

# Bullying in the K-8 School

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April 22, 2011

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## **Abstract**

Through my own experiences as a child and now as a teacher, I strongly believe in helping children of any age build positive relationships. In my childhood experiences, I did not witness the extent of bullying behavior that is going on today. I believe that bullying is getting worse and worse. My research explored the frequency of bullying in a kindergarten through eighth grade school in Central New York. It also explored how staff, students, and their parents felt about bullying and offers suggestions and strategies to help decrease the level of bullying that occurs. A sample of 27 staff members, 133 students, and 133 parents were included in this study and data collection consisted of quantitative and qualitative information through the use of questionnaires and observations. It is clear that there is a high level of bullying that occurs throughout the school day and this research supports the concern people have for the welfare of school children.

## **Section 1 Introduction**

### *1- Identifying the Problem; Creating a Purpose:*

Bullying is a phenomenon that concerns me as a teacher in a Kindergarten through Eighth grade school in Central New York. Unfortunately there is a lot of negative behavior I have observed during lunch, in the hallway, and at other places. It makes me sad to hear children being mean and emotionally violent to each other. I am fully aware that bullying is increasing with time, and this kind of behavior really has an impact on children of any age. My purpose was to identify the root cause of bullying as a way of informing school communities about the negative effects of bullying on students learning and creating strategies to help decrease the level of bullying that goes on within their school.

### *1.1- My Story:*

I attended an Elementary School, and I can only recall a few experiences that involved bullying whether it was something I witnessed or I was involved in it. When I got to sixth grade there was one girl that kept asking for a keychain that I had made and kept telling me that she would pay me for it. I finally gave in after weeks of her telling

me that she would pay me for this keychain and to this day, I still have not gotten my \$5.00. Looking back on it, I felt like I was being bullied. It was the intimidation and persistency of the girl constantly asking me for my keychain that made me feel like I was bullied. After elementary school, I attended an urban middle school. There I witnessed many accounts of not only emotional bullying but physical bullying as well. I was shocked that there was even a fight at all, because I never saw that in elementary school. There was definitely a lot more negative behavior, whether it was student versus student or student versus teacher.

Going to an urban high school, I was the minority just like in my middle school. Daily there would be at least one fight, if not more. A lot of the reasoning for fighting was due to outside of school issues. Students brought in the negativity from the outside world into the school environment. Sadly, it became normal for me and a part of my school life. For example, one morning I walked in through front door of the school with the rest of my friends through a weapons check. At the time there was a long streak of fights and administration thought it would be a good idea to check everyone. It was a reality check for my naïve mind because there were an endless number of weapons thrown on the floor before you got to the “weapon” checkpoint. Word got out and whoever had a weapon in school dropped it on the floor before they got searched. Quickly word spread fast that weapons were found outside school grounds, and a boy that walked to the elementary school right next door, found a knife in the bushes.

I became directly involved with bullying my senior year in high school. One night at a party I was sitting on the top level of some bleachers talking with another friend, and the girl that was upset with me brought two other girls with her up to where I

was. She started yelling all this nonsense, and again I tried to be the one to not retaliate and keep my cool. I figured I would just let her get all her anger out and hopefully she would stop and leave me alone. But she never did, and I was fed up with it and pushed her down the whole flight of bleachers. I was being bullied and took action. There was no adult for me to go to; it was just a bunch of teenagers. I felt like I could not do anything else but get her away from me, and unfortunately she ended up getting hurt badly.

As a teacher in a kindergarten through eighth grade school, it is hard for me to understand why I see constant negative behavior. There was an incident at my school a couple years in which a first grader brought a knife to school because she did not feel safe. It was such an emotional awakening to the staff at my school because she was being bullied and she felt like no one was doing anything about it. Even last year there was an incident where a second grader got beat up in the girls' bathroom. As part of my research, I wanted to ask individual students about how they feel at school. Whether they feel safe at school or not plays a huge part in their educational success. We have actually had a few presentations made by students that were being bullies, about bullying, however I do not feel that it helped their behavior. There was a student that was part of this presentation group that I heard say to another student, "I am going to draw you because you are ugly."

This issue of bullying in schools tends to be brushed off and veteran teachers may think that it is not that big of deal. I believe it is. In my opinion, problems with bullying are getting worse and worse. Students need to feel physically and emotionally safe at school. Classroom management techniques need to be practiced to promote positive learning environments. Children and adults need to be aware of bullying and the different

types of it. Something as a simple word like “shut up” could have a huge impact on another person’s feelings. From my observations at my school, the students think a word like “shut up” is normal. Children need to realize that the words they use can have huge negative effects on another person. It is my goal through my research and practice as an educator to positively touch the lives of everyone involved in my study.

### *1.2- Forming my Inquiry; Talking to Teachers:*

There was no question in my mind about what I wanted to inquire about for my research. Since the start of my teaching career, I have always heard other teachers talking about student behavior and how it affects learning. I began my inquiry by completing a pilot to get a small idea of what people were thinking about the topic of bullying. I only asked a few teachers and randomly asked some parents if they would be willing to complete a survey. The answers that I got from the surveys showed me that I was making the right choice to complete my research on the topic of bullying and finding out how often this behavior is actually happening, along with how people actually feel about bullying.

## **Section 2 Literature Review**

### *2- Overview of Literature that Informed my Research*

I realized that the term bullying accounts for a lot when it came to finding other research so I had to narrow down my key words to find literature that connected with my focus. I initiated my research with key words such as bullying and student behavior. My main focus was to find studies that contained data with bullying behavior. I wanted more proof that this is a main problem within the school systems. I began to find studies that

dealt with intervention studies and gave data about bullying behavior through the use of questionnaires amongst students, parents, and teachers. In reviewing this literature, a few themes emerged: location of bullying behavior, frequency of bullying behavior, and solutions to prevent bullying behavior.

### *2.1- What exactly is a bully?*

The act of bullying can be defined as a specific type of aggressive behavior that causes distress or harm, demonstrates an imbalance of power, and is repeated over time (Piotrowski and Hoot, 2008). There is overwhelming evidence that many children across the world are subjected to persistent aggression called bullying by some of their peers in school and are unable to defend themselves adequately (Boulton, Duke, Holman, Laxton, Nicholas, Spells, Williams, Woodmansey, 2009). First and foremost, there are three forms of bullying. There is physical, emotional, and verbal. Physical bullying includes physical contact that causes discomfort to another individual. An example might be a student who removes the metal edge of a ruler and uses it to jab others because I have seen this occur in a classroom. Emotional bullying is aggression without words, as in exclusion or ignoring behavior. Verbal bullying also referred to as psychological bullying or relational aggression may be seen when a girl reports that another girl is not talking to her and she is encouraging everyone else to do the same (Piotrowski and Hoot, 2008). Through educational experiences I knew of these three major forms of bullying, however I was not familiar with the various types of emotional and verbal bullying. Piotrowski and Hoot further define emotional and verbal bullies as: “practiced liar bullies, jekyll and hyde bullies, shallow and superficial bullies, highly critical bullies, lobbying bullies, evasive bullies, and bully saboteurs” (2008 p357-363).

## *2.2- How often is bullying happening and why?*

A study by Anderson and Swiatowy, found that ninety-six percent of students have observed someone being bullied at school (2008). Cowie and Oztug (2008) reported that the most unsafe place in school was deemed to be play areas (playground and field), and this was attributed more to bullying than to any other reason. Furthermore, Cowie and Oztug (2008) found that bullying was the single most common reason why pupils felt unsafe at school. I feel that this connects with the instances where students are bringing weapons to school as defense because they do not feel physically or emotionally safe. In a study done in the United Kingdom, most students found safety within the classroom and playground; however a large minority of students did not (Boulton, et. al., 2009).

Remboldt explains that bullies tend to come from homes where the caregiver lacks any emotional warmth, involvement, clear limits, and allows too much freedom (as cited in Anderson and Swiatowy, 2008). Schwartz and Voors state that bullies may have a difficult time connecting and developing meaningful relationships with others (as cited in Anderson and Swiatowy, 2008). Children that demonstrate aggressive behavior also tend to have a hard time understanding that there are consequences for their behavior.

## *2.3- Recent Research on Bullying*

Every day, 160,000 school children stay home to avoid the attacks and intimidations of their peers (National Middle School Association 2001 as cited in Schoen and Schoen, 2010). In this study, Schoen and Schoen addressed the issues of bullying and harassment in the United States and reviewed various considerations in addressing the bullying problem. School communities need to collectively and collaboratively define what “bullying” is for their particular school culture (Newgent, Lounsbery, Keller, Baker,



Cavell, and Boughfman, 2009). To have a clear and consistent policy regarding bullying behavior along with support for those in need will be a step in the right track in resolving bullying problems in schools. It was imperative that this study be completed to obtain data in showing the rate of bullying behavior and discuss feelings of staff, students and parents in regards to bullying.

### **Section 3 Methodology**

#### *3- Methodology*

Due to the fact that my research questions focus around a problem that is being experienced in my school, the methodology that I used in this study was action research. I developed questionnaires for teachers, students, and parents in my school community that included concrete and open ended questions. I also set up observations. This enabled me to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding knowledge of bullying within the school, as well as bullying behaviors.

#### *3.1- Sample*

The population targeted for my study was staff members, students, and parents at an urban elementary/middle school, in Central New York. This school was home to approximately 55 staff members and 650 students. Students attending the school came from various different surrounding areas (both suburb and urban settings). The school consisted of kindergarten through eighth grade, with a total of 27 classes. A total of nine classes were included in the study. One class from each grade was chosen at random with a colleague as a witness. The teachers and staff involved in the study were full and part time employees.

### *3.2- Instruments*

Questionnaires were designed in combination of styles that include open-ended, Likert-scale, rating scales, and multiple responses. Interviews were conducted for kindergarten and first grade students due to their reading levels. The word ‘bully’ was changed to ‘someone being “mean”’ to ensure understanding of the questions listed. Questionnaires given to the student subjects included six questions ranging from the rate at which they witness, participate, or become a victim of bullying behavior. Questions on location of bullying were also asked along with questions regarding consequences in dealing with someone that bullies. Questionnaires created for parent participants included 13 questions ranging from if their child ever stayed home due to bullying, where they think the most bullying occurs, satisfaction rating scales and open-ended questions regarding how they feel about bullying and what they think should be done. Questionnaires created for staff participants included six questions ranging from the rate at which they witness bullying per day, satisfaction rating scales of their class environment, what grade level they thought the most bullying occurs, and their opinion on if character education needs to be implemented.

As part of my research, I chose to conduct observations during arrival times from 8:15 am to 8:45 am, and various instructional times throughout different days ranging from 9:00 am to 3:15 pm. I also observed lunch areas which ranged from 11:15 am to 12:30 pm and observed dismissal from 3:15 pm to 3:45 pm. A tally system was used to document any form of verbal or physical bullying behavior observed.

### *3.3- Procedure*

In the previous weeks before my study began, I obtained permission from the Human Subjects Committee and SUNY Oswego. I then obtained permission from the principal at the designated school. I also obtained permission from teacher and staff participants. Classes were picked randomly using a “draw names out of a hat” method. Parent consent forms and questionnaires to students in each chosen class were handed out. Students that were absent were then tracked down and any student participant that did not immediately return their parent consent and questionnaire were given a new one if needed.

During the next week I continued to track down missing consent forms and questionnaires from staff and parents. A letter was typed addressing the request for consent and return of the parent questionnaire and given to students that still did not return the parent portion. I began to document my observations of any sort of bullying behavior (verbal or physical) during my scheduled times. Observations of instructional time took place primarily on Tuesdays through Fridays. All data was kept in secure folders and analyzed at the end of the week.

The main focus of the following week was to have the students of the selected classes complete the questionnaires. Classes that came to me during instructional time were able to complete the student questionnaires. There were a couple classes that were not able to come to me (due to time off or assemblies), therefore I went in the classroom and gave those students their questionnaires first thing in the morning. I still continued to track down any student that was still missing their parental consent and questionnaire form. During the final week of my research I met with any student that did not complete a

questionnaire. I was still receiving parental consent and questionnaires at this point so I had to make sure that those students were able to complete their part of the study.

## **Section 4 Data Analysis**

### *4- Data Analysis*

In order to organize all information, the use of pie charts, graphs, and diagrams were used to generate quantitative data. The use of an observational journal and transcripts were used to collect qualitative data that included comments from open ended questions regarding how staff and parents felt about bullying, and what they think the school could do to help decrease the level of bullying. To ensure security, all class folders and parent and staff folders containing information were kept in a locked cabinet until analyzed.

#### *4.1 – Analysis*

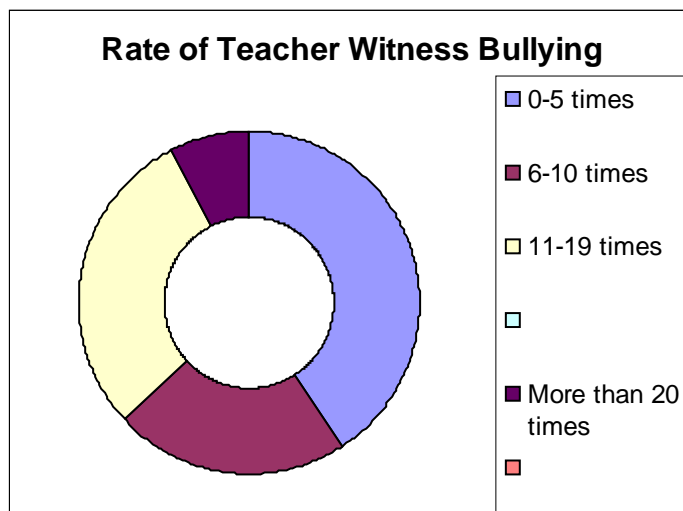
Class folders and staff information were contained in coded folders to ensure confidentiality. Quantitative data was analyzed and put into pie charts and graphs for display. Answers to questions that involved where students witnessed bullying were gathered and put into graphs for the reader to be able to easily see which locations in the school were the most popular places for bullying. Answers to questions that involved which grade levels staff thought the most bullying occurred were obtained and put into graphs as well. To differentiate how quantitative data was analyzed, pie charts were also used. Student responses as to how often they witness bullying behavior were placed in a pie chart to show the evidence of the bullying problem amongst the school.

Qualitative data was analyzed and themes were developed amongst the parent and staff responses to open-ended questions. Open ended questions were categorized by school climate, parental involvement, and possible solutions to decrease the level of bullying. Those responses were then ranked by importance. There were a lot of repeat answers from parents as to how they felt about bullying and almost every parent made a comment as to what they thought the school could do to help decrease the level of bullying.

## **Section 5 Results and Findings**

### *5.1 – Findings and Results amongst Staff*

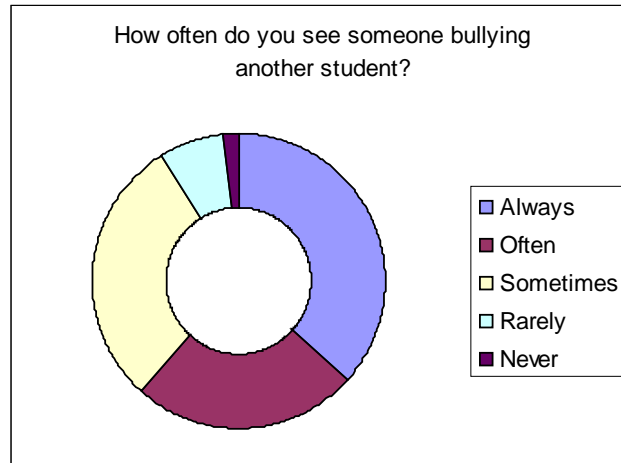
Twenty seven participants including administration, full time teachers, paraprofessionals, and janitorial staff out of total of 55 participated in this study, providing an overall 49% of the staff population. While all staff thought that bullying occurs in all grades levels, the most bullying grade levels noted were fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. To get an idea as to how many times staff participants witness bullying in one day, members of staff were asked to choose the proper category noting how many times they witnessed physical or verbal bullying behavior. Forty percent of staff (11 staff participants) noted that they witness bullying behavior zero to five times in one day, 22% (six staff participants) noted six to ten times, 30% (eight staff participants) noted 11 to 19 times and seven percent (two staff participants) noted more than 20 times.



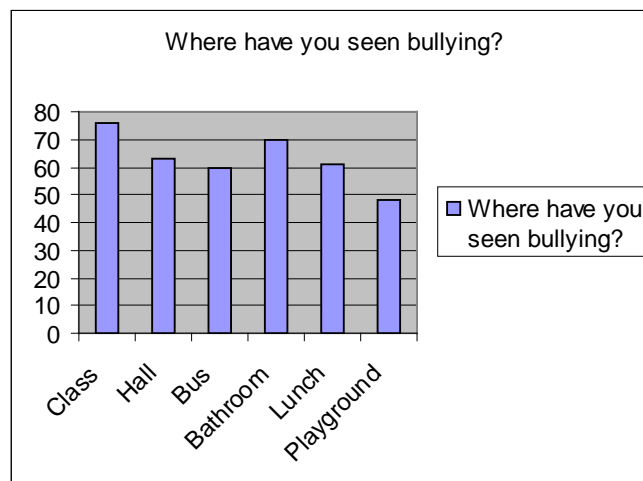
Staff was asked to rate their satisfaction with their own classroom environment. Over half of the staff participants (18 participants) rated that they were somewhat satisfied with their classroom environment. If the staff member did not have their own classroom, they left the question blank. The next category where staff noted the most was somewhat dissatisfied, which was four participants, and two participants noted that they were completely satisfied. An important aspect to note is that there was only one staff participant that noted they were completely dissatisfied with their classroom environment.

### 5.2 – Findings and Results amongst Students

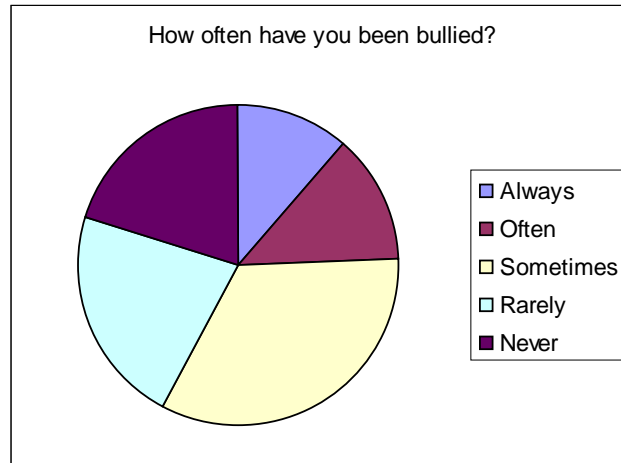
Out of a possible 215 students, 133 participated in this study. Students were asked a series of questions ranging from where they have seen bullying behavior to what they would do if someone was bullying them. After analyzing the data, 31% (41 participants) of students always see bullying behavior, and 21% (28 participants) of students often see bullying behavior. The choice of selecting sometimes was marked by 25% (33 participants) of student participants.



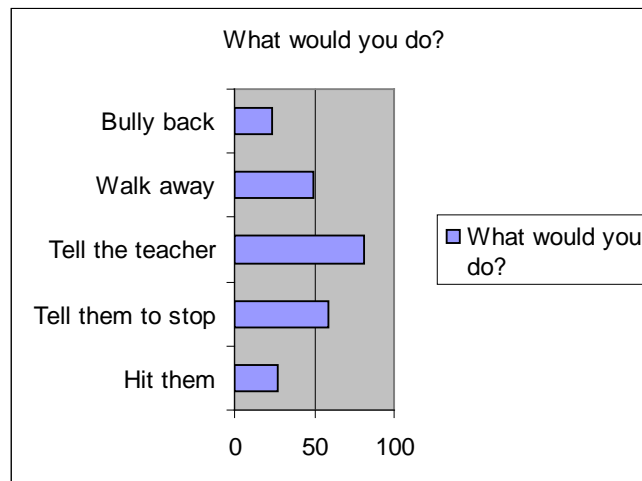
Students were also asked where they see bullying behavior. The classroom was selected by 57% (76) of the student participants. The hallway was chosen by 47% (63) and the bathroom was marked by 53% (70) of student participants. Other areas such as the bus (60), lunch time (61), and playground (48) were also noted, but the top three locations were the classroom, hallway and bathroom.



Students were asked how often they themselves have been bullied. Twenty-nine percent of students (38) noted that they are sometimes bullied. The next highest category was 19% (25) noting rarely, and 17% (23) noting never. Students that noted often consisted of 11% (15) and students that noted always (13) consisted of nine percent.



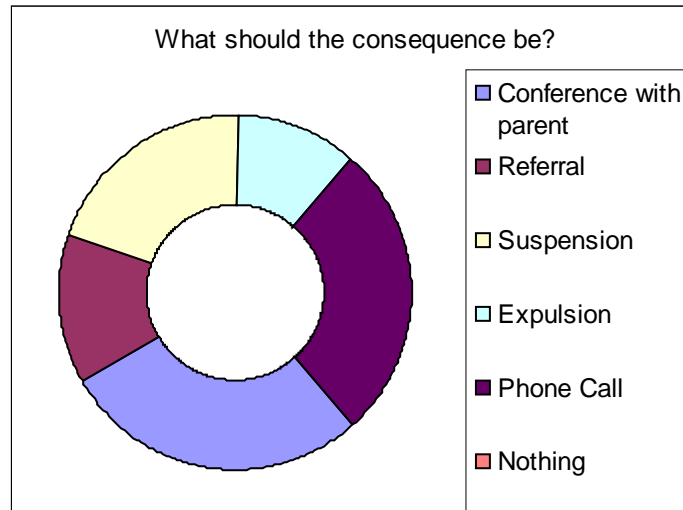
When students were asked how they would respond to someone that was bullying them, 61% (81) responded with “tell the teacher.” Telling the bully to stop was selected by 44% (59) of student participants, and 37% (49) responded with “walk away.” It is important to note that 18% selected “bully back” (24) and “hit them” (27) as their response to someone that was bullying them.



An important question was asked to students in regards to consequences for bullies. Students were able to choose more than one consequence. A little over half (54%, 72 student participants) felt that there should be a conference with the parent. Fifty-one percent (68) of student participants felt that the bully should get a phone call home and

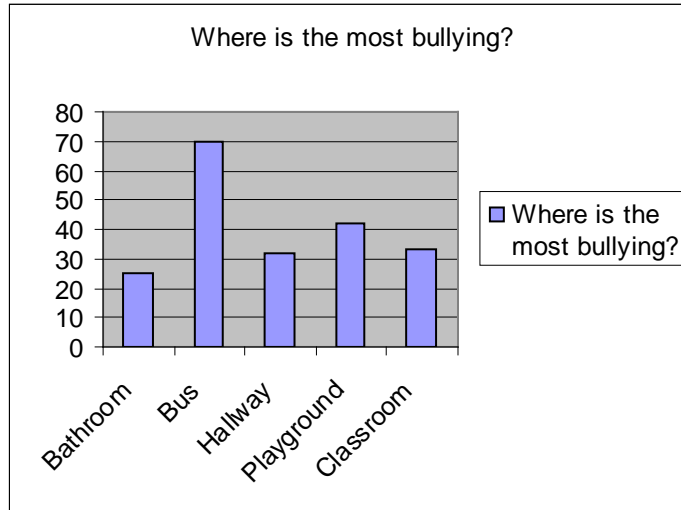


38% (51) of students felt that the bully should be suspended. Referrals and expulsions were also choices for students and 25% (34) noted referrals and 21% (28) noted expulsion.

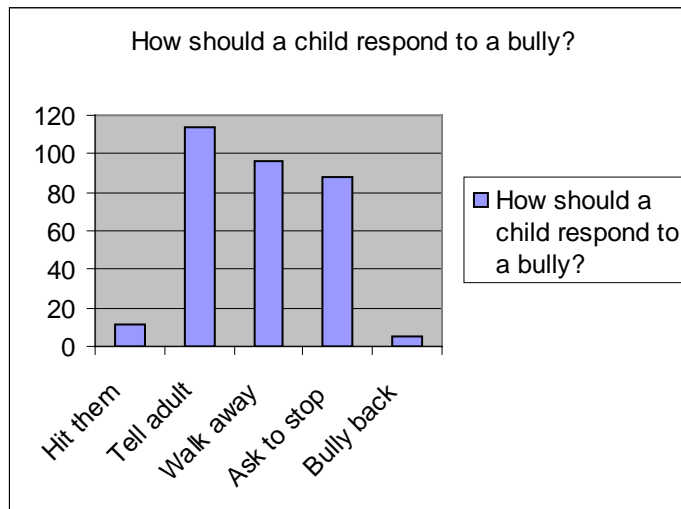


### 5.3 – Findings and Results amongst Parents

Out of a possible 215 parents/guardians invited to participate, 133 participated providing 61.8%. Parents were asked similar questions as the student participants. When asked where parents felt the most bullying occurred, 53% (70) noted the bus as the most popular place for bullying. The playground was the second highest consisting of 32% (42) of parent participants. Twenty-five percent (33) of parent participants noted the classroom as the third highest place for bullying behavior, and the hallway was very close with 24% (32) for parent participants.

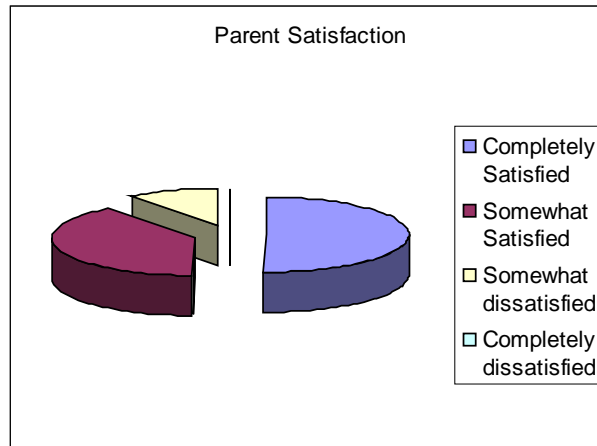


Parents were asked how a child should respond to someone that was bullying them, 86% (114) responded with “tell and adult.” The second most popular response came from 72% (96) of parent participants noting “walk away,” and 66% (88) of parent participants noted “tell them to stop.”



While it is important to note how many students noted that they would hit the bully or bully back, it is just as important to note that eight percent (11) of parents marked “hit them,” and three percent (5) of parents marked “bully back.” Parents have a strong influence on their children. If parents respond to conflict in negative ways, then there is a

greater chance their child will follow their parents' choices. In connection with the staff questionnaire, parents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the school environment. Completely satisfied was marked by 47% (63) of parent participants and 37% (49) of parents marked somewhat satisfied. Nine percent (13) marked somewhat dissatisfied and no parent participant marked completely dissatisfied.



#### 5.4 – Observations

There were a total of 21 observations at the end of the study. Observations of verbal and physical bullying were noted and analyzed. All together, there were 29 verbal accounts of bullying and 20 physical accounts during arrival. There were 225 verbal accounts of bullying and 62 physical accounts of physical bullying during instructional times that included homeroom classroom observations and special area classroom observations. During the lunch periods, there were 153 verbal accounts of bullying and 63 physical accounts. During dismissal, there were 18 verbal accounts noted of bullying and nine accounts of physical bullying.

Type of Bullying Behavior	Location	Number of Times	Comments
Verbal Bullying	Arrival	29	Threats, gossip, verbal attacks on the victim
Verbal Bullying	Instructional Time	225	Threats, gossip, verbal attacks on the victim
Verbal Bullying	Lunch	153	Threats, gossip, verbal attacks on the victim, "Don't sit by him."
Verbal Bullying	Dismissal	18	Threats, gossip, verbal attacks on the victim
Physical Bullying	Arrival	20	Pushing, shoving, tripping, taking possessions
Physical Bullying	Instructional Time	62	Pushing, shoving, tripping, taking possessions
Physical Bullying	Lunch	63	Pushing, shoving, tripping, taking possessions
Physical Bullying	Dismissal	9	Pushing, shoving, tripping, taking possessions

### 5.5 – Qualitative Data

Staff and parents were asked open-ended questions such as how they felt about bullying, what the results were when their child told a teacher or administrator that they were being bullied, and more they felt could be done at the school to prevent bullying or instruct students about bullying. After analyzing and coding the staff responses, it is important to note that the staff feels that bullying takes form as just ‘messaging around,’ and that bullies do not think that they are doing anything wrong. Staff also mentioned that there are no real consequences so the bullies tend to get away with their actions. The staff also noted that bullying needs to be stopped at home, so that it does not carry over to the school environment. Unfortunately there were responses that mentioned that bullying goes on between teachers and students. This may connect with the fact that students may not be feeling safe at school. After analyzing and coding the parent responses of how they feel about bullying, most noted that they do not tolerate it and it should not be tolerated in

classrooms. An important response that some parents made when answering how they felt about bullying was that there should be tougher penalties. This is something that schools can work on in regards to consequences for those students that bully.

After analyzing the parent responses about what the results were when their child told a teacher or administrator, it was noted that more often it was not dealt with. Some results were: teacher told my child to 'sit down,' mediation did not help, the child still gets picked on and even called a snitch. There were more parent responses about how the situation was not dealt with or swept under the rug, than responses about how the situation *was* dealt with.

Parents were also asked what they felt could be done at the school to prevent bullying or instruct students about bullying. This is where the parents were really speaking their mind as to what they want the school to do. Communication was important amongst the parents' responses: parents need to be called more to sit with their kids, adults need to listen and take it serious, parents need to be notified what their child is doing, meetings with students, teachers and parents all together, and thoroughly investigate situations were common themes. In regards to safety, parent responses included: volunteers to help in school, better monitor, assistance in overcrowded classrooms, and cameras to monitor disputes. Most parents felt that the school needs to crack down on bullying by having a strict policy. Some parents suggested the three strike rule. Other parents suggested only giving a warning, and if it happens again then the student should be removed from the school. Parents felt that there were situations where the bullying was swept under the rug and ignored, and they also felt that parents need to

know that the school will not tolerate bullying. Most parents did feel that the child should be punished at home as well.

In regards to programs that parents want to see the school implement are: seminars about bullying for parents and students, bring in speakers about bullying to offer strategies on how to deal with the issue, train teachers on the signs of bullying, and to have bullying as a permanent feature in the moral focus. Clearly the responses from the staff and parents really say a lot about what is working and what is not working within the school in regards to bullying.

## **Section 6 Discussion**

### *6.1 – Purpose*

My main purpose of this study was to help teachers, parents, and students at the elementary and middle school level gain a better perspective as to the level of bullying that goes on in the school. Since there is a level of bullying occurring at my school, I also wanted to know how teachers, students, and parents felt about this growing concern.

In looking at the data, I found certain themes that were important to discuss. The data collected shows that the areas that students felt the most bullying occurred were the classroom, bathroom, and the hallway. The classroom and hallway were also popular choices amongst the parents that completed the questionnaires. The middle school grades were also popular choices amongst the level where the most bullying occurs. The frequency of bullying incidents showed that classroom instructional time had the most accounts of verbal and physical bullying. Choices of “always” and “often” were far too large amongst the students’ responses to how often they witness bullying behavior. What

does this say about classroom environment? The data collected also shows that both parents and students felt that they should tell an adult if someone is bullying them. Many parents also felt that there should be more education in regards to show school communities should deal with bullying behaviors.

### *6.2 - Limitations*

While I believe my study and research data is extremely important, I did encounter some limitations. My biggest limitation was time. Having a four week time period to collect all this data was overwhelming. If this study was year long, trends could be established of when the most bullying occurs during the school year, and a focus on bullying prevention could be emphasized during those times of the year on top of year round awareness. Another limitation was a low participation in some classes, which resulted in a high level of missing and much needed data amongst certain grade levels. Fourth grade had the lowest participation and this grade level had a high level of bullying behavior when observed. Other limitations included a low efficiency in parent communication because there were numerous times where I had to send out new consent forms, permission slips, and parent questionnaires.

### *6.3 - Implications*

My research implies that there is a bullying problem within my research site's school community. Surprisingly, I would have thought that there would have been more bullying behavior during dismissal than arrival. However when you look at the data, there were more accounts of bullying behavior during arrival. I know that through observations there have been numerous time where students have come to their teacher in the morning and say "So-and-so hit my on the bus, or so-and-so took my hat and never gave it back."

They have also looked for the staff member that is in charge of dealing with bussing situations.

The amount of bullying behavior accounts for the fact that there is not enough supervision during the lunch period. Also from observation, there is a large amount of students that think they do not have to listen to the staff assigned, even though they are teachers or other staff. Some staff that are assigned to tables did not either show up or were in other areas during this time, which decreased the level of supervision amongst that area.

It was not distinguished between a homeroom classroom and other classroom, but just the fact that a little more than half of the student participants chose the classroom as the main location for bullying is alarming. Factors that come into play from my observations in regards to causes of bullying is the parental attitude towards their child, acceptance of their child's aggressive behavior, parenting styles, and difficulty dealing with conflict resolution. I can see some of the students at the research site that are defined as bullies, as not having the 'ideal' home life. I have seen the interactions with some of the students and their parents and it falls under that category of negative parenting styles. I have heard the way that some parents speak to their children when they have picked them up from school. People do have the power to change, either negatively or positively, but the way someone is raised plays an extremely important part in forming who they are.

Due to the fact that both parent and student participants chose "tell an adult" as their reaction to someone that is bullying them, we as a school community must work harder to listen to what the students are telling us. They count on us as adults to help them, and it perhaps it is when things escalate to bigger situations when students feel like



someone is not helping them. The alarming evidence that seven percent of the staff participants witness bullying more than 20 times a day goes to show that bullying is occurring a lot more than some people may think.

Due to the extensive evidence of bullying with the research site's community, more resources need to be studied and offered on how to handle bullying. From observations, the majority of the student body is really quick to retaliate to someone that is bothering them. It is evident that all students and staff need assistance in how to appropriately handle bullying situations. The discipline system is weak and needs to be looked over to fill in gaps. Students are getting suspended, but yet the durations of suspensions at times do not really match the behavior. There are not consistent consequences that send the message that bullying behavior is not appropriate. The message that bullying behavior will not be tolerated is not being followed through enough. Parents need to be held accountable for their child's behavior and need to be informed well about bullying policies once they are in place. I believe if administration (principal and deans) made more of a presence in every classroom, not just the grade level they are assigned, then the level of bullying and negative behavior will decrease. There is a discipline committee within the school but the purpose has been discussing dress code, and coming up with positive incentives. If the name of the committee is 'discipline committee,' then they should be discussing discipline issues and offering support to those staff members that are struggling.

#### *6.4 – Further Research and Conclusion*

More research needs to be done because of the high prevalence of bullying behavior. There are many outside factors that contribute to bullying behavior. To have

more than one person helping me in the research, especially for observation times, is something that someone should take note if they were ever to do similar research. I know for a fact that there are areas of the building where more bullying is occurring, however I could not be in two or three places at once. There needs to be more research done in regards to finding trends in times of school year when bullying is the highest. Through my experience the first couple months of school are always pretty good. Students and teachers are just getting to know each other and building relationships, but why all of a sudden is there a change from seeing positive behavior majority of the time, to seeing constant bullying behavior? There needs to be more research on bully prevention programs and how to make teachers and administration be consistent with consequences. What discipline programs are out there that have been proven to work with urban school settings?

In addition, more research needs to be done to come up with consistent and clear consequences for bullying behavior. I know that one strategy will not work with every single bullying child (or even adult), but there needs to be more research on what strategies clearly work for urban school settings such as the site in this study. Outside resources need to be brought in and as a staff come up with a no bullying policy. Children are simply not “just being kids.” That excuse cannot be tolerated. As teachers and staff at schools, we really need to make more of an effort to take the time to help children that are going through behavior crisis. Schools cannot let one kind of bullying behavior slide, and then harp on another bullying behavior. There should be no gray area when it comes to bullying. Bullying is bullying, no matter what form. I believe that through this

research, one can gain a clear picture as to how big of a problem bullying is today in our schools.

## Section 7 References

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## Section 8 Appendices

### Consent Form for administrator permission

Dear Principal,

To finish my graduate program, I need to complete my thesis which focuses on bullying in schools. The study that I am asking for your permission to conduct explores attitudes and perceptions of bullying. Questionnaires, observations, and interviews and will be included in my research. This study has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects of the State University of New York at Oswego.

Participation is completely voluntary, and participants are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. I assure you confidentiality will be maintained and participants will not be identified by me in any way.

By having students, staff, and parents participate in this study, they will help to create a perspective on how they feel about bullying. It is my intention to release a summary of this study to all participants.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me personally. If you have further questions about the study, please contact Dr. Faith Maina at 315-312-2641 (my academic advisor). You may also contact Dr. Freidman, Chair of the SUNY Oswego Human Subjects Committee at 315-312-6381.

I greatly appreciate your time and dedication to my research study at Southside Academy.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Therrien

I agree to give my consent for Lindsay Therrien to complete this study.

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Principal Signature

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Date

## Consent Form for Staff Participation

Dear Colleague,

To finish my graduate program, I need to complete my thesis which focuses on bullying in schools. The survey that I am asking you to participate in explores your attitude and perceptions of bullying. This survey has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects of the State University of New York at Oswego.

The survey is one page consisting of multiple choice and short response questions. Each person's data in this study will be confidential. Your name will not be reported. By participating in this survey, you will help to create a perspective on how teachers feel about bullying. It is my intention to release a summary of this study to all participants. It is my hope that the results will open the possibility of a positive change within school communities. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Please take time to complete the survey, and then return it to me in the envelope provided. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me either personally or by phone or email (ext.229 or 44.ltherrien@heritageacademies.com). If you have further questions about the study, please contact Dr. Faith Maina at 315-312-2641 (my academic advisor). You may also contact Dr. Freidman, Chair of the SUNY Oswego Human Subjects Committee at 315-312-6381.

I greatly appreciate your time and dedication to my research study.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Therrien

I have read the above statement about the purpose and nature of the study and I freely consent to participate.

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Teacher/Staff Signature

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Date

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Print Teacher/Staff Name

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Date

## Consent Form for Parent Participation

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Lindsay Therrien. I am in my fifth year teaching art and am currently a graduate student at Oswego State University. To finish my graduate program, I need to complete my thesis which focuses on bullying in schools.

The survey that I am asking you to participate in explores your attitude and perceptions of bullying. This survey has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects of the State University of New York at Oswego.

The survey is two pages consisting of multiple choice and short response questions. Each person's data in this study will be confidential. Your name will not be reported.

By participating in this survey, you will help to create a perspective on how parents feel about bullying. It is my intention to release a summary of this study to all participants. It is my hope that the results will open the possibility of a positive change within school communities.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Please take time to complete the survey, and then return it to me in the envelope provided. If you have any questions about the experiment, please contact me either personally or by phone or email.

I greatly appreciate your time and dedication to my research study.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Therrien  
ltherrie@oswego.edu

I have read the above statement about the purpose and nature of the study and I freely consent to participate.

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Parent Signature

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Date

---

Print Parent Name

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Date



## **Parent Consent Form for Student Participation**

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Lindsay Therrien. I am in my fifth year teaching art and am currently a graduate student at Oswego State University. To finish my graduate program, I need to complete my thesis which focuses on bullying in schools.

The study that I am asking your child to participate in explores their attitude and perceptions of bullying. Questionnaires, observations, and interviews will be included in my research. This study has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects of the State University of New York at Oswego.

Your child's participation is completely voluntary, and they are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. I assure you confidentiality will be maintained and your child will not be identified by me in any way. In addition, your child will not be denied any instruction or benefits because of my inquiry. By having your child participate in this survey, he/she will help to create a perspective on how students feel about bullying. It is my intention to release a summary of this study to all participants. It is my hope that the results will open the possibility of a positive change within school communities.

If you have any questions about the experiment, please contact me either personally or by phone or email.

I greatly appreciate your time and dedication to my research study.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Therrien  
ltherrie@oswego.edu

If I have your permission to use \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) work in my research,  
please return this form with your approval in the enclosed envelope.

I have read the above statement about the purpose and nature of the study and I freely consent for  
my child to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **Middle School Student Consent Form**

Dear Student:

My name is Lindsay Therrien. To finish my graduate program, I need to complete my thesis which focuses on bullying in schools.

The study that I am asking you to participate in explores attitudes and perceptions of bullying. Questionnaires, observations, and interviews will be included in my research. This study has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects of the State University of New York at Oswego.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. I assure you confidentiality will be maintained and you will not be identified by me in any way. In addition, you will not be denied any instruction or benefits because of my inquiry.

By having you participate in this survey, you will help to create a perspective on how students feel about bullying. It is my intention to release a summary of this study to all participants. It is my hope that the results will open the possibility of a positive change within school communities.

If you have any questions about the experiment, please contact me either personally. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject, please contact my advisor.

I greatly appreciate your time and dedication to my research study.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Therrien

I have read the above statement about the purpose and nature of the study and I freely consent to participate.

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Student Signature

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Date

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Print Student Name

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Date

**Staff Questionnaire for full and part time teachers/staff.**

1. How do you feel about bullying?
  
2. What grade do you teach? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How many times a day do you witness bullying? Circle One.
  - (a) 0-5
  - (b) 6-10
  - (c) 11-19
  - (d) More than 20
  
4. What grades do you think you would find the most problems with bullying?  
Check all that apply.  
 6<sup>th</sup> grade     2<sup>nd</sup> grade     3<sup>rd</sup> grade     1<sup>st</sup> grade  
 4<sup>th</sup> grade     Kindergarten     7<sup>th</sup> grade     8<sup>th</sup> grade
  
5. How satisfied are you with your classroom environment? Circle one area.  
Completely Satisfied    Somewhat satisfied    Somewhat dissatisfied    Completely Dissatisfied
  
6. Given the climate of the school, character education needs to be implemented in a more serious manner. Check one.  
 Strongly agree  
 Moderately disagree  
 Slightly disagree  
 Neutral, no opinion, undecided  
 Slightly disagree  
 Moderately agree  
 Strongly disagree

## Parent Questionnaire

1. How many children do you have in school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What grade(s) is your child in? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What gender is (are) your child (children)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you feel about bullying?

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5. Has your child ever been verbally picked on?    Yes    No
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the worst and 10 being the best, rate your relationship with your child's teacher. Circle the appropriate number.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. How satisfied are you with your child's school environment? Circle area.

Completely Satisfied    Somewhat satisfied    Somewhat dissatisfied    Completely Dissatisfied

### Additional Comment:

8. Has your child ever tried to stay at home from school because they were afraid of someone at school?                      Yes                      No

9. If your child was bullied, did he or she tell the teacher or administrator?

Yes    No                      What was the result?

10. Have you talked with your child on how to respond appropriately to a bully?

Yes    No

11. What ways should a child respond to a bully? Check all that apply.

Hit them       Walk away       Bully back

Tell adult       Ask them to stop

12. Where do you think the most bullying occurs in school? Circle one.

A – Bathroom      B – Hallway      C – Classroom

D – School Bus      E - Playground

13. What more do you feel could be done at our school to prevent bullying or instruct students about bullying?

## Student Questionnaire For Grades K-8

Due to various different reading comprehension levels, some questionnaires will be transformed into interviews

### Definitions of Answers:

Always = you see or do this behavior everyday

Often = you see or do this behavior at least a couple times a week

Sometimes = you see or do this behavior at least once a week

Rarely = you see or do this behavior once a month

Never = this is not something you see or do at your school

1. What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How often have you been bullied at school?

Always      Often      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

3. How often do you see someone bullying another student at school?

Always      Often      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

4. How often have you bullied another student?

Always      Often      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

5. Where have you seen bullying? Circle the ones that apply.

Classroom      Hallways      Bathroom      Bus      Cafeteria      Playground

6. If someone was bullying you, what would you do? Circle what you would do.

Hit them      Tell the Teacher      Walk Away

Tell them to stop      Bully Back

7. What do you think the consequence should be for people that bully? Circle one.

Conference with parent      Suspension from School      Phone call home

Referral      Expulsion from School      Nothing