for Virginia public school personnel in school safety and the effective identification of students who may be at risk for violent behavior and in need of special services or assistance; (b) serving as a resource and referral center for Virginia school divisions by conducting research, sponsoring

workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns, such as conflict management and peer mediation, and legal and constitutional issues regarding school safety and individual rights; (c) maintaining and disseminating information to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation; and (d) collecting, analyzing, and disseminating various Virginia school safety data. According to the *Virginia Juvenile Law Handbook for School Administrators: 2006 Update*, bullying, as defined by the National School Safety, is a euphemism for activities committed by youths that, if committed by adults, would be considered criminal (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2006). The *Code of Virginia* now specifically addresses bullying in the Character Education Act and Board of Education Guidelines (§22.1-208.01 & §22.1-279.6). Legislation passed by the 2005 General Assembly (§22.1-208.01) requires local school boards to establish a character education program in their schools, the purpose of which is to instill in students civic virtues and personal character traits to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high character. The program shall also address the inappropriateness of bullying, as defined in the Student Conduct Policy Guidelines adopted by the Board of Education pursuant to §22.1-279.6. Based on the *Code of Virginia*, §22.1-279.6 (2005), each school board shall include in its code of student conduct prohibitions against bullying, hazing, and profane or obscene language or conduct. It was a goal of this study to discover the types of programs Virginia public schools are adopting to prevent bullying, to determine whether or not schools in Virginia are utilizing the Virginia Center of School Safety, and to learn how the schools are using the Virginia Center of School Safety.

Summary

For decades, schoolchildren have been faced with bullying, a problem with which many educators are acquainted; however, researchers only began to study bullying systematically in the 1970s (Olweus, 2003). Bullying is defined as a phenomenon in which a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students (Olweus). Research has revealed that bullying is a problem, especially among middle school students. Studies have examined students' perceptions of violence, teasing, and bullying; schools' implementation of antibullying strategies or programs; and the efficacy of various antibullying programs (Bennett, 2008; Brockenbrough, 2001; Finn, 2008; Khosropour & Walsh, 2001; Limper, 2000; Livingston, 2008; Olweus, 1993; Waldron, 2002; Winters, 1997). Throughout Europe, many countries, including France, the Netherlands, and England, have been adopting antibullying policies for their school systems (Limper). Through NCLB, the federal government of the United States addresses the problem of bullying and school violence (P. L. 107-110, 2002). Across the United States, legislatures are targeting bullies with new laws (Zehr, 2001). Virginia requires local school boards to establish a character education program in their schools and has established the Virginia Center for School Safety. Utilizing an antibullying intervention that is consistently emphasized creates an environment in which all children can feel safe. Such a program also eliminates the fear that bullies create and develops a foundation through which students who work to create a positive culture with caring behaviors are recognized (Garrity et al., 1997). The goal of this qualitative study was to explore and discover what steps public school systems are

taking to prevent bullying. In the next chapter, the research questions of this study are

identified and the methodology is delineated.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Overview

The list of violent incidents in schools continues to grow since the incident at

Columbine High School in 1999. Yogan (2000) reported that since 1992, there had been

more than 211 school deaths associated with violence. In an interview with the parents of

Klebold, one of the school shooters in Littleton, Colorado, Garbarino (Garbarino &

deLara, 2002) found that Klebold was driven to desperate violence by the relentless

bullying and emotional violence he experienced at Columbine High School. Could the

bullying that drove Klebold to his heinous act have been prevented? Olweus (1993)

concluded in his pioneer research that bullying was an issue that needed to be addressed.

Research indicated that (a) despite declining school violence, bullying has increased; (b)

bullying is dynamic; (c) antibullying intervention is prudent; and (d) bullying and

antibullying methods need further study (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Brokenbrough, 2001;

Natvig et al., 2001; Olweus, 2003; Winters, 1997). Around the world and in the United

States legislation has been passed to contend with school violence. During the time

frame, September 20, 2004 through December 20, 2004, in which data was collected,

bullying was not directly addressed in the *Code of Virginia*, however, legislation passed

by the 1999 General Assembly (§22.1-208.01) required local school boards to establish a

character education program in their schools, the aim of which is to improve the learning

environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop

civic-minded students of high character. It was the goal of this qualitative study to

explore and examine the policies, programs, strategies, and practices that are being used to reduce and eliminate bullying in the schools of Virginia.

Research Questions

How are school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia addressing bullying? This was the primary question of this qualitative study. Secondary questions included the following: What policies and programs are public school administrators in Virginia implementing to address bullying? What strategies and practices are public school administrators in Virginia utilizing to address bullying? And what future directions are Virginia school administrators planning to take to address bullying in their institutions?

Research Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to answer questions of who, what, when, where, and how many. These were descriptive research questions; therefore, a descriptive study was executed. As anticipated, the study used an uncomplicated, qualitative research design because data needed to be collected from only one particular group at one point in time. To obtain the most comprehensive details of the antibullying programs, most of the questions on the instrument were open-ended; therefore, data were collected via telephone interviewing and electronic mailing. Alreck and Settle (1995) stated that personal interviewing provides the most complete contact with respondents because the interaction allows both audible and visual communication with the respondents; moreover, cooperation from the respondent is usually attained and maintained for a long

time through personal interviewing (p. 33). Costs to the interviewer can get high if the study is conducted outside a reasonable geographical area; however, the information gathered from a larger geographical area can produce a very profound study. Telephone interviewing and electronic mailing were utilized as the primary process for collecting data in this study.

In this qualitative study a complete investigation of the policies, programs, strategies, and practices that were being used to reduce and eliminate bullying in public schools was conducted through a formal interview protocol. Patton (2002) stated, "Qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collections: (1) in-depth open-ended interviews, (2) direct observations, and (3) written documents" (p. 4). Patton continued,

Interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Document analysis includes studying excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys. (p. 4)

A cluster random sample of 24 school systems from the 134 public school divisions in Virginia during the 2004-2005 school calendar year was utilized in this study. The school systems of Virginia are divided into eight geographical regions. Three school systems were randomly selected from each of these eight geographical regions to gather data from school systems across the state. Administrators or other staff members

in charge of safety and discipline policies for these school systems were selected as the interviewees to be questioned in the study. Based on the role these personnel played in their school divisions, they were in a position to know about climate and safety of their schools, as well as the types of programs and strategies that were in place to confront bullying and school violence. Telephone interviewing and e-mailing were used to collect the data. A structured interview protocol (See Appendix A) was designed to obtain a representation of how public schools were managing bullying; how they were involving the faculty and staff, students, parents, and the community; and what strategies, programs, and policies to handle bullying activities were in place in the divisions. Responses from the structured interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

Data Collection

Participants

Public school divisions were the population of interest in this study. The Commonwealth of Virginia was chosen purposefully as the setting for this study because of its proximity and the resident status of the researcher. Of the 134 school divisions in Virginia, 24 were used in the data collection process of the study. Subject recruitment information was attained via the Internet. Three school divisions were selected randomly from each of Virginia's eight regions. This selection process provided a variety of school systems with large or small populations, as well as school systems with rural, suburban, or urban settings. The personnel interviewed in this study were those administrators or other staff members in charge of safety and discipline policies in the school systems because of their unique role in the school division. First contact with each school system was made via telephone to introduce the study and to identify the appropriate personnel

in charge of school safety and discipline, those staff members who could best answer the questions in this study. Next, an electronically mailed document with the interview protocol was sent to each of the appropriate administrators or other staff members. A structured interview protocol was designed to obtain a representation of how public school systems were addressing bullying; what strategies, programs, and policies to handle bullying activities were in place in the division; and how school divisions were involving the faculty, staff, students, parents, and the community. Five to ten days after the documents had been electronically mailed, follow-up communications directly to those administrators or staff members accountable for school safety were initiated to schedule and obtain interviews.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explained that structured interviews can be conducted by telephone. Structured interviews call for the interviewer to play a neutral role, never interjecting his or her opinion of the respondent's answer (Denzin & Lincoln). Better control can be achieved by utilizing the telephone because the interviewer is less likely to influence the answers of the respondents (Denzin & Lincoln).

Parameters

Only one interviewer was involved to assure consistent questioning and data collection practices. Each of the interviews took no more than 60 minutes to complete. The time frame took into account that some participants might not be reached or available when first contacted. The actual interview was conducted using a structured interview protocol with only a few open-ended questions; furthermore, it took no more than 45 minutes to complete the protocol from start to finish. The additional 15 minutes allotted for each interview included the time to schedule the interview, to make introductions, and

to connect with the interviewee. It was estimated that the originally planned personal interviews would have taken a minimum of 24 days to conduct. Telephone interviews took less time than face-to-face interviews would have, thereby shortening the estimated time frame. The researcher either scribed the responses during the telephone interview without the use of recording devices or the participants e-mailed their responses to the interview questions, providing the flexibility necessary for the respondents' schedules.

Interviewing Guidelines

Alreck and Settle (1995) asserted that there are two broad classes of information that effective interviewers must have: the "how" and the "why." The interviewer must understand how to locate, identify, contact, greet, qualify, question, record, and terminate, as well as know why it is important to follow the instructions and procedures for interviewing. In this study, the schools were located and identified using the Virginia Department of Education Web site. A sample of 24 Virginia public school systems was used in this study. After the initial contact via telephone, an introductory letter (See Appendix B), along with an information sheet and an interview protocol, was sent to each of the identified personnel of the 24 selected school divisions as a way to help induce their involvement. The letter briefly explained the study on bullying prevention and the need for the administrator's or other staff member's input. Each prospective participant was called to schedule an interview at his or her convenience.

Instruments

For data collection purposes, an instrument was created using items from an established instrument, School Survey On Crime and Safety, which was used in the spring of 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of

Education (see Appendix A). The instrument contained 16 items. The first 14 items related directly to the research questions and were categorized into four areas: school bullying prevention policies and programs, school bullying prevention practices, disciplinary problems and actions, and future school bullying prevention programs or practices. The last two items were designed to gather demographic information such as total student enrollment in the school system. The instrument used in this study was a structured interview, which was conducted via telephone or electronically using e-mail. Voluntary and anonymous responses were requested from school personnel in charge of school safety and discipline.

A panel of five experts in the field of education assessed the instrument. Each panel member was provided a copy of the 16-item instrument; moreover, each went through a mock, structured interview to help determine the survey's reliability and validity. Feedback from the panel members was heeded and incorporated into the 16-item instrument.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the instrument were divided into five categories: school bullying prevention policies and programs, school bullying prevention practices, disciplinary problems and actions, future school bullying prevention programs or practices, and school characteristics. Items on the instrument that were not open-ended were analyzed using percentages and placed into tables to illustrate what was taking place to address bullying in each of the schools. The open-ended items that generated short responses needed to be postcoded and categorized into programs, practices, disciplinary actions, future directions, and school characteristics. Each open-ended item that received

a unique response was assigned a code and recorded into a codebook. The objective of the coding process was to provide a unique code for each acceptable answer (Alreck & Settle, 1995). Subcategories of programs and practices were used if necessary, depending on similarity in responses; for example, if more than one school used the formal program, Steps to Respect: a Bullying Prevention Program, which was developed and endorsed by Committee for Children, it then became a subcategory. The programs and practices were analyzed qualitatively by comparing them to the features that an antibullying program should have, according to the literature, as well as quantitatively by determining the frequencies with which a coded item occurred in each category.

Open-ended questions that provided very lengthy, detailed information were examined utilizing qualitative analyses. Responses were categorized and coded. They were analyzed for the presence of terms relating to various bullying prevention strategies and practices used in the schools. Analyses of these data gathered through the interview were presented in a narrative format; these analyses provided answers to this descriptive study's research questions.

<center>Human Participants and Ethics Precautions</center>

Individuals who participated in this study encountered no risk of disparaging their school division, which could ultimately hurt their reputation, because precautions were taken to ensure that no school system or individual participant was identified. All responses were undisclosed. Only voluntary responses were used after the participants had been given information about the study. There was a concern that the respondents might not be forthcoming with some of their answers, such as admitting they do not have

any policies, programs, or strategies that address bullying; therefore, interviewing was employed to discourage dishonesty.

Summary

Previous research indicated how students had perceived violence, teasing, and bullying; how bullying had manifested as a problem in schools; how schools had implemented antibullying strategies or programs; and how effective these bullying prevention programs were at reducing bullying behaviors (Bennett, 2008; Brockenbrough, 2001; Finn, 2009; Khosropour & Walsh, 2001; Limper, 2000; Livingston, 2008; Olweus, 1993; Waldron, 2002; Winters, 1997). Since the initiation of this study, the *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-208.01) has required local school boards to establish a character education program in their schools to address the inappropriateness of bullying; the *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-279.6) has mandated that each school board include in its code of student conduct prohibitions against bullying (Board of Education Guidelines, 2005; Character Education Act, 2005). It was the goal of this qualitative study to explore and examine the policies, programs, and strategies that were being used to reduce and eliminate bullying in Virginia's public schools via structured interviews of the appropriate staff members accountable for school safety. Qualitative data analyses were utilized to reveal exactly how the public schools were addressing bullying. In the next chapter, the results of this research study are disclosed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results of this qualitative study answer the questions: How are school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia handling bullying? What policies and programs are public school administrators in Virginia implementing to address bullying? What strategies and practices are public school administrators in Virginia utilizing to handle bullying? And what future directions are Virginia school's administrators planning to take to manage bullying in their institutions? Twelve school systems of 24 school systems in the Commonwealth of Virginia that agreed to participate in the study completed the interview process. Administrators from the 12 school systems were interviewed; their responses have been organized into five reporting categories: school bullying prevention policies and programs, school bullying prevention practices, disciplinary problems and actions, future school bullying prevention programs or practices, and school characteristics.

Bullying was defined in this study as a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time, which can take three forms: physical, verbal, and psychological. Physical bullying involves hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, or taking personal belongings. Verbal bullying includes taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, and making threats. Psychological bullying comprises spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, and intimidation. The responses are disclosed according to each of the five main reporting categories of the interview protocol in the following text. The first reporting category reveals the policies and programs school districts are using to address school bullying.

School Bullying Prevention Policies and Programs

Policies

The researcher discovered that each of the 12 school systems had policy in place that addressed bullying either directly or indirectly. This policy was in place before legislation in the Commonwealth of Virginia mandated that each school district adopt policy to address bullying. Half of the participants had policy in place that directly addressed bullying: The culprit shall not harass or bully others. One school system also included hazing in its bullying policy. The school system policies generally defined the culprit as a student acting either individually or as part of a group. Prohibited conduct included, but was not limited to, physical intimidation, taunting, name-calling, insults, and any combination of prohibited activities, as well as verbal conduct consisting of comments regarding race, gender, religion, physical abilities, or characteristics or associates of the targeted person. Policy specified that students who bullied, harassed, or hazed others would be suspended from school.

The other half of the school systems who participated in this study had indirect policy addressing bullying listed under other violations in their disciplinary codes. Generally, these school systems listed the act of bullying under such headings as disrespect, slander, libel, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and battery, or fighting. These offenses were listed as either Category 2 or 3 offenses, whereby violators would be suspended from the classroom or the school for 1 to 10 days.

Programs

All of the 12 participants in this study had programs in place that addressed bullying to some extent. Ten of the school divisions reported programs that directly

involved the guidance department via character building or character education programs, assemblies, lessons, and group or individual counseling that directly addressed bullying. These character education programs had been utilized anywhere from 2 to 20 years depending on the school system. Elementary and middle school counselors addressed various topics in classroom guidance lessons designed to equip students with strategies to cope with problems and challenges they might experience, such as bullying, tattling, getting along with others, dealing with peer pressure, and handling conflicts. Five of the school systems specified or described a character education program, entitled Character Counts, which is a program coordinated by the building level administrator. It maintains its own Web site, www.charactercounts.org (n.d.), which proclaims it to be the most widely implemented approach to character education. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian framework that utilizes six pillars of character in its curriculum: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. According to one school division, the Character Counts program was cross-referenced with the traits of respect and trust in the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs).

In addition to having character education, one school division described having four other interventions in place: Conflict Resolution; Al's Pals; Building an Environment of Acceptance, Cooperation and Opportunity Necessary for Success; and LifeSkills Training. According to this school division, Al's Pals is a program that provides teachers with a toolbox of skills and techniques that help teachers model and reinforce certain concepts throughout the day. The program strengthens the abilities of teachers and parents to help children develop key personal, social, and emotional skills, which form the foundation for future success in life.

Building an Environment of Acceptance, Cooperation and Opportunity Necessary for Success (BEACONS) was described as a middle school advisory program for teachers and students. The mission of the program is to provide a classroom environment for students and teachers that will foster bonding within the school community so that students will feel accepted and valued and realize their full potential. The objectives of the program are (a) to help students cope with academic concerns and set long-term goals that will facilitate positive school experiences; (b) to promote a better understanding of self and others through the development of positive self-esteem, positive relationships, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and an appreciation for diversity; and (c) to increase student awareness of good citizenship and provide opportunities for meaningful contributions to the school and the community. Middle school teachers facilitate BEACONS with the assistance of the school counselors.

In addition to BEACONS, the LifeSkills Training (LST) program, a curriculum developed by Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin, a psychologist at Cornell University, was being used in this school division. The LST program was described by the school division as an exciting new breakthrough intervention, which not only prevents tobacco, alcohol, and drug abuse, but also teaches the knowledge and skills necessary to increase self-esteem, increase ability to make decisions and solve problems, communicate effectively, avoid misunderstandings, manage anxiety, make new friends, stand up for one's rights, say "no" to unfair requests, resist advertising pressures, and resist the pressure to use drugs. LST is a program designed for children from Grades 4 through 8 to learn these important skills. The LifeSkills Training (2002) program maintains a Web site, which describes the program as being uniquely designed, proven effective, and grounded in over 20 years of

research. LST goes beyond simply teaching information about drugs; it consists of three major components that cover the critical domains found to strengthen a student's resistance to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors: drug resistance skills, personal self-management skills, and general social skills.

In another school system, counselors, social workers, and psychologists met to address bullying with prevention as the number one concern. After this initial meeting 2 years ago, a committee formed to review bullying prevention programs. This school system applied for a grant through the Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) and planned to employ an intervention program designed by Dan Olweus, the pioneer of research in the phenomenon of bullying in schools. Implementation of Olweus' program in the entire school division was launched in the 2004-2005 school year with a kickoff division-wide event in October. The committee recommended that a violence prevention specialist be hired to conduct bullying prevention in all the schools.

Olweus' intervention program includes awareness of bullying and involvement at three different tiers: at the school level, at the class level, and at the individual level. Action items at the school level of the program include a questionnaire survey, a school conference day on bullying-victim problems, better supervision at recess and lunch time, more attractive school grounds, and significant communication among staff, teachers, and parents, including parent circles or panels. Action items at the class level of the program include having class rules against bullying in place with clarification, praise and sanctions, regular class meetings discussing bullying, role playing, literature on bullying, cooperative learning, common positive class activities, and class meetings with parents and students addressing bullying. Action items at the individual level involve serious

talks with bullies and victims, serious talks with parents of involved students, teacher and

parent use of imagination to help the students involved, help from neutral students (those

who are not victims or bullies), support for parents (information), discussion groups for

parents of bullies and victims, and possible change of class or school for those students

involved (Olweus, 1993).

Two school divisions discussed a program called Positive Action. Positive Action

is designed to increase positive behaviors and decrease negative behaviors; moreover, it

is a comprehensive program for students in kindergarten through high school. Its

methodology incorporates daily classroom lessons with a school climate program.

According to the Positive Action Web site (2005), the program is unique in that it deals

with the whole child, teaching physical, intellectual, social, and emotional positive

actions. The instruction program for schools' use includes the Positive Action curriculum

and the site-wide climate program. The curriculum features a separate teacher's kit for

each grade that contains a manual with scripted lessons and activities; the site-wide

climate program focuses on the elementary and secondary climate kits that include a

guide and materials to help students and staff practice and reinforce school-wide positive

actions. The site-wide climate program includes a counselor's kit containing a manual

and lessons and materials for classroom teaching, individual and small group counseling,

and parent classes; furthermore, a conflict resolution kit with lessons that teach and

promote peaceful solutions to conflict within schools, families, and communities is also

included with the site-wide climate program.

Project Wisdom is a program that is being used in two school divisions. One

school system described the program as including a thought for the day, support materials

that can be reproduced, and curricula that can be used in the English classes via journal writing. Special days have special themes, and the program emphasizes attitude, character, citizenship, and other positive attributes. Project Wisdom consists of a self-contained library of three series (collections) of messages. According to Project Wisdom's Web site (n.d.), it is one of the oldest and most respected character education programs in the nation and is currently licensed in over 12,500 schools nationwide. In addition to their extensive library of thought-provoking messages, the Project Wisdom program offers an online educator resource site that provides easy access to program materials, additional weekly messages, and lesson plans that address current events, calendar events, or other pressing issues. According to the Web site, program themes are used weekly or monthly to help establish a common "virtue vocabulary" on campus. Examples of themes include the following: Honesty and Integrity: Rules for Success; Responsible Citizenship: Helping Others; Role Models: Who's Influencing Whom; Wisdom: Educating the Human Heart.

Another school division administered a survey on bullying developed by The George Washington University. The George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development administers The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence (n.d.), which provides information, research, and support to make schools safer for high achievement. The Hamilton Fish Institute maintains a Web site that links school systems with popular resources, program databases, and surveys or measures that promote safe schools, including addressing and preventing bullying in schools. The school division reported that the data collected through the survey on

bullying was used to address the problem as the survey helped to identify the bullies, the victims, and the hot spots.

One school division described a program developed by one of its schools, Taking Bullying by the Horns, which utilized the Web site Stop Bullying Now (n.d.). Taking Bullying by the Horns was a campaign designed by a middle school in one school division that involved a pledge against bullying and a newsletter designed to be sent home with students to inform parents how to help their children deal with bullying. Suggestions in the newsletter to the parents included the following: take your child's complaints of bullying seriously; watch for symptoms in your child such as withdrawal, drop in grades, torn clothing, unexplained bruises, lack of motivation to go to school, needing extra money or supplies, taking possessions to school and regularly "losing" them; inform the school immediately; work with other parents; listen; help your child develop social skills; model problem-solving strategies with your child; and help your child develop strategies for coping with bullies. The Stop Bullying Now Web site was adopted as part of the campaign against bullying; it is a free Web site supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and The U.S. Health Resources and Service Administration. The Web site is very child friendly; furthermore, it includes links related to specific information for adults and resources for educators.

Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations (PATTS) and Students against Violent Youth (SAVY) are safety programs that were being used by various middle and elementary schools in one school system. The goals of the programs are to support a safe and caring school environment, increase student success, reduce violent behavior, and reduce suspensions. The PATTS program is used with elementary schools as a peer

mediation, anger management, and peaceful conflict resolution model to create a safe and caring school environment. The SAVY program was specifically designed to support a zero tolerance policy for bullying in schools and neighborhoods. In conjunction with an outside local agency that worked with the guidance department, the program reached 80% of caring students to teach them positive ways to deal with bullying and encourage a caring atmosphere in their school. Groups of 10 or more middle school students met once a week for 9 weeks to learn positive ways of dealing with bullying and ways to reach out to alienated youth. Once trained, the SAVY team met monthly with a school representative to collaborate on methods of maintaining a zero tolerance for bullying atmosphere in the school. The taught skills included understanding the characteristics of bullies, ways to reach out to alienated youth, verbal confidence and positive body language, specific methods for dealing with bullies, and forgiveness. The program provided training not only to school personnel but also to parents via Parent Teacher Association (PTA) presentations. The SAVY program included pre and post assessments related to bullying for students.

In some instances, the data in this category did not reveal the extent of the involvement of faculty, staff, students, parents, and community in the programs. The information collected was vague in some cases, with only a name or title of a program provided along with a sketchy description. Follow-up examination regarding how these programs were implemented as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs would be worthwhile. The next reporting category, school bullying prevention practices, illustrates the strategies that school divisions used to address bullying as well as the practices they used to promote positive school climates.

School Bullying Prevention Practices

Strategies to Address Bullying

Eleven of the 12 participants in this qualitative study responded positively with regard to having strategies that address bullying in place. Eight of those 11 school divisions provided descriptions of their strategies; divisions described strategies in terms of the implementation of their bullying policies, their specific programs addressing bullying, their character education programs, or counseling. Counseling activities included group as well as individual conferences with bullies and victims. One school division went a step further and hired a bullying coordinator. The bullying coordinator provided support to the building level administrators in dealing with specific students, collected and reviewed related data, and filed monthly accountability reports. Another school system planned to hire a violence prevention specialist to coordinate bullying prevention in all their schools.

Two of the school systems discussed having clear expectations and high standards for the students via sound classroom management practices. Both school systems described parent involvement, but one of the two specifically described the PTA's role in the planning and implementation of their antibullying campaign. Both systems described using assemblies; however, one used assemblies to address student behavior, whereas the other used assemblies in a manner similar to pep rallies, as a means to motivate students in their kickoff campaign against bullying.

One school division trained the faculty and staff in how to recognize bullying and how to address it. After this training the teachers held class meetings to address bullying and to make students aware of what constitutes bullying and how to address it. Another

school division allowed its schools autonomy in selecting strategies to address bullying. Many of the schools in this division adopted the practice of recognizing and rewarding students who perform random acts of kindness; furthermore, the student body was encouraged to participate in peer mediation and problem solving using a third party.

Practices to Promote Positive School Climate

All 12 school divisions in this study reported having strategies or practices in place to promote positive school climate. Four of the school systems described their character education programs as being part of their practices for promoting positive school climate. Other practices included implementing programs such as Positive Action, Project Wisdom, and Character Counts; maintaining the 4-H Program; sponsoring mentoring programs; holding awards and recognition programs; sending out newsletters, having SCA conferences; conducting student meetings and staff meetings to address school climate; maintaining Web-site discussion boards; conducting staff development training on maintaining positive student climate; promoting after-school activities and clubs; encouraging interpersonal contact between students and teachers; teaching social skills and how to accept differences; being proactive rather than reactive; promoting tobacco and drug prevention; providing a safe learning environment via structure and discipline; and imposing consequences to actions.

One school system hired student assistant counselors, full-time for the middle schools and part-time for the high schools, to promote positive climate. The student assistant counselors facilitated peer mediation, conducted small group counseling sessions for anger management, and conducted individual counseling for students with problematic behaviors. Another school system embraced the Search Institute's 40

Developmental Assets, which are concrete, common-sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people; the system also held a CARE (Creating A Respectful Environment) conference. This conference took place in the summer of 2000; it was an event in which all the schools in the division participated to learn about the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. During that conference teachers, students, administrators, and parents worked together to generate strategies to promote positive school climate in the upcoming school year. These strategies had evolved through the previous few years and were part of each school's School Improvement Plan. Some schools in the system had established a group of student volunteers who promoted positive actions and random acts of kindness by recognizing students, faculty, and staff members that performed good deeds in their daily routines. Another school division used a similar strategy to encourage clubs that specifically promoted student safety; for example, they started a campaign to have the student body pledge "just say NO to BULLYING."

Although a majority of the school systems involved in the study stated they had strategies and practices to address bullying, many did not provide details regarding the specific strategies and practices. The next reporting category demonstrates the disciplinary actions school systems had in place to address various disciplinary problems related to bullying between two students or between a student and an adult.

Disciplinary Problems and Actions

All of the school divisions that participated in this qualitative study had in place disciplinary actions ranging from warnings to in-school suspension to out-of-school

suspension, depending on the facts of each case, the severity of the infraction, and the frequency of the disciplinary problem for each of six categories of offenses: pupil verbally bullies another pupil, pupil verbally bullies an adult, pupil physically bullies another pupil, pupil physically bullies an adult, pupil psychologically bullies another pupil, pupil psychologically bullies an adult. The following list includes all punishments listed by the school systems: student conference or warning, parent contact, conference with parent or guardian, detention, school service or intervention, probation, modified instructional program or in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, law enforcement agency involvement, expulsion recommendation to school board, alternative education. Bullying involving physical contact resulted in severe punishment, such as out-of-school suspension, law enforcement agency involvement, or expulsion recommendation, because physical contact equated to physical violence according to the policies and standards established by each of the school systems interviewed.

The next reporting category reveals future school bullying prevention programs or practices cited by the school divisions. The section is divided into two areas: future strategies or practices to promote positive student behavior and future directions of the school divisions to address bullying.

Future School Bullying Prevention Programs and Practices

Future Strategies and Practices to Promote Positive Student Behavior

Ten of the 12 Virginia school divisions participating in this study reported future plans to promote positive student behavior. The two school divisions that did not share future strategies or practices to promote positive student behavior noted that future plans

were undetermined at the time of the interview. The future strategies or practices described by the school systems ranged from continuing character education programs, enforcing policy, conducting staff development, and increasing parent involvement to having extensive, detailed strategic plans.

One school division described a 6-year strategic plan that was approved in November 2004. Goal 2 of the plan addressed establishing and maintaining school climates and facilities that are safe, orderly, nurturing, and supportive of quality teaching and learning. Among the many actions outlined were the formation of a division-level student discipline team to train school staff and work with schools to resolve problems and the establishment of school safety committees to review, discuss, and make recommendations or take action to address identified safety and security problems. The 6-year plan identified strategies to develop and model positive relationships among youth and between youth and adults.

Another school system discussed expanding the implementation of Olweus' intervention program to all staff, including bus drivers. Olweus' program was described as four-faceted, including the following aspects: individual student intervention, school-wide intervention, parental intervention, and community-level intervention. The school system anticipated exposing students to the program every year with the goal of reducing levels of bullying interactions in their school system. Furthermore, the system planned to enlist a motivational speaker to promote positive interactions and relationships in the schools.

Three school systems discussed assessing and expanding their formal character education programs; moreover, they talked about having teachers weave into their

classroom lessons various character-building activities such as cooperative education and peer teaching. They planned to have staff members monitor the effectiveness of their formal character education programs and make recommendations as needed. One of the three school divisions also discussed implementing Schools That Work to increase student motivation and achievement.

Other school systems discussed their continued vigilance in being proactive by promoting mutual respect, encouraging students to report all negative actions and approaches, and establishing rapport between students and faculty and staff. Staff members in one school system were in the process of conducting a needs assessment to measure the level of bullying in the school division and planned to take appropriate action following the study. To provide safe, secure, healthy, and well-disciplined learning environments for all students was the goal in another school division. Other school divisions simply planned to continue to enforce their student codes of conduct, to involve parents in the school environment, and to conduct student seminars and parent sessions.

Future Directions of the School Division to Address Bullying

Eleven school systems in this study described the future directions in their school divisions to address bullying. The one school division that did not discuss future directions to address bullying at the division level encouraged each of its individual schools to take the initiative to address bullying as the school deemed appropriate. Future directions to address bullying noted by the school systems ranged from reacting to problems to developing more elaborate and specific plans. For example, one school division declared that their staff would be involved in determining the frequency and patterns of inappropriate behavior, including bullying incidents in each school, and would

submit reports to the school board by June 30 of each school year from 2005 to 2008; furthermore, the staff would develop intervention strategies to address bullying, anger management, substance abuse, and peer mediation, and would submit recommendations for implementation by June 30, 2007. Another school system planned to educate the school community (teachers, parents, students) on bullying and to promote visibility among teachers throughout the schools to discourage inappropriate student behaviors and encourage vigilance among all students to report incidents of bullying.

The strategic plan of another school system included increased training for students and staff to identify bullying-harassing behavior and to actively support reduction and prevention strategies of these behaviors. They also planned to continue engaging students through appropriate programs for antibullying utilizing the guidance staff and PTA members. Other school divisions planned one or more of the following: enforcing the student code of conduct; utilizing intervention strategies developed for students beginning in the early elementary grades; monitoring and assessing current formal character education and antibullying programs, making recommendations as needed; organizing student seminars and parent sessions, conducting staff development, and continuing to look for funding for future programming to support all initiatives in the school system.

Many of the school systems scantily described their future school bullying prevention programs or practices, omitting specific details. Only two school systems included goals or action items to address bullying and character education in their strategic plans.

The last reporting category displays the characteristics of the school divisions that participated in this qualitative study.

School Characteristics

The 12 school systems involved in this study extended from rural and suburban areas to urban areas throughout the eight regions of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Seven school divisions in this study served rural communities, two school divisions served suburban communities, and three school divisions served urban communities. Total enrollments for each of the school divisions as of June 1, 2004 ranged from just over 700 students to 37,000 students. Four of the school divisions each served more than 10,000 students. The student enrollment at three of the school divisions ranged between 5,000 and 10,000 students, and the enrollment at five school divisions ranged between 700 and 5,000 students. These demographics demonstrated that the interviewed participants represented a varied sample.

Summary

It was the goal of this descriptive study to explore and examine the policies, programs, and strategies that were being used to address bullying in the public schools via structured interviews of the appropriate staff members accountable for school safety. Qualitative data analyses were utilized to reveal exactly how the public schools were handling bullying. The data revealed that all the school divisions participating in this study had policies and programs in place to address bullying. Programs varied from interventions that directly addressed bullying to formal character education programs. It

should be noted that since the time of this study the *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-208.01) has

required each local school boards to establish a character education program in its

schools to address the inappropriateness of bullying; further, the *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-

279.6) has mandated that each school board include in its code of student conduct

prohibitions against bullying (Board of Education Guidelines, 2005; Character Education

Act, 2005). The policies and programs that the school divisions described were in place

prior to the enactment of these codes. In the next chapter, the interpretations, conclusions,

and recommendations are articulated.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

It has been established that bullying is an endemic problem in schools worldwide. The purpose of this uncomplicated, qualitative study was to answer the question: How are school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia handling bullying? To gather the most comprehensive details of the antibullying programs, most of the questions in the interview protocol were open-ended. The data revealed that all 12 school divisions that participated in this study had in place policies and programs to address bullying, together with practices to promote positive school climates. Most of the school divisions reported having strategies to address bullying; furthermore, most of the school divisions reported future plans to promote positive student behaviors and future directions for managing bullying in their institutions.

Interpretations and Conclusions

The results of this study provided detailed descriptions of the actions taken by school divisions of varying school populations and communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia to handle bullying in their schools. Since the time of this study, the *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-208.01) has required that local school boards establish character education programs in their schools to address the inappropriateness of bullying. The *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-279.6) has also mandated that each school board include in its code of student conduct prohibitions against bullying (Board of Education Guidelines, 2005; Character Education Act, 2005). The school divisions that participated in this study

were interviewed before these laws were enacted; however, each of these school systems had policy in place that addressed bullying either directly or indirectly in their student handbooks. Olweus (1993) concluded that parents of students who were bullied and parents of students, who bullied others, were relatively unaware of the problem. Antibullying policy in the student handbooks is the first step towards creating awareness of bullying among the students, parents, faculty and staff of the school systems; furthermore, Harris and her colleagues (2002) asserted that it is not enough simply to acknowledge that bullying takes place at schools. Principals must lead the effort to reduce bullying on their campuses (Harris et al.). Having policy in place is the step in the right direction, but how are the school systems supporting this policy.

Review of the literature revealed that bullying is an endemic problem in schools worldwide (Akiba et al., 2002), a problem that needs to be addressed and managed. Bullying is pervasive in the classroom, teachers are generally unaware of bullying, and peers are reluctant to intervene to stop bullying (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). A comprehensive program preventing bullying that continually emphasizes creating a safe school environment eliminates the fear that bullies create in students (Garrity et al., 1997) and would help to support an antibullying policy. Garrity et al. discussed in their article five key components that should be included in a bully-proofing program to create a safer school environment: (a) a systems approach, (b) staff training, (c) classroom intervention, (d) intervention with bullies, and (e) support for the victims. Furnishing the student population with the expertise they need to transform the overall climate of the school is necessary to facilitate a significant impact on school violence (Garrity et al.).

Analysis of current school-based programs revealed that whole-school programs that incorporate victim education programs; prohibit bullying; increase adult supervision; and, involve parents, bystanders, bullies, and victims in the intervention process can help to decrease bully and victim behaviors (Bennett, 2008). It was the researcher's goal of this study to ascertain what programs public school administrators in Virginia are implementing to address bullying. All of the 12 school systems that participated in this study had programs in place, where ten of the school divisions reported programs that directly involved the guidance department.

Brokenbrough (2001) conducted a study in one school system in Virginia to discover the nature and extent of bullying, as well as, to ascertain whether the bullying prevention efforts, Garrity's Bully-Proofing Your School Program, made a significant impact on students. All the guidance counselors involved in the bully-proofing program were asked to complete a log of bullying prevention efforts implemented throughout the school year (Brokenbrough). Brokenbrough found no significant changes related to the bully-proofing intervention program; however, Brokenbrough discovered that Garrity's Bully-Proofing Your School Program was not completely implemented and did not include important program components such as school-wide activities and parent participation.

In one Virginia school division in this study, counselors, social workers, and psychologists met, formed a committee and ultimately employed an intervention program designed by Dan Olweus. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program includes awareness of bullying and involvement at three different tiers: at the school level, at the class level, and at the individual level. Finn (2008) emphasized that whole-school antibullying

programs, such as Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), attempt to reduce bullying behaviors by making systematic, school-wide changes. Finn explained that the Olweus program had been researched worldwide; however, few published studies that examined the effectiveness of this program in U.S. schools existed (p. 62). Finn's study on the effectiveness of OBPP found no significant reduction in rates of reported bullying behavior; moreover, Finn recommended further research studies evaluating OBPP effectiveness with U.S. student populations.

The Virginia school systems in this study utilized research based programs with comprehensive age-specific curricula, such as Character Counts and Project Wisdom. Livingston (2008) presented the following questions, adapted from the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (as cited in Livingston), which should be considered when selecting an antibullying program: Is the program research based? Does the program have a comprehensive age-specific curriculum? Does it build on what is learned each year? Does the program involve parents, peers, all school staff, and the entire community? Does the program contain materials that are culturally sensitive and appropriate for a variety of student backgrounds? Does the program include staff training? Is the program cost efficient? Can the program be incorporated into the curriculum? Is it incorporated into the safe schools or violence prevention program? Will students find it meaningful and enjoyable? Four of the 12 Virginia school systems in this study are utilizing antibullying programs that answer positively to the aforementioned questions in Livingston's study.

It is important that Virginia school officials recognize that they have a bullying problem in order to address it. According to Weinhold (1999), school officials must learn

how to identify and address the hidden aspects of the culture of violence that exists in their schools; they must consider and answer the following questions:

> Do you have a plan in place to recognize and promote students' positive acts of kind and pro-social behavior each day at your school? Are there more opportunities at your school for students to be recognized for positive, pro-social behaviors than opportunities to be recognized for negative and anti-social behaviors? How do you think students would answer this question? Does your faculty or staff have established ways to recognize and support the positive and kind acts that they do at the school? Do you have a school-wide policy for dealing with bullying? Have you developed an effective way to reduce or eliminate student-to-student putdowns? Does your school teach conflict resolution skills to all students? Has your school been able to significantly reduce the number of discipline referrals? Does your school have a peer mediation program to help students settle disputes peacefully? Is your school as safe as it could be? Does your school have an emergency disaster plan in place? (p. 9)

School officials who answer "no" to any of these questions need to create kinder and safer schools (Weinhold). Public school administrators of Virginia were asked what practices and strategies did they use to promote a positive school climate. Varying details were given; however, not a single school system in this study addressed all the aforementioned questions that Weinhold suggested in his article.

It is also important to increase awareness of bullying and its effects in the school community (Rigby, 1995). It is important to try to link bullying awareness with the curriculum. Rigby emphasized that links with the curriculum can strongly reinforce an

antibullying policy; content relevant to problems of abuses of power can be included in a

variety of subjects, such as social studies, English, and history. In this study, Virginia's

school systems were examined to determine whether or not they had adopted antibullying

programs; and, upon close examination of the various programs that some of the school

systems adopted, it was discovered that two school systems utilized Project Wisdom,

which they tied directly into their English classes and citizenship lessons in social studies.

Another aspect of bullying that has arisen in more recent years is the use of

technology to taunt and torment targets and victims. Hinduja and Patchin (2009) reported

that their data revealed a trend of increasing cyberbullying victimization and offending;

they asserted, "We have to do our part to ensure these lines do not continue to increase in

the next decade of the 21st century" (pp. 49-50). It is important to examine the

relationship between online victims and their aggressors. According to Hinduja and

Patchin, bullying offline by and large involves adolescents who know each other; the

researchers raised two very noteworthy questions:

> Is cyberspace just another setting in which traditional bullying can take place,
>
> albeit without the immediate threat of physical harm and face-to-face interaction?
>
> Or is cyberspace emboldening individuals (for one reason or another) to harass
>
> and mistreat others with whom they have no previous relationship or contact? (p.
>
> 57)

Hinduja and Patchin (2009) found that victims of cyberbullying nearly always

know or have some idea who is harassing them. Another alarming statistic is that 90% of

lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students (vs. 62% of non-LGBT teens)

reported having been harassed or assaulted during the previous year (GLSEN, 2005). In

light of this more recent information, did the school systems address the potential

problem or foresee technology as being a means for bullies to taunt or torment their

victims?

All of the 12 school divisions that participated in this study had included policy in

their student conduct handbooks that addressed bullying either directly or indirectly.

Weinhold (1999) asserted that such policy is one of 11 things that need to be in place in a

school to create a kinder and safer environment; however, none of the school systems had

all 11 things in place. None of the school systems revealed whether or not their schools

were as safe as they could be; none indicated whether or not they had been able to

significantly reduce the number of discipline referrals (See Appendix C). These two

items are equally important in creating a more positive school climate, which would

discourage bullying activities and ultimately reduce the amount of school violence. The

school systems had programs in place that either directly or indirectly addressed bullying

by building character in students; however, it was unclear in some of these programs

whether or not students were given opportunities to be recognized for positive, prosocial

behaviors. The formal programs that the school divisions were implementing each had a

classroom component that linked bullying prevention and positive behaviors to the

curriculum, such as journal writing and utilizing cooperative education.

Many of the school divisions utilized a systems approach to address bullying by

involving the whole school in research-based programs. They trained faculty and staff on

bullying, taught the students and parents about bullying and positive character, intervened

with bullies in place, and emphasized the quality of teaching, learning, and care for

individual students that appeals to students (See Appendix D); these actions had been

identified by the body of literature as some of the key components that should be in a bully-proofing program (Garrity et al., 1997; Livingston, 2008). School systems did not, however, discuss in any detail what they actually did to support the victims of bullying, nor did they discuss any specific classroom interventions being utilized to address bullying. Many of these schools did have in place a means of recognizing positive behaviors among the students and rewarding random acts of kindness, which was a strategy described in the body of literature as being important in promoting a positive school climate that discourages bullying and deters school violence (Weinhold, 1999).

Most of the school divisions discussed future strategies and directions they were planning to promote positive student behaviors and eliminate traditional bullying. They did not discuss the possibility of bullies' using technology as a medium or ways to address cyberbullying, nor did the school systems discuss any future directions, programs, or strategies to address the victimization of target populations, namely LGBT students. The results of this study suggest that school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia are managing bullying in their schools using sound programs, strategies, and practices that will facilitate a positive transformation of the climate of their schools. The results of this study also suggest, however, that there is a definite need for improvement in that the school systems should (a) reexamine their current policies and practices, using the 11 questions suggested by Weinhold (1999); (b) add policies, programs, strategies, and practices that support all bullying victims, including LGBT students; (c) include specific classroom interventions; and (d) address cyberbullying.

Recommendations

Bullying and programs that address bullying are topics worthy of further study. Many programs were described in this study that could be examined for their effectiveness in supporting antibullying policies. These programs include Olweus' Intervention Program, Character Counts, LifeSkills Training, Positive Action, and Project Wisdom. A case study of a school division that has one or more of these programs in place would constitute a profound study.

A sampling of 24 school systems from the 134 public school divisions in Virginia was utilized in this study. The 24 school divisions agreed to participate in the study; however, only 12 school divisions followed through with the interview process. A greater response rate would have strengthened this study. Another recommendation is to repeat this study with a larger sampling of school systems not only in the Commonwealth of Virginia but also from surrounding states; furthermore, the protocol needs to be expanded to include questions about cyberbullying and how cyberbullying is being addressed in schools to make for a momentous study. A national study would be meaningful.

Summary

Previous research had indicated how students perceive violence, teasing, and bullying; how bullying manifests as a problem in schools; and how schools have implemented certain antibullying strategies or programs (Brockenbrough, 2001; Khosropour & Walsh, 2001; Limper, 2000; Olweus, 1993; Waldron, 2002; Winters, 1997). It was the goal of this qualitative study to explore and examine the policies, programs, and strategies that were being used in the Commonwealth of Virginia to

address bullying in the public schools via structured interviews of the appropriate staff members accountable for school safety. Qualitative data analyses were utilized to reveal exactly how the public schools were handling bullying. The data demonstrated that all the school divisions that participated in this study had policies and programs in place to address bullying. Programs varied from interventions that directly address bullying to formal character education programs. The results of this study suggest that school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia are managing bullying in their schools using sound programs, strategies, and practices that will facilitate a positive transformation of the climate of their schools. The results of this study also suggest, however, that there is a definite need for improvement in that the school systems should (a) reexamine their current policies and practices, using the 11 questions suggested by Weinhold (1999); (b) add policies, programs, strategies, and practices that support all bullying victims, including LGBT students; (c) include specific classroom interventions; and (d) address cyberbullying, bullying carried out through technology.

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APPENDIX A: BULLYING INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Bullying among children includes a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time, which can take three forms: physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, taking personal belongings), verbal (taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, making threats), and psychological (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation.

School bullying prevention programs

1. During the 2003-2004 school year, did your school division have any policies intended to prevent or reduce bullying?   _____Yes   _____No (If no, skip to question 2.)
   If yes, please describe the school policy.

2. During the 2003-2004 school year, did your school division have any formal programs intended to prevent or reduce bullying?   _____Yes   _____No (If no, skip to question 5.)

3. Name and describe the details of the program(s). Who is involved?

4. How long has this program been used? Or how long have these programs been used?

   School bullying prevention practices

5. During the 2003-2004 school year, did your school use strategies to prevent bullying? _____Yes   _____No
   If yes, please explain:

6. During the 2003-2004 school year, did your school division promote positive school climate? If yes, please explain.   _____Yes   _____No (What practices or strategies does your school do to promote a positive school climate?)

Disciplinary problems and actions

7. What disciplinary actions do you use when a student *verbally* bullies *another student*?
    > 1st offense:
    > 2nd offense:
    > 3rd offense:

8. What disciplinary actions do you use when a student *verbally* bullies *an adult*?
    > 1st offense:
    > 2nd offense:
    > 3rd offense:

9. What disciplinary actions do you use when a student *physically* bullies *another student*?
    > 1st offense:
    > 2nd offense:
    > 3rd offense:

10. What disciplinary actions do you use when a student *physically* bullies *an adult*?
    > 1st offense:
    > 2nd offense:
    > 3rd offense:

11. What disciplinary actions do you use when a student *psychological* bullies *another pupil*?
    > 1st offense:
    > 2nd offense:
    > 3rd offense:

12. What disciplinary actions do you use when a student *psychological* bullies *an adult*?
    > 1st offense:
    > 2nd offense:
    > 3rd offense:

Future school bullying prevention programs/practices

13. What future practices or strategies are going to be implemented at your school division to promote positive student behaviors? What do you foresee for the future…?

14. What future directions do you foresee your school division taking to prevent bullying?

School characteristics

15. As of June 1, 2004, what was the total enrollment at your school? _____

16. How would you best describe the community your school division serves?

      _____Rural   _____Suburban   _____Urban

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

May 2004

Dear _____:

As a knowledgeable school administrator, you are aware of the increase of school violence and bullying that is in many of our public schools. As part of my research at The George Washington University's School of Education and Human Development, I would like to ascertain the strategies and formal programs that public schools are using to reduce or eliminate bullying. To adequately represent the diversity of the public schools, a sample of administrators in charge of school safety and discipline will be interviewed about their school division's policies, programs and strategies to prevent bullying and to promote a positive school climate. Your participation, while voluntary, is vital to the success of this study because each of your responses represents those of many other school divisions.

I want to assure you that the information you provide on this survey will be kept confidential. The findings of this survey will be reported only in statistical tables and summaries as part of the results for my dissertation "An Examination of Bullying Prevention Policies, Programs, and Strategies in Public School Systems." I would like to express my gratitude in advance for your cooperation in this important undertaking. At the conclusion of my study, I plan to provide each respondent with a summary of the results, a complete list of references, and a list

of resources on bullying prevention programs and practices that the school systems used.

I will be in contact with you shortly to schedule an interview that would best suit your schedule. It is estimated that the interview should take less than one hour. If you have any questions about the study or the interview protocol, please do not hesitate to call me at (757) 868-6841 or e-mail me at <AngelaKowitz@aol.com>.

Respectfully yours,

Angela Kowitz

Angela Kowitz, Ed. S.

APPENDIX C: CLIMATE ANALYSIS

	CLIMATE QUESTIONS to answer (x ~ yes)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	school system #												
1	Plan to recognize students' positive acts…daily?		x		x		x	x			x	x	x
2	More opportunities for positive recognition than negative?		x			x	x	x			x	x	x
3	How will students respond?												
4	Does faculty/staff have established ways to recognize…kind acts?		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	School-wide policy for dealing with bullying?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	Effective way to reduce/eliminate student-to-student put-downs?		x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x
7	Teach conflict resolution to all students?	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x
8	Been able to significantly reduce # of discipline referrals?												x
9	Peer mediation program?		x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x
10	Is your school as safe as it could be?						x						
11	Emergency disaster plan in place?											x	x
		2	7	2	5	3	8	6	3	5	7	8	9

APPENDIX D: PROGRAM ANALYSIS

	PROGRAM QUESTIONS to answer (x ~ yes)	school system # 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Research-based?	x	x				x	x			x	x	x
2	Comprehensive curriculum developmentally tailored to be age-specific?	x	x		x		x	x			x	x	x
3	Build on what is learned each year?	x	x		x		x	x			x		x
4	Use practical lessons and activities in addition to information?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
5	Involve parents, peers, all school staff, and the entire community?	x	x			x	x				x	x	x
6	Use culturally sensitive material appropriate for students from variety of backgrounds?	x	x		x		x	x			x		x
7	Include staff training?	x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x
8	Cost efficient?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	Can it be incorporated into the curriculum/safe schools or violence prevention program?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10	Student appeal, meaningful and enjoyable?	x	x		x		x	x			x	x	x
		9	10	3	9	4	10	9	2	3	10	8	10