Rowan University

## Rowan Digital Works

4-5-2005

# Teachers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of a middle school bully patrol

Arnold Jeffrey White
*Rowan University*

Follow this and additional works at: https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd

Part of the Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons

## Let us know how access to this document benefits you - share your thoughts on our feedback form.

# TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL BULLY PATROL

by
Arnold Jeffrey White

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 2005

Approved by
Professor

Date Approved____4-5-05____

# ABSTRACT

Arnold Jeffrey White
TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A
MIDDLE SCHOOL BULLY PATROL
2004/2005
Dr. David H. Moyer
Master of Arts in School Administration

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness, as perceived by teachers and students, of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol in reducing bullying for seventh and eighth grade students. The data gathering procedures were teacher and student surveys using the convenience sampling technique. The results of this study were based upon the analysis of the feedback that the teachers and students provided.

The major conclusions of this study provided important insights into the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol. The data revealed that almost all of the teachers perceived the bully patrol to be effective in eliminating bullying behaviors. In addition, the majority of seventh grade students also believed the Bully Patrol to be a useful school-wide anti-bullying program. In contrast, a noteworthy portion of the eighth grade students, who generally were pessimistic about the school's policies and programs, did not think that the Bully Patrol was very effective. Even so, the Bully Patrol continued to function at the Glassboro Intermediate School as a deterrent to bullying and bullying behaviors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents, Roberta and James White, for being my heroes because of their unconquerable inner, and outer, strength and courage. They are unquestionably the reasons that I have had many successes in my life and the reasons that I will have many more successes to come. My parents were the best friends that a son could ever have, and I was very blessed and extremely fortunate to have had them as my earthly parents and now as my guiding spirits and guardian angels.

Then, I would like to thank my Higher Power for ensuring that I would be created as a descendent of the first people, the Africans, upon whose strong and proud shoulders I stand tall.

Next, I am very appreciative to my field mentor, Ms. Marianne Carver, for providing me with a first rate internship experience and allowing me to develop my leadership style and skills unconditionally. I also owe gratefulness to Mrs. LaVonyia Mitchell and all the students, faculty, and support staff of the Glassboro Intermediate School for being patient and cooperative with me through my internship process.

Other special acknowledgments go to my good friends Mr. Jay Steele and Madame Anne-Sophie Kruse-Guth for their help and support in completing my thesis and my administrative internship.

Finally, I am grateful to Dr. David H. Moyer, my university mentor, and Rowan University, in particular the Educational Leadership Department, for providing me with an exceptional education in leadership theory and practice.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

# LIST OF FIGURES

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Focus of the Study

Bullying is a widespread problem in American schools and communities. This behavior includes physical aggression, threats, teasing, and harassment. It is, furthermore, an unacceptable, anti-social behavior that is learned through influences in the environment, e.g., home, school, peer groups, even the media. On the other hand, bullying can also be unlearned and prevented. A review of the existing literature indicates that researchers advocate school-wide, anti-bullying prevention programs that promote a positive and safe school climate to significantly reduce bullying for school-age children. Such school-based bully prevention programs have been found to be effective in reducing bullying incidents by as much as 50% while also decreasing general anti-social behavior (Olweus, 2003). If implemented correctly, school-wide bully prevention programs can and should lead to the creation of American schools in which students and teachers alike are able to have positive educational experiences in safe learning environments (Staniszewski, 2003).

To counteract the negative effects that bullying behavior has on the victims, the bullies, and the overall learning environment, many American schools are now using a variety of school-wide anti-bullying programs. For example, the Glassboro Intermediate School (GIS) has chosen to use a school-wide anti-bullying program called a 'Bully

Patrol'. As the research literature points out, successful anti-bullying programs involve *everyone* in the school community and not just the principal or a couple of concerned teachers (Pellegrini, 2002). Therefore, bully prevention programs must be a school-wide effort that should send a message that bullying will not be accepted in 'our school' (Garrett, 2003). For this purpose, any stakeholder of the Glassboro Intermediate School 'family' can be involved with the Bully Patrol. The involvement of all stakeholders, as heretofore mentioned, is *essential* to the success of any anti-bullying program and, most importantly, to the creation of a safe learning environment in a bully-free school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol, according to the teachers and students, on reducing bullying behavior among seventh and eighth grade middle school students using a quantitative-based action research design. This study resulted in a feasibility study to inform educators, parents, and students.

Definitions

*Bullying* means a child is being victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. A *bully* is someone who directs physical, verbal, or psychological aggression or harassment toward others, with the goal of gaining power over or dominating another individual. A *victim* is a child who is called names, pushed around, or harassed on an ongoing basis by a bully. A *bully-victim* is a person who is both a bully and a victim of bullying. The *Bully Patrol*

is a school-wide program consisting of students, teachers, and administrators who all work together to help eliminate bullying at the Glassboro Intermediate School and to promote a safe learning community. A *stakeholder* is anyone involved in the school community who has an interest in the student's and school's success, i.e., administrators, teachers, parents, students and concerned community members.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations for this study. First, the study was conducted just in one school. Therefore, the population of the study was small. Second, the intern only used a quantitative-based research model for this study and did not use other techniques such as reviewing material culture, case studies, or interviews. Third, the intern made use of an uncomplicated convenience sampling technique of the focused population, seventh and eighth grade teachers and students, of the study.

Relationship of the Study to the ISLLC Standards

For this study, the intern learned that the best Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards that applied were Standards Two and Three. In Standard Two, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth." The principal and assistant principal at the Glassboro Intermediate School unabashedly promoted the use of the Bully Patrol to help eliminate bullying and bullying behaviors. Therefore, the intern was strongly encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol according to

the students and teachers. By investigating the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol, the intern demonstrated knowledge of the importance of providing a safe school environment to ensure student growth and development (2.a.1). The intern took the study of bullying seriously and therefore was committed to helping to provide an effective learning environment (2.b.5) by working on a daily basis with members of the Bully Patrol to eliminate bullying behaviors.

In Standard Three, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a *safe*, efficient, and effective learning environment." Therefore, by working on the Bully Patrol, facilitating its meetings, and disciplining students who had their names given to the Bully Patrol, the intern had knowledge of the operational procedures for the school; including principles of school law and school safety (3.a.3) Since bullying hinders a *safe* learning environment, research showed that students who did not feel safe coming to school would not perform well academically as they were too concerned with their physical and emotionally well being. Thus, the intern believed in values and was passionately committed to helping to provide a safe school environment (3.b.4) in which each and every student felt comfortable to progress academically, socially, and emotionally.

Being an essential part of the Bully Patrol and monitoring bullying behaviors on a daily basis allowed the intern to perform as an administrator. That is, the intern acted as an administrator to facilitate and engage in activities ensuring that there was effective conflict resolution (3.c.5). The Bully Patrol meet frequently to discuss ways to resolve conflicts among students in a healthy and productive manner. In addition, the intern

performed as an administrator that facilitated and engaged in activities ensuring that there was a safe school environment (3.c.7) by helping to plan an anti-bullying pep rally, helping to design an anti-bullying contract, and acquiring prizes from local businesses to reward students for helping to prevent anti-bullying behaviors.

Setting of the Study

Glassboro is located in Gloucester County, New Jersey. It is an old borough that was incorporated in 1802. It is also a relatively small borough with a size of only 9.2 square miles. Ethnically, Glassboro is a diverse community. According to the 2000 Census, it has a population of 19,500 with Whites comprising 73% of the population, African Americans 20%, Hispanics 4%, and other racial and ethnic groups make up the remaining 3% of the population. With regards to economics, the 2000 Census reported that Glassboro's median household income is $44,992 and the median house value is $114,100. Glassboro is known for being the home of the formerly named Glassboro State College. The College changed its name in the early 1990s to Rowan University, which continues the legacy of being a great source of pride for Glassboro and the Southern New Jersey region. According to the Glassboro School District on-line news letter, Glassboro has 103 commercial enterprises and seven parks/recreation facilities.

Educationally, Glassboro is a comprehensive K-12 school district. The district has three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Overall, the Glassboro School District has a population of 2,434 students. The makeup of the student body is even more racially diverse than the overall makeup of the town. Whites are 55% of the district wide student population, African Americans are 36%, Hispanics are 5%, and

5

Asians comprise 4% of the overall student body. The special education population in the district is 19% and the gifted and talented students are 12%. This study takes place in the Glassboro Intermediate School which is the middle school and has an enrollment of 342 students in the seventh and eighth grades.

The district has 223 classroom teachers who each average 10 years of experience. There are 14 administrators who average 24 years of experience. As for administration and teacher education levels, 71% of all teachers and administrators hold at least a bachelor's degree, while the other 29% of administrators and teachers possess a master's degree. There are not any administrators or teachers who have earned a doctorate degree. Out of the 237 teachers and administrators, 221 are White, 22 are African American, 2 are Hispanic, and 1 is Asian. Some points of pride for the district are a highly flourishing Renaissance student success program, outstanding athletics, and about $22 million in building improvements.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to help the stakeholders of the Glassboro Intermediate School understand how the school's Bully Patrol was functioning to reduce bullying behaviors among the student population. Moreover, the intern wanted to investigate the perceptions of the how effective this anti-bullying program was according to the teachers and students. Understanding the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol, through a serious and thorough quantitative study, will allow the stakeholders to verify if they should continue using the program, change it, or decide if other effective school-wide, anti-bullying programs can achieve the same goal, a *bully-free* school. Since there was a

plethora of information about all aspects of bullying, this study also contributed to scholarly research and literature. The study also gave a different perspective and furthermore enriched the existing literature and research on this topic.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the study and provided an overview of the demographics of the Glassboro community where this study was completed. The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2: Review of the Literature, Chapter 3: Design of the Study, Chapter 4: Presentation of Research Findings, and Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Bullying among school children has been around for a long time and is therefore an old and well-known concern for educators. However, it is only in the very recent past that this negative, anti-social behavior has received extensive and intensive attention in American schools and media. This is due in large part to a surge in extremely violent behavior in schools that has lead to horrible human tragedies. These tragedies, such as the Columbine High School Massacre in Colorado for example, are played out in the media over and over again.

The events that lead up to these terrible tragedies can be attributed to bullying. For instance, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, who perpetrated the Columbine High School Massacre, were considered outsiders and according to one news report, "As is too common in high school, the boys [Dylan and Eric] found themselves frequently picked on by athletes and other students" (Rosenberg, 2003 para. 3). Moreover, Garrett (2003) has written, "The group of Columbine students identified as the 'trench coat mafia,' which included Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, was harassed, bullied, and put down on a daily basis for years" (p. 1). The American public sees these highly problematic images of the extremeness that bullying can have on schools and communities and becomes highly alarmed about bullying for the moment.

After the immediate shock of horrible occurrences like the Columbine Massacre fades away, children nonetheless continue going to schools throughout the country where "there is a significant presence of bullying" (Malecki, 2003, p. 471) and where the next catastrophic tragedy is just waiting to happen. If schools take bullying more seriously and not dismiss it as 'child's play' (Cooper and Snell, 2003), then maybe school tragedies like Columbine High School can be completely avoided. If taken more seriously, then perhaps the prevalence of bullying in American schools possibly can be significantly reduced as Ballard, Argus, and Remley (1999) have written, "by addressing the issues of bullying, school personnel may prevent more serious violent behavior" (p. 38).

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of social aggression that continues over time. Bullying can either be direct or indirect. Direct bullying comes in the forms of teasing, taunting, name calling, hitting, kicking, stealing, threatening, or using a weapon. Indirect bullying is much more subtle than direct bullying and can occur as spreading rumors about a person, ignoring or excluding others intentionally, or influencing others to do these things (Garrett, 2003). The major components of bullying are repeated physical and psychological intimidation which causes its victims an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.

In any given bullying situation, there is also an imbalance of power and strength between bully and victim (Espelage and Swearer, 2003). Furthermore, students who bully other students have a need to feel powerful and in control. Bullies appear to get satisfaction from hurting others and causing them pain. In addition, bullies do not have

empathy for those whom they bully and "often defended their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way" (Ditzhazy and Burton, 2003, p. 45). Bullying is also used to achieve a social goal for a bully and his or her friends. Specifically, the bully, by abusing and intimidating others, is trying very hard to gain "peer status and effective bullies (i.e., individuals who got their way with peers) are often leaders of peer cliques" (Pellegrini, 2003, p. 152). The author furthermore has written, "Thus bullying can be a deliberate tactic used to achieve peer status" (Pellegrini, 2003, p. 152). So, bullies feel empowered when they bully others as they look and feel 'important' in the minds of their peers and friends.

Prevalence of Bullying

Bullying is a widespread problem in American schools and is the most common form of violence in American society. Bullying is so prevalent in American society and the above-mentioned statistics only reinforced the importance of eliminating it from *all* schools and communities. Bullying in schools however is not just an American phenomenon but rather a global problem. Still, bullying did not begin to be seriously studied by researchers until the 1970s with the focus being primarily on schools in Scandinavia. In the 1980s and 1990s, other studies on bullying in schools began to take place in such varied countries as Canada, England, the United States, Japan, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and the Netherlands (Funk, 2003).

The preeminent and world renowned researcher on school-age bullying is Dan Olweus, a Norwegian Professor at the Research Centre for Health Promotion at the University of Bergen. He began the first serious studies on bullying among

10

schoolchildren in the 1970s. Professor Olweus followed up and conducted studies on bullying in the 80s, 90s, and then again in 2001. In his studies, he discovered that bullying was very prevalent between the ages of 8 and 16. He and his colleagues surveyed 150,000 Scandinavian students in 1983 and discovered that 15% of these 8 through 16 year old students experienced being a bully or a victim of bullying (Olweus, 2003; Suderman, Jaffe, and Schieck, 1996). In the 2001 study, Professor Olweus and his colleagues surveyed Scandinavian students again. This time however, they surveyed only 11,000 students in 54 elementary and junior high schools using the same questionnaire from the 1983 study. Professor Olweus received results that were very disturbing to him and his colleagues. First, the percentage of students who had been victimized rose by 50%. Second, the percentage of students who were the bullies increased by a highly problematic 65%. As a result of these studies, Olweus (2003) therefore wrote, "The surveys [1983 and 2001] showed that bullying was a serious problem affecting many students in Scandinavian schools" (p. 12).

In other studies on the prevalence of school-age bullying, the results were very similar to those of Professor Olweus' research. For example in Canada, the Toronto Board of Education documented that in the fourth through eighth grades, one child out of every five had been a victim of bullying periodically, while 1 student out of every 12 was bullied daily or weekly (Garrett, 2003). In the United States, the results were not much different than the Toronto study. Several large-scale studies that were conducted in mid-western schools reinforced the fact that bullying was very prevalent among American school-age children as Garrett (2003) wrote, "In a study of junior high and high school students from small Midwestern towns, 88 percent of students said they had observed

11

bullying, and 76.8 percent indicated they had been a victim of bullying at school. Of the nearly 77 percent who had been victimized, 14 percent indicated they had experienced severe reactions to the abuse (p. 35).

In a study of 6,500 fourth through sixth graders in rural South Carolina, 25 % of the students admitted to being bullied with some regularity and 10% had been bullied at least once a week. In the same study, 20% of the children admitted that they had been bullied with some regularity in the three months preceding the study (Espelage and Swearer, 2003; Garrett, 2003). Another study, conducted by the Journal of American Medical Association in which 15,686 students in Grades 6 through 10 across the U.S. had been surveyed, "found that a total of 29.9% of the sample reported frequent involvement in bullying, with 13% as a bully, 10.6% as a victim, and 6% as bully-victim" (Espelage and Swearer, 2003, p. 367).

In terms of gender differences with bullying, boys were much more likely to report being bullies, and perpetrating violent acts on others than were girls, at any age. Girls were somewhat less likely than boys to be the victims of bullying. Still, girls did engage in bullying just as much as boys did (Cooper and Snell, 2003). On the other hand, Professor Olweus' 1993 study, conducted with students in grades five through seven, found that 60% of girls who were bullied were bullied only by boys, while another 15 to 20 % of girls were bullied by both boys and girls. In addition, the great majority of boys who were bullied, 80%, were bullied only by boys (Suderman, Jaffe, and Schieck, 1996). Furthermore, boys who bullied were more likely to engage in direct bullying while girls who bullied were more prone to using indirect bullying. Females especially were more likely to spread rumors and intentionally ignore or exclude others (Malecki, 2003).

Although Bullying was prevalent among students at all grade levels, it was most insidious during the middle school years (Harris and Petrie, 2003). For instance, an American study of students in grades 6 through 12 revealed that "bullying increased from primary to middle or junior high school, and then declined in high school" (Pellegrini, 2002, p. 154). In an Australian study, similar results were discovered. That is, "bullying decreased across the primary school years, increased with the transition to secondary schools [beginning of American middle or junior high schools], and then after the transition [to senior high school] resumed its decline" (Pellegrini, 2002, p. 154).

As a result of the prevalence of bullying in American schools, several state legislatures have passed laws addressing bullying among school children. States such as Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania have had anti-bullying laws in effect since 2001 and "likely were motivated, at least in part, by tragic shootings at several U.S. high schools in the late 1990s and subsequent reports that many perpetrators of school shootings had felt persecuted, bullied, or threatened by their peers" (Small, 2003, p. 432). Additionally, several other states, for example Oklahoma, Georgia, and Colorado, strongly promote the idea that schools need to have a serious commitment to implementing anti-bullying programs.

In Oklahoma, for instance, schools must have a Safe School Committee that needs to review bullying prevention programs from other states with the intention of compiling a list of programs that are appropriate for the prevention of bullying. The state of Georgia mandates the Georgia State Board of Education include in its mandatory K-12 character education curriculum, the development of methods to vehemently discourage bullying and violent acts associated with it. In Colorado, a school principal is required to submit a

13

written report to his or her board of education. This report informs the board of the measures that the principal is using to reduce bullying and if he or she is implementing a bully prevention program (Small, 2003).

Causes of Bullying

There are four important reasons why bullies develop. First, there are family factors that lead to a child developing into a bully. That is, bullies are *created* in the home. They are a product of their home environment which includes parents who are not affectionate and show neither warmth nor attention to their child. Moreover, the parents themselves can be bullies and therefore model the same behavior for their child or children.

Second, there are individual factors that contribute to a bully's development. Bullies tend to have low self-esteem especially in the middle school years, and they tease other students as a means of increasing their peer position and low self-esteem. They do this by going along with the crowd (Harris and Petrie, 2002). Also, children who are active and impulsive in temperament are more inclined to develop into bullies, as their temperament leads them to develop certain personality styles and inappropriate interpersonal behaviors (Olweus, 2003). In addition, boys who are physically stronger than their peers tend to become bullies as well (Ditzhazy and Burton, 2003).

Third, school factors guide some students to become bullies while other students do not. As a result, the social climate in a school has to be one that encourages warmth and acceptance of all students, and one where there are high standards for student and teacher behavior towards one another (Olweus, 2003). Since it occurs in social contexts,

it is easy therefore for bullying to take place in schools where there are a plethora of social interactions occurring on a daily basis among students. This is especially true if there is a lack or scarcity of adult supervision in the school and if there is a negative climate in which bullying behavior is allowed and accepted as status quo as Yoon and Kerber (2003) have written:

> Bullying behaviors [in schools] are reinforced when a bully successfully dominates a victim and does not experience negative consequences (i.e. punishments). That is, unless appropriate consequences are consistently and immediately given after each bullying episode, bullying behaviors have a greater chance of recurring in the future, especially when there is continuing success in exerting control over the victim. However, teacher reports indicate that bullies often go without punishment for their behavior thus reinforcing the bullying behaviors. (pp. 27-28).

Finally, there are community factors that contribute to the development of bullies. For example, students who attend schools that are located in high crime areas are predisposed to having higher incidents of violence in and around the schools. Moreover, people do not feel safe in areas where there is high drug-dealing related violence which has the potential to spill over into the neighborhood schools. Furthermore, schools that contain a high turnover rate of students are more likely to have *more* bullying than schools where there is a very low turnover rate for students. In addition, many communities have a lack of state and local concern with bullying and this "could influence a community's intolerance" (Garrett, 2003, p. 20) to bullying behaviors.


Victims

Victims of school bullying can be described as students who have low-self esteem, not many friends, and often feel a sense of failure. They also are often not considered physically attractive and sometimes consider themselves to be clumsy and

stupid, and they therefore become ashamed of whom they are. Since victims of bullying have difficulty forming peer relationships, they have a propensity to isolate themselves further and therefore experience strong feelings of loneliness and abandonment. Bullied victims believe that there are not any social support systems in place for them at school, and they do not tell teachers, administrators, or parents that they are being bullied. As a result, victims do not like going to school and are afraid to do so. They also begin to show fear while they are in school. Bullies sense these facts about victims and prey even more upon them. Victims are often quiet and shy in temperament. They neither retaliate nor make any assertive responses to the initial aggression, which is then repeated by the bully (Ballard, Argus, and Remley, 1999).

The research literature moreover shows that bullied students in general are low academic achievers and "students who were physically different in race, size, or in the way they dressed and who were not as adept as others were more likely to be bullied. . . . furthermore, special needs children appeared to be at particular risk for being bullied" (Harris and Petrie, 2002, p. 44). Victims also have a better rapport with adults and this too becomes a source of their victimization because a bully senses the favoritism showed to a victim by the adults at school. While most victims do not do anything to provoke the victimization, there is a subgroup of victims who have a tendency to show irritating and inappropriate social behavior. These children tend to be impulsive and have poor social skills. These bully-victims also try to bully other children, so they become both a bully and a victim (Ballard, Argus, and Remley, 1999; Espelage and Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 2003).

Long-term Consequences for Victims and Bullies

Many people think bullying is just part of growing up and a way for young people to learn to stick up for themselves. However, this is faulty thinking and perpetuates myths about bullying, i.e. kids are kids and therefore bullying is something normal that all young people have to endure. Many adults can vividly recall bullying incidents "whether they were the target of bullying [or] used bullying behaviors themselves . . . that happened 10, 20, or even 40 years ago" (Cooper and Snell, 2003, p. 22). These are powerful memories that bullying situations leave with adults well after their school years have passed as "the negative effects of bullying and being bullied reach into adulthood" (Harris and Petrie, 2002, p. 45). Research therefore demonstrates that the long-term consequences for both victims and bullies can be far too serious and damaging to just claim that bullying behaviors are nothing more than innocuous teasing by children or just 'child's play'.

Victims of bullying are generally not happy children. In addition, victims can suffer from such physiological and psychological concerns as fear, depression, anxiety, and low-self esteem as a result of their bullying experiences. Victims do not like going to school and also attempt to evade certain social situations in and out of school in hopes of avoiding bullying. Victims are even afraid to go into the bathroom alone and afraid of the bus ride to and from school, especially if there is scarce adult supervision (Garrett, 2003). Other negative effects of bullying for victims are absenteeism, truancy, habit disorders, behavior extremes, overly adaptive behaviors, and lags in development (Ballard, Argus, and Remley, 1999; Garrett, 2003).

17

Moreover, middle school bullied victims are more likely to use alcohol, smoke cigarettes, have poor academic achievement, and drop out of school (Harris and Petrie, 2002). In extreme cases, some victims of bullying even attempt or commit suicide. As a result of several bullied boys committing suicide in Norway in the 1980s, the country started a nation-wide anti-bullying program (Suderman, Jaffe, and Schieck, 1996; Olweus, 2003). Furthermore, children who are bullied during their high school years, as one study has reported, "have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem by the age of 23, even though they are no longer harassed or socially isolated" (Harris and Petrie, 2002, p. 45).

Although it might seem incredulous to some, there are also long-term negative consequences for bullies. Bullies have lower self-esteem than their victims, especially in the middle school years. As bullies reach their high school years, they become less popular and have fewer friends. Furthermore, they are more likely than bullied victims to use alcohol and smoke cigarettes as well as being involved in deviant behavior (Ballard, Argus, Remley, 1999). Additionally, bullies have a tendency to become aggressive adults who are involved in multiple criminal activities and who develop anti-social personality disorders. Bullies as a result are more likely to require adult mental health services than victims or non-bullied children. They need these services to address the serious psychological and physiological issues that they face or may face. If bullies have not changed their patterns of bullying behavior when they reach adulthood, then they are also more likely to "bully their mates, their children, and possibly people in the workplace" (Garrett, 2003, p. 75). Thus, it is in the best interest of *all* that bullying is reduced drastically if not entirely purged from American schools and communities.

What Schools Can do About Bullying

Although there is a myriad of research on school-age bullying, there is also a significant amount of research literature that provides remedies to help schools appreciably diminish this insidious anti-social behavior. When bullying is reduced moreover, schools can begin to create and maintain safe learning environments in which students and teachers alike can flourish. As heretofore mentioned, the prevalence of bullying for school-age children is not just harmless teasing and innocent child's play.

The ramifications for both victims and bullies has the potential to extend throughout their lives and thus into American workplaces, homes, and communities. As the research literature points out, bullying begins in the home and extends to schools. However, it is in the schools where bullying takes place the most for school-age children, because there are unlimited social interactions on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis (Feinberg, 2003; Funk, 2003). As unfair as it may be, schools often have more of a responsibility and carry a heavier burden, to eradicate bullying than parents. After all, many parents may not even ever have any clue that their child is a bully or a victim.

The research literature shows that schools can effectively reduce bullying if all stakeholders are involved in the process. That is, *everyone* involved in the school community needs to actively be concerned and engaged in a serious, committed, and emotionally honest belief that bullying has no place in 'Our School' (Staniszewski, 2003). Once this mentality exits, schools can then begin, as the research literature points out, to develop a safe and supportive school environment. A safe and supportive environment is one in which the adults "provide a school atmosphere free of psychological and physical abuse for all students" (Ballard, Argus, and Remley, 1996, p.

47). In order to provide safe and supportive school environments, the research literature illustrates that it behooves schools to create well-implemented anti-bullying programs with parent, teacher, student, and community support (Feinberg, 2003). Such school-wide programs, which can also be implemented throughout an entire school district, can markedly reduce bullying. For example, Sudermann, Jaffe and Schieck (1996) have written the following:

> Olweus, in his very comprehensive and large-scale school-based program evaluation in Norway, found a reduction of 50 percent in direct bullying two years after the start of implementation. In addition, both teachers and students reported very positive changes in school climate: improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, greater satisfaction on the part of students, and reduced vandalism (¶ 35).

The Olweus Norwegian Anti-Bullying Program showed tremendous accomplishment in two short years because, as Feinberg (2003) discovered, "The goal is to create a [school] culture in which adults stop all bullying immediately, all students learn positive behaviors and become part of the anti-bullying solution, and the needs of individuals are met" (p. 10). The Olweus Norwegian Anti-Bullying Program was one of the first successful anti-bullying programs among school-age children anywhere in the world, and it helped lay the groundwork for other successor programs upon which to model and to draw successful ideas and results (Feinberg, 2003; Olweus, 2003).

In another example, the Bully-Proofing Your School Program, the researchers have developed five key components to the creation of a safe school environment that can effectively reduce, if implemented correctly, bullying behaviors. These five integral parts are: all staff members are appropriately trained in bully reduction and appropriate intervention techniques; a caring majority of students (85% of the students who are neither bullies nor victims but the students who stand and watch as bullying takes place)

who set the tone by carrying the message 'We treat others kindly in school'; support for victims; an involved parent community; and a systems approach that emphasizes the creation of an environment where all children feel safe and comfortable to be who they are (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, and Short-Camilli, 1997). In summary, the Bully-Proofing Your School Program, according to Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, and Short-Camilli (1997), is a successful program to considerably lessen bullying because the overall attitude of the program and the stakeholders is based on the African philosophy of 'It takes a Village to Raise a Child' since everyone in the school is involved in the achievements and accomplishments of the program.

There are a myriad of names for successful school-based anti-bullying programs. For example, some accomplished programs are called by such names as Practice Playground, Expect Respect, School-Based-Anti–Bullying Program (ASAP), Take A Stand, Steps To Respect, Quit It!, Students Against Bullying, Kindness is Contagious, Respect and Protect, and Bully-Free For Me! Task Force (Garrett, 2003). No matter what the program is called however research shows that the goals are the same. That is, school-based anti-bullying programs *all* want the reduction, if not the outright eradication, of bullying and the creation of safe school environments (Ballard, Argus, and Remley, 1999; Cooper and Snell, 2003; Feinberg, 2003; Garrett, 2003; Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, and Short-Camilli, 1997; Olweus, 2003).

Furthermore the research literature shows there are several basic principles that any school-based anti-bullying program needs to make use of in order to be successful. First, the program has to lay the groundwork and build a school-wide foundation for the program by striving for awareness (bully prevention training) and warm, positive

involvement of adults, teachers, principals, counselors and parents. Next, the program should make early interventions (teach specific skills and values in the classroom) and set and stick to firm limits as to what behavior is unacceptable.

Then, the program is required to consistently apply non-hostile, non-physical consequences for rule violation and unacceptable behavior and has a protocol in place for intervening in or investigating a bullying incident. Finally, all adults involved in the program *must* act as authorities and positive role models in students' academic learning and social relationships in school (Ballard, Argus, and Remley, 1999; Cooper and Snell, 2003; Feinberg, 2003; Garrett, 2003; Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, and Short-Camilli, 1997; Olweus, 2003). Adhering to these guidelines can help educators, parents, students, and community members involved in any anti-bullying program to achieve the goals of reducing bullying behaviors and creating safe school environments.

Summary

Bullying is a widespread problem in American schools and communities. However, it is only in the very recent past that this behavior has received its due attention in American schools and media. This is due in large part to a surge in extremely violent behavior in schools that has lead to horrible human tragedies such as the Columbine High School Massacre. Bullying is an unacceptable anti-social behavior that is *learned* through individual, home, school, and community factors. Furthermore, bullies tend to have a low self-esteem, especially in the middle school years, are physically stronger than their victims, and tease other students as a means of increasing their peer position. On the other hand, children who become victims generally are quiet and shy in temperament.

Additionally, they often have low-self esteem, not many friends, often feel a sense of failure, and tend to isolate themselves from their peers to avoid being harassed and victimized by bullies.

Bullying is a form of social aggression that continues over time and sentences its victims to an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse. Bullying is either direct (teasing, taunting, name calling) or indirect (spreading rumors, social isolation). Bullying among school-aged children is not just an American phenomenon but rather a global problem. The research literature contains a plethora of studies on bullying and the negative effects of it from such diverse countries as Japan, Australia, Canada, Norway, New Zealand, and England. Bullying however is so prevalent in American schools that some state legislatures have passed anti-bullying measures for their respective public schools to follow. Bullying therefore is not innocent 'child's play' and indeed has serious negative short and long-term consequences for both bullies and victims.

Even though bullying is a learned, destructive social behavior and very prevalent in American schools, it can be unlearned and significantly reduced. In schools, researchers advocate school-wide, anti-bullying prevention programs (like the Olweus Norwegian Anti-Bullying Program or the Bully-Proofing Your School Program). There are multitudes of other school-wide anti-bullying programs that have successfully addressed the issues of bullying and reduced it significantly as well. However, to be effective, school-wide programs must involve all the appropriate stakeholders, i.e., administrators, teachers, parents, students, and even community members. These stakeholders should have a serious commitment to drastically reduce bullying in order to create safe school environments free of psychological and physical abuse for *all* students.

# CHAPTER 3

# DESIGN OF THE STUDY

## Introduction

For this study, the intern investigated the students' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the school-wide anti-bullying program, the Bully Patrol, at the Glassboro Intermediate School. The intern moreover felt that using the students' and teachers' input was vital to under covering how these important stakeholders felt about the program. Therefore the design of this study was created to elicit the most reliable and realistic data that related to their beliefs and perceptions of the Bully Patrol.

## Description of the Research Design

The design of the study was a quantitative-based research model using an uncomplicated convenience sampling technique of the focused population, 7th and 8th grade teachers and students. The focused populations completed surveys that were specifically created for them. The intern selected the quantitative research design with a convenience sampling technique since it was an extremely reliable method to obtain accurate data about the perceptions of the students and teachers regarding bullying and the school's Bully Patrol. There were 26 out of 35 teachers, 74% of the teacher population, from the 7th and 8th grades that participated in this study. In addition, the students were selected from this intern's Social Studies classes. One 7th and one 8th grade was selected to participate in this study. In the 7th grade class, there were 26 students, and

the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class consisted of 33 students. From these two classes, 75% of the students participated in the study. The other students either never turned in the consent letter or were not allowed to participate by their parents.

This research study took place exclusively in the Glassboro Intermediate School, the Glassboro School District's middle school, where there was an enrollment of 342 students in the seventh and eighth grades. The socioeconomic status for Glassboro residents ranged from low income to upper middle income levels. In this study, the teacher participants consisted of 90% females and 10% males. In the participant teacher population, whites comprised 86% of the total number of teachers who completed the survey and African Americans made up the remaining 14%. There were not any other racial groups that participated in the teacher population. Of the participant student population, 12% received special services, 39% were students of color and 61% were whites, and 49% were girls and 51% were boys.

Focus on Research Instruments

The research instruments were developed and designed based on the intern's experience with the Procedures and Evaluation in Research course at Rowan University. During this course, this intern had the opportunity to create and design a nonexperimental quantitative-based research instrument that was used successfully as a data gathering technique. Therefore, the intern decided to use the same format for this research study. According to the research literature presented in the Procedures and Evaluation in Research course, using surveys had become an extremely reliable and credible method of collecting and analyzing data in nonexperimental quantitative research. As a result of

what had previously been learned about using surveys, the intern therefore created two distinct instruments. One instrument was created explicitly for the teacher participants (Appendix A) and the other one exclusively for the students (Appendix B). The research instruments that the intern designed used a Likert-type Scale. Using the Likert-type Scale to sort through the collected data and analyze it was simple and straightforward. This type of scale moreover allowed for a wide-ranging collection of the teachers and students perceptions of the effectiveness of the bully patrol.

The research instruments were administered in November directly after the "Stamp Out Bullying Pep Rally". The intern purposely set about surveying the faculty and students since the Bully Patrol put together the pep rally. At that time, the intern furthermore believed that the knowledge about preventing bullying and how the Bully Patrol was working would be embedded in all the participants' minds. The surveys were administered without any complication. The students and faculty were willing to become involved in the research. Therefore, the intern believed that the responses to the survey were valid and credible in describing the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for this study was very simplistic. The sample populations were represented by those stakeholders, the students and teachers, who had the most opportunities to determine if the Bully Patrol was effective in reducing bullying at the Glassboro Intermediate School. The students were not selected because of any prescribed beliefs but rather because of their convenience to the intern's teaching

schedule. Moreover, the students represented a very diverse group racially, ethnically, academically, and economically. The diversity of the student population was significant for the reason that it provided for a range of opinions about the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol and not monolithic view points.

Data Collection Approach

The intern decided to begin gathering and collecting the data for this study early in the school year. Therefore, the data collection instruments were introduced in early November. The data was collected as early as possible since teachers and students were likely to get overwhelmed as the school year progressed. Moreover, the intern felt that if the research data collection began early in the school year, then both students and teachers would take their time in completing their surveys with more efficiency, which would provide very reliable and credible data.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan was to collect the completed surveys from the teachers in December, the students in January, and then analyze the data through March 2005. The intern used the SPSS predictive analytics computer software to input the collected data for both students and teachers. SPSS predictive analytics was a superior software program that provided this intern with a plethora of different methods to analyze the research data. That is, SPSS predictive analytics connected the data to effective action by drawing reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol and how beneficial it would be in the future.

Evidence to Prove that the Project is having an Impact

The intern was involved with the Bully Patrol from the beginning of the school year until the end of it. The intern created a classroom environment that was bully-free, helped plan the "Stamp Out Bullying Pep Rally", and helped create an anti-bullying contract for each student to sign. The intern eventually took over the school's Bully Patrol and thus became the "administrator" in charge of it. From this perspective, it was easy to recognize evidence that the project had an impact. That is, the teachers reported to the intern throughout the academic year that they had observed fewer incidences instances of bullying than in prior years. In addition, the bully patrol reported very few occurrences of bullying.

Although all teachers and students were involved in ensuring that bullying behaviors did not occur at GIS and were in effect a "Caring Majority," the actual Bully Patrol consisted of twenty-five 7th and 8th grade students, the assistant principal, and the intern who took their commitment to reporting and preventing bullying behavior very seriously. As a result of their hard work and pledge to end bullying behavior the Glassboro Intermediate School Bully Patrol was featured in a newspaper article for the Gloucester County Times during the course of the school year. The Glassboro Intermediate School Bully Patrol was therefore recognized as a model program for other schools to emulate. For the intern, there was no better evidence that this research project had an impact on the stakeholders of the Glassboro Intermediate School then when the Bully Patrol received this outstanding honor.

# CHAPTER 4

## PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The use of a quantitative-based action research model to gather and analyze data provided very revealing information about the how the students and teachers perceived the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol. The results of the study were based upon the students and teachers responses to their respective surveys. The teachers' survey items (Appendix A) were delineated using varying response score ranges than the students' survey items (Appendix B). The results of the respective surveys are contained within this chapter.

What Information was Found

The focus of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol according to the students and teachers. The school had a "Bully Box" near the main office. Students, without divulging their names, could place the names of other students who they had witnessed bullying in it. Once a student's name was placed in the box, the intern would have a conference with the student to determine whether or not the allegations of bullying were true. Bullying was taken very seriously at the Glassboro Intermediate School, therefore a student who was proven to be a bully would face severe disciplinary actions up to and including suspension.

The Bully Patrol played an integral part in minimizing bullying and bullying behaviors. The students knew who members of the Bully Patrol were in every aspect of

the school's daily life. Therefore, the fact that students were monitoring other students empowered the Bully Patrol and indeed all the students to be on the look out for this negative social behavior. Although the Bully Patrol did not have actual power to punish or give consequences, they did however have the power to report bullying and to prevent students from bullying one another by intervening in a potential situation where bullying took place. As a result, the simple presence of having a Bully Patrol prevented students from bullying one another. Since all the students knew there were other eyes watching for potential problems, any student was ready to report bullying behaviors by placing a name in the Bully Box or directly to the Bully Patrol members.

Since the focus of this study was what the students and teachers perceived about the Bully Patrol, the most important question asked therefore was how effective did they believe the Bully Patrol to be. Regarding the student participants, 75% perceived the Bully Patrol to be an effective school-wide program sometimes or often (Figure 1). There were some students who felt that the program was never effective as well. Still, the majority believed that there were positive benefits in having a school wide anti-bullying program in place at Glassboro Intermediate School. Since such a significant number of the students believed that the program was effective always or sometimes, the Bully Patrol had obviously influenced this segment of the stakeholder population. Although more 7th grade students than 8th grade students believed in the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol, this did not negate the overall trend that the students believed in the Bully Patrol's effectiveness to help stop bullying at the Glassboro Intermediate School.
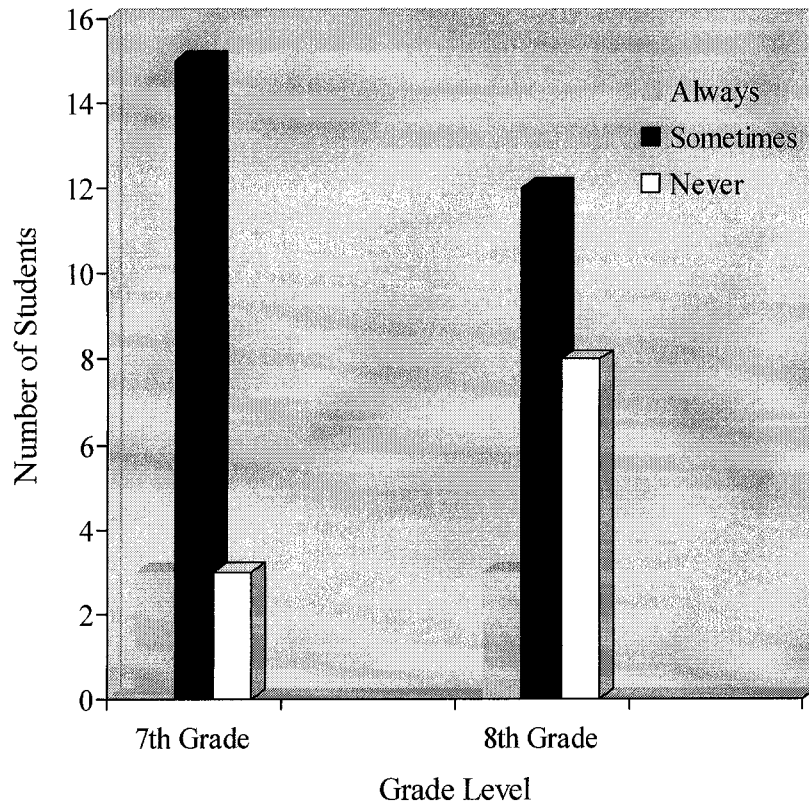
*Figure 1.* Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Bully Patrol.

Additionally, there was a significant difference between how the 7th and 8th grade

students perceived the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol in fostering a safe school

atmosphere. The 7th grade students had a much more favorable view of the effectiveness

of the Bully Patrol in this regard (Figure 2). That is, the majority of 7th grade students

believed that the Bully Patrol was sometimes effective in creating a safe school

environment or often effective. It was quite the opposite for 8th grade students. The

majority of 8th grade students believed that the Bully Patrol was either never effective in

creating a safer school or only sometimes effective in creating a safe school environment
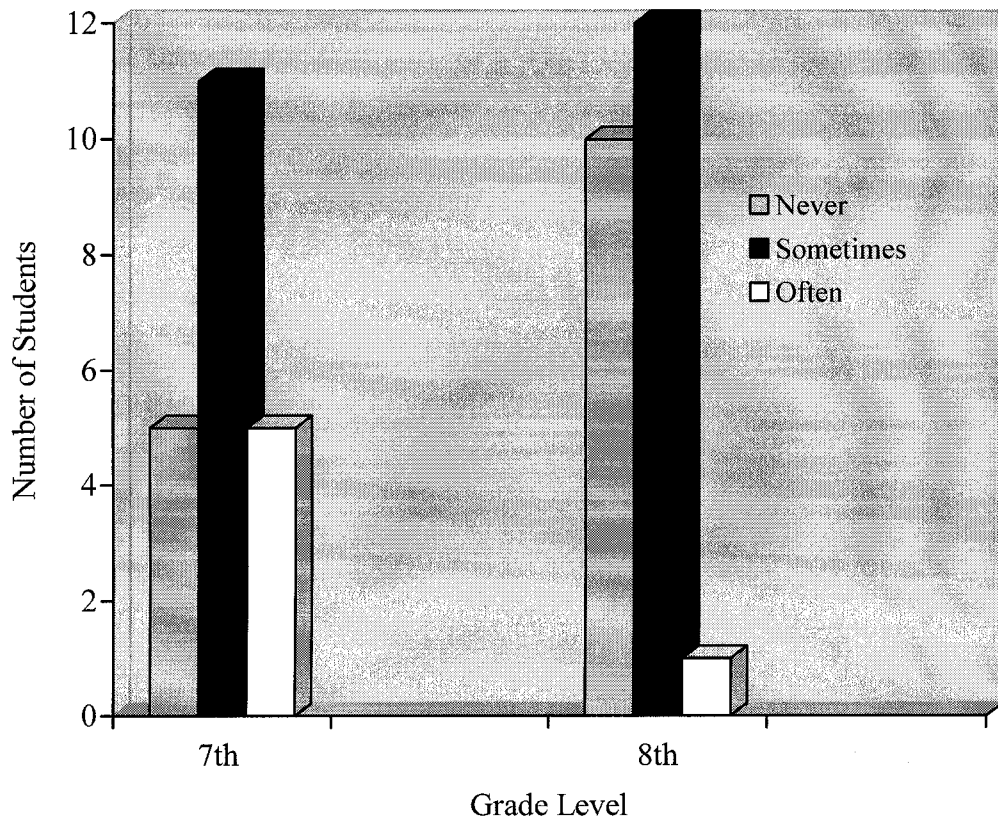
(Figure 2).

*Figure 2.* Students' Perceptions of the Bully Patrol's Effectiveness in Creating a Safe School Environment.

Even though the 8th grade students had a more unfavorable view of the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol than did the 7th graders, they did not overwhelmingly respond (Table 3) that they did not feel safe at school. Furthermore, when asked on the student survey if they ever thought of not coming to school because of bullying (Appendix B), both the 7th and 8th grade students resoundingly answered no. In fact, 88% of the all the students answered that they never thought of not coming to school because of bullying. Still, the 7th grade students however had more consistency than their 8th grade counterparts. That is, they not only perceived the Bully Patrol to be effective but they

32

also overwhelmingly felt safer at school (Figure 3). In general, the 7th grade students, tended to be more optimistic about the policies and programs that were available at the Glassboro Intermediate School. Therefore, this fact correlated with their positive responses to the efficacy of the Bully Patrol and to feeling safe at school. That is, the 7th grade students were enthusiastic that such a program was in place and were willing to apply themselves fervently to make it work for all students.

Since the 8th grade students did not feel that the Bully Patrol was tremendously effective, it would stand to reason that they would not feel as safe at school. However, through conversations with fellow colleagues, the intern discovered that 8th grade students were more apt to have negative opinions in general about the Glassboro Intermediate School. This did not negate their perceptions, but rather provided insights into how they may harbor contempt for the school and project that disdain into a lack of enthusiasm for the school's programs and policies, even a program such as the Bully Patrol that the 7th grade students found to be effective (Figures 1 and 2).

Furthermore, through conversations with fellow colleagues, personal discussions with 8th grade students, and comments on the student survey (Appendix B), the intern discovered that the 8th grade students at the Glassboro Intermediate School believed, in general, that the Bully Patrol was not intended to prevent bullying. They assumed that the program was used to "snitch" on fellow students and to therefore get these students in trouble or punished. Much to the chagrin of the intern, the 8th grade students' pessimism about the Bully Patrol perpetuated some bullying behaviors that were not reported by them and therefore not investigated.
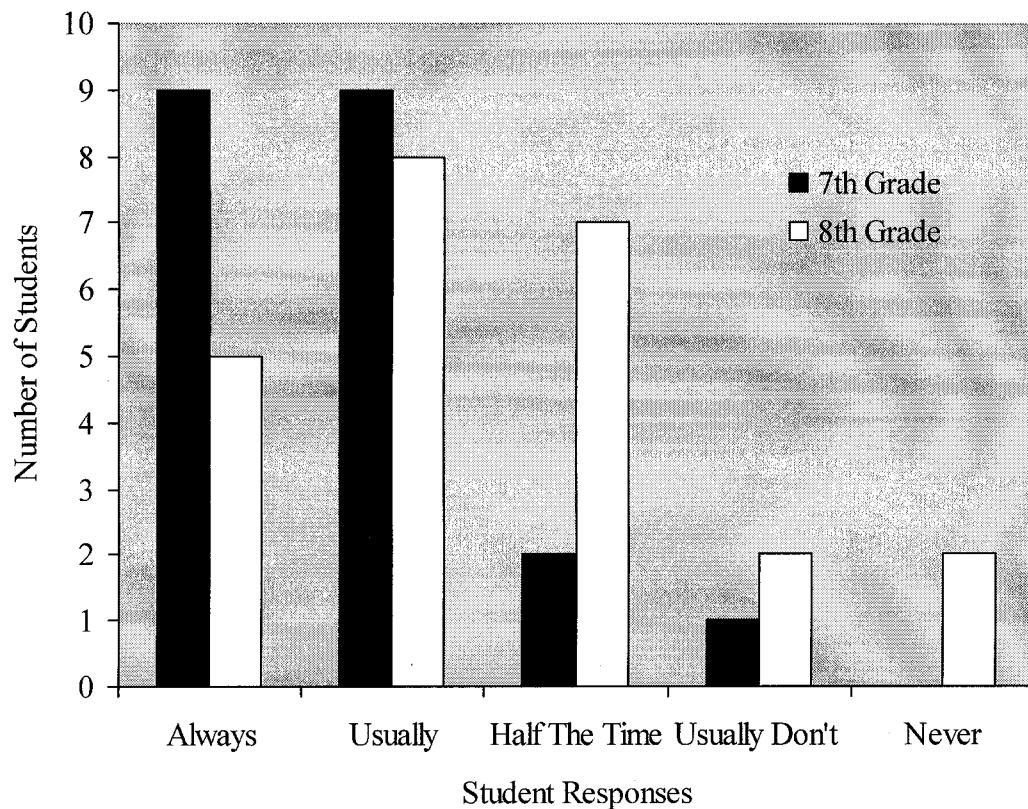
*Figure 3.* Students' Perceptions of Feeling Safe at Glassboro Intermediate School.

The majority of teachers who participated in the study were tenured teachers with more than ten years of service at the school. As a result, they were able to base their perceptions on how bullying was prior to the inception of the Bully Patrol and then how it had changed since the Bully Patrol began a several years. For the teachers therefore, there was more consistency with their perceptions of the Bully Patrol (Figure 4). The majority of teachers, whether male or female, felt that the Bully Patrol was an effective program. Albeit there were some female teachers who perceived the program as ineffectual, but the

majority of teachers still believe that the Bully Patrol had validity as a program that was helping to eliminate bullying behaviors at the Glassboro Intermediate School. The teachers also strongly believed that bullying increased in grades 7th and 8th. This idea was in accordance with the research literature that bullying dramatically increased during the middle school years as 62% of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed that this was the case. Moreover, when asked on the survey if Bully Patrols were helpful in decreasing bullying in schools (Appendix A), the teachers agreed generally that Bully Patrols were important as a deterrent to bullying and bullying behaviors.
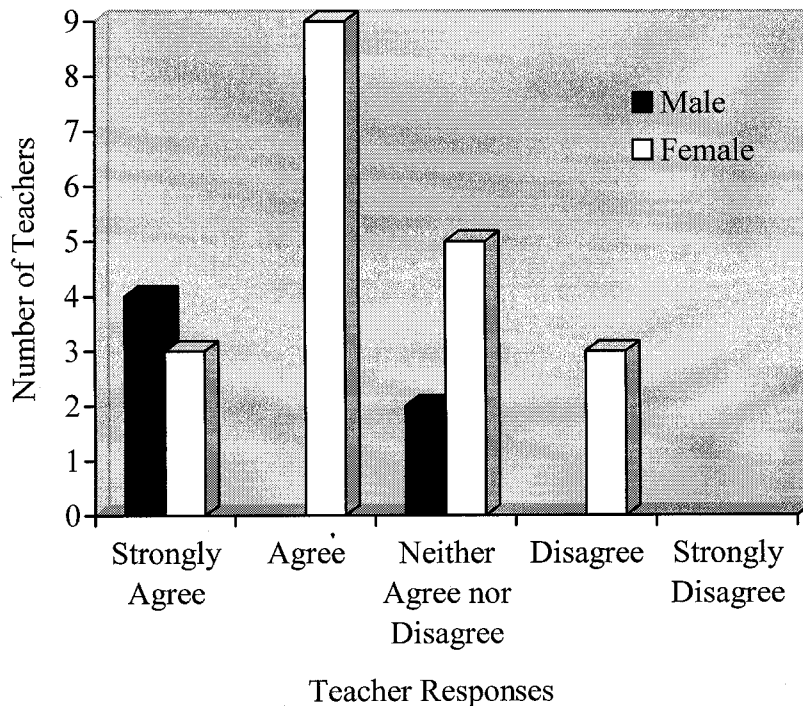


*Figure 4.* Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Bully Patrol.

Like the majority of 7th grade students and about half of the 8th grade students, the teachers followed a similar pattern in perceiving the Bully Patrol as effective in helping to create a safer school. That is, the teachers, for the most part, too believed that the Bully Patrol was an effective program for this purpose (Figure 5). The teachers did not overwhelmingly perceive the Bully Patrol to be effective, but they nevertheless did believe that it was beneficial to helping provide a safe school. For example, four out of the six male teachers who participated agreed that the Bully Patrol was effective as a school-wide program that helped to foster a safer school. With regard to the female teachers, 11 out of 20 strongly agreed or agreed that the Bully Patrol was well utilized in fostering school safety (Figure 5). Moreover, out of the 26 teachers who participated in this study, only 1 felt that the Bully Patrol was not effective at all in helping to provide safety in the school for the students.
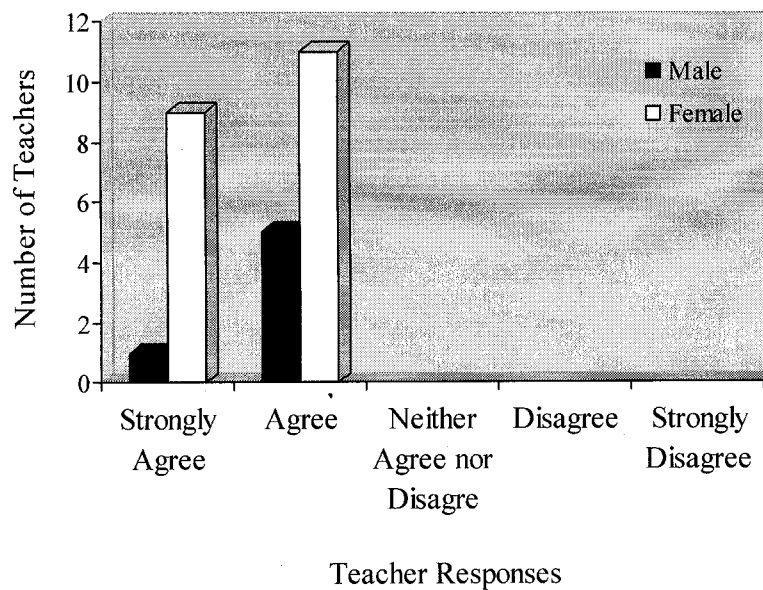


Teacher Responses

*Figure 5*. Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Bully Patrol in Creating a Safe School Environment.

There were many different results that developed through this study; however one in particular was extremely important and beneficial to increasing the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol. That is, it was discovered that both the students and the teachers overwhelmingly agreed that each had to work together to eliminate bullying at the Glassboro Intermediate School. In relation to this, 73% of the students corroborated this notion (Figure 6). Even the $8^{th}$ grade students recognized how critical it was that students and teachers work together. This was amazing since many $8^{th}$ grade students, as heretofore mentioned, often had negative perceptions about the school. For the intern, there was no greater satisfaction than students and teachers realizing the importance of all being a part of the "Caring Majority" to eliminate bullying and bullying behaviors.
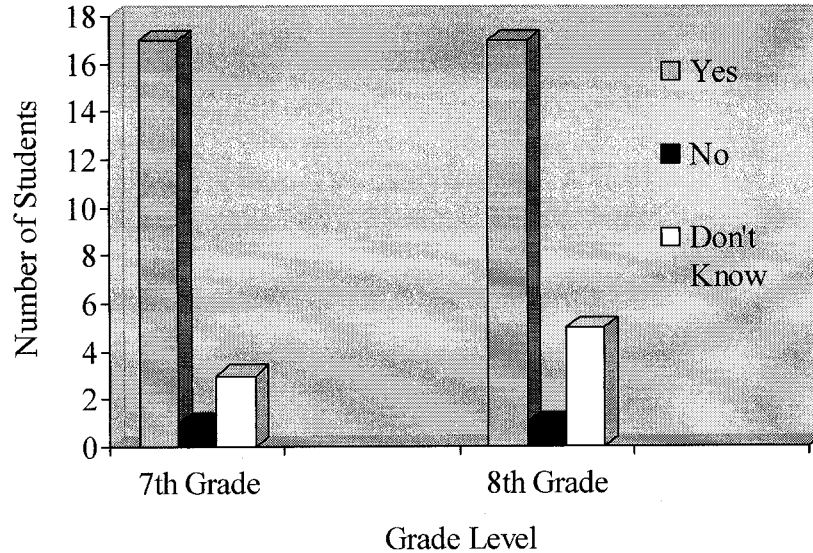


*Figure 6.* Students' Perceptions about Students and Teachers Working Together to Stop Bullying.
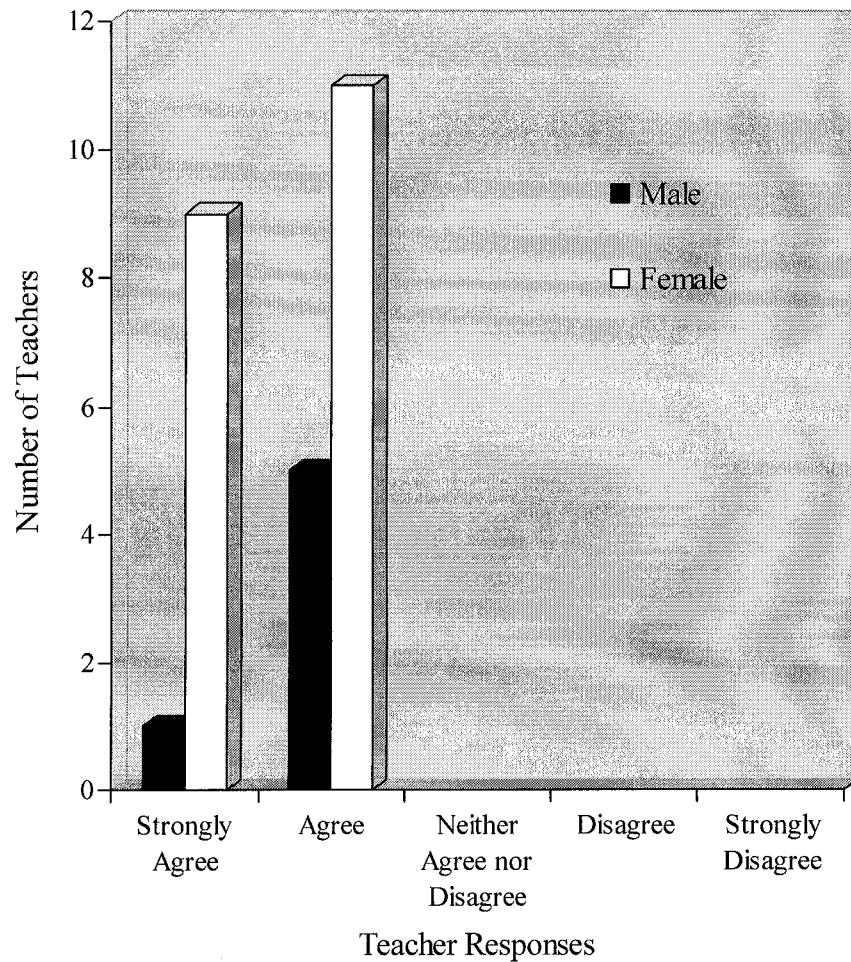
*Figure 7.* Teachers' Perceptions about Teachers and Students Working Together to Stop Bullying.

Although the primary focus of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol was for students to intervene in bullying situations and to report bullying behaviors, the teachers and administrators were catalysts for the students to feel empowered. In many of the previously mentioned anti-bullying programs, there were collaborative efforts between teachers and students to help eliminate bullying. The Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol c was not any different than these programs with respect to students and teachers uniting as a team in creating a bully-free atmosphere in school. As a result,

the teachers also believed in the same approach as the students did, which working in conjunction with each other was significantly beneficial to help stop bullying (Figure 7). It was moreover impressive to the intern that 100% percent of the teachers fervently believed that both students and teachers needed to work together to advance toward the goal of a bully-free, safe school.

What Did the Information Mean?

The information that was produced as a result of the study meant that the stakeholders of the Glassboro Intermediate School had credible data about the effectiveness of the school-wide anti-bullying program, the Bully Patrol. The data were based on how effective the students and teachers believed the Bully Patrol to be. The information found in this study therefore was valid and credible based upon those two important stakeholders' perceptions. The teachers' and students' insights were the most important factor in evaluating the effectiveness of the anti-bullying program at Glassboro Intermediate School because these were the individuals who operated on a daily basis with issues that were addressed by the Bully Patrol. Furthermore, the information contained within the study also allowed all the stakeholders of the school to verify if they should continue using the program. From this they could also decide whether they wanted to change it, or decide if other effective school-wide, anti-bullying programs can achieve the same goal, a bully-free Glassboro Intermediate School.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

Distress about bullying in American schools has become an urgent matter for educators today. Therefore, many schools have implemented school-wide anti-bullying programs to combat bullying and the negative effects that bullying behavior has on the climate and morale of the schools. Such school-based bully prevention programs have been found to be effective in reducing bullying behaviors. This intern wanted to understand how some of the stakeholders, students and teachers, perceived the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol, which is an anti-bullying program. This type of program has been used at the school for the past few years.

Wide-ranging information that discusses the severity of bullying was readily accessible to educators. The superintendent of the Glassboro School District was an important supporter of the Bully Patrol's role as an anti-bullying program as were the principal and assistant principal at the Glassboro Intermediate School. They all therefore unabashedly promoted the use of the Bully Patrol to help eliminate bullying and moreover encouraged this intern to investigate the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol according to the students and teachers. Furthermore, the study would provide the information needed to determine if the Bully Patrol needed any improvements or needed

to be modified to further the goal of providing all stakeholders a bully-free school. The conclusions that were reached as a result of the students' and teachers' responses to survey questions, the implications of the study on leadership skills, and the implications of the study on organizational change are presented next.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the teachers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol. The Glassboro Intermediate School was the only school in the Glassboro School District that used a school wide anti-bullying program to combat bullying and bullying behaviors. Since research reported that bullying increased drastically in grades six through eight, it was imperative to have such a program at the Glassboro Intermediate School as the school housed students in grades seven and eight.

The research plan was to utilize a nonexperimental quantitative-based research instrument to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol according to the teachers and students. The responses that were given on the teacher and student surveys provided ample feedback to determine how effective the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol was according to the particular stakeholders, students and teachers. The intern analyzed the data provided by the stakeholders during the course of the school year as well as seeking interpersonal feedback from experienced veteran teachers.

The major conclusions drawn from the study were that the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol has had a positive impact on the students and teachers. That is, the presence of the Bully Patrol sent subtle and not so subtle messages that bullying was not

going to be condoned or tolerated by teachers or students. As a result, the majority of students felt safer at school because of the work of the Bully Patrol. In addition, the majority of teachers at the Glassboro Intermediate School had been teaching at the school for more than three years. As such, the teachers were able to add important insights into how effective the Bully Patrol was. Moreover, they were able to reveal that the Bully Patrol was an important program that helped students feel safe at school. Therefore, both students and teachers alike were able to recognize the importance of the Bully Patrol's role as an important part of creating a positive school atmosphere.

In effect, the school had created a "caring majority" through the Bully Patrol. The philosophy of a caring majority was a vital element throughout the schools that employed anti-bullying programs. The caring majority of the Glassboro Intermediate School was the majority of students who reported bullying incidents and who had positive opinions about the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol. This majority of students also suggested on their surveys (Appendix B) that it would be beneficial if the school added a Peer Mediation component either separate or in conjunction with the Bully Patrol. For them, the Peer Mediation would further empower all the students to be an integral part in reducing harassment and bullying of their fellow students.

The students and teachers also strongly agreed that it was imperative that the two groups of stakeholders needed to work together consistently to decrease and thus eliminate bullying at the Glassboro Intermediate School. As the research literature had extensively pointed out, it behooved all stakeholders involved in a school to cooperate in order to eradicate bullying. This concept was the foremost pre-requisite to any anti-

bulling program being successful. For the intern, it was extremely rewarding that the teachers and students agreed upon this critical cooperation.

Although the Bully Patrol had a positive impact on both students and teachers, there were some stakeholders, in particular eighth grade students, who believed that the Bully Patrol was not effective. For this portion of the eighth grade students, the Bully Patrol was not an anti-bullying program but rather an administrative tool used to get some students in trouble for their obvious bullying of other students. These non-believers in the effectiveness of the Bully Patrol also tended to believe that the Bully Patrol was not helpful in creating a safer school. Despite some mild consternation on the part of some of the eighth grade students, the overall positive impact of the students' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol could not and would not be diminished.

Implications of the Study on Leadership Skills

In actual fact, the intern believed that feeling safe in a school was not only paramount to a student being accepted for who they were but also was an important element for student success. If a student was bullied and felt that he or she had no recourse to help eliminate the problem, then a student would become a victim. As the literature review in the study outlined, victims could suffer from such physiological and psychological concerns as fear, depression, anxiety, and low-self esteem as a result of their bullying experiences. It was imperative to the intern that each child of the Glassboro Intermediate School believed that he or she was in a school that provided both physical and psychological safety to all its students.

An important part of the research project was therefore to give the intern the opportunity to apply theory into practice. The intern was permitted to utilize theoretical methodologies of leadership during the course of the study. Therefore, the intern gained invaluable experience during many leadership opportunities available while working on the study. As a leader of the Bully Patrol, the intern was provided with the skills, experiences, and opportunities that prior to the study were only a part of the literature and courses that were completed during the intern's graduate school experiences.

The intern displayed educational leadership skills by facilitating the Bully Patrol meetings. During the meetings, the Bully Patrol members discussed what bullying was, how to recognize it, how to report it, and how to prevent it. The intern also utilized leadership skills while investigating potential claims of bullying. The intern had conferences with students who were suspected of being bullies. The intern discussed the seriousness of bullying with these students and too much to the appeasement of the intern; the students' names no longer were brought to the attention of the intern as potential bullies. The opportunities that the intern had to put theoretical leadership skills into practice therefore were abundant as heretofore mentioned. The intern not only facilitated Bully Patrol meetings and had conferences with students but also was a resource for students and teachers to discuss their concerns about bullying in more informal settings such as in the hallways, library, or lunchroom. The intern understood that an educational leader must be one who not only adhered to sound educational and leadership principles but also one who had the ability to relate positively to the student's and teacher's concerns.

The entire experience of being a leader of the Bully Patrol was extremely positive. This leadership experience was invaluable to the progress of the intern as a future educational administrator. The entire experience, from beginning to end, allowed the intern to employ, on a daily basis, the second and third principles of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. For these two standards, an educational leader must ensure a school environment that provides for the safety and well being for all the students thus allowing them to achieve to their fullest potential in a bully-free school. As a leader and future educational administrator, the intern learned how important it was for students to feel safe in their schools and is committed to ensuring that each student feels safe at the school where this future administrator will lead.

The study finally helped the intern to understand that being a leader meant more than having the title of leader. There was a plethora of literature about what made a good leader that the intern could access also. However, during the course of the study the intern lived being a leader and felt it constantly. Although the coursework and educational experiences inside the classroom were extremely beneficial to the intern in the theoretical sense, the intern was an emphatic advocate of first hand knowledge. The intern therefore believed that there was not a better teacher than practical and real life situations that arose during the course of the study. For the intern, the experience of the research study, the leadership skills learned during the course of the study, and the experiences and opportunities provided by the study, allowed the intern to not only feel leadership but more importantly allowed the intern to become a leader.

Implications of the Study on Organizational Change

The goals of the study were to investigate the perceptions of how effective the Glassboro Intermediate School's anti-bullying program was according to the teachers and students and to determine if the program needed modifications. Focusing on bullying allowed the Glassboro Intermediate School's administrators, teachers, and students to consistently remind themselves that bullying was no longer simply "child's play". The time for condoning bullying had come and gone. If anyone needed reminding of the horrible and tragic consequences of what unchallenged bullying could do, all were reminded of what happened at Columbine High School.

In order for the Bully Patrol to be effective, it needed the support of all the stakeholders of the Glassboro Intermediate School to be supportive of its mission, to eliminate bullying and create a bully-free school. The success of the program not only came from the students but also their parents, the teachers, the administrators, and the central office administrators. Without the support of all the aforementioned stakeholders, the program would not be successful. It was of the essence that there was significant cooperation between the differing groups who had a vested interest in the success of the Bully Patrol.

The results of the study provide a localized view of how effective the Bully Patrol was. Still, the results could and should lead to better communications between the students, teachers, and administrators at the Glassboro Intermediate School regarding bullying issues. It was obvious from a small portion of the sample population that the Bully Patrol needed some minor adjustments to ensure that there was 100% support for it among the students and teachers. The results of the study however should furnish the

Glassboro Intermediate School and the Glassboro School District the ability to consider the Bully Patrol as a point of pride for the school as well as for the entire district.

Further Study

In conclusion, the findings of the study provided important insights into the Glassboro Intermediate School's Bully Patrol and its effectiveness according to the teachers and students who work and attend the school daily. Although the Bully Patrol had a positive impact on the overall school culture and climate, the intern recommends that Glassboro School District should seriously investigate how effective other school wide anti-bullying programs are. Such an investigation may provide new ideas for the Bully Patrol program to strengthen it further.

In addition, the intern recommends that the Bully Patrol be expanded in the district. As it is now, the bullying focus is primarily set in the Intermediate School. The intern firmly believes that bullying should be focused throughout the school district in particularly in grades five through nine. To the intern, the Glassboro Intermediate School has a tremendous burden of trying to eliminate bullying when this responsibility should be shared throughout the district starting in earlier grades and reaching to the high school level. As such, recognizing and preventing bullying and bullying behaviors can be raised during these extremely important years of psychological development.

Finally, the intern recommends continued evaluation of the Bully Patrol to ensure that it is being used effectively. The intern is not naïve enough to believe that bullying will all of sudden stop taking place at the Glassboro Intermediate School. However, the intern also understands that although creating a safe school environment is the

responsibility of the administrators, it is extremely important that the teachers and students support the measures that the administrators have taken to fight bullying such as the Bully Patrol. For that reason, all the stakeholders of the Glassboro Intermediate School have a vested interest to support the Bully Patrol program and to ensure that the focus remains on eliminating bullying and creating a *bully-free* school.

# REFERENCES

Ballard, M., Argus, T., Remley, T. P. (1999). Bullying and School Violence: A Proposed

    Prevention Program. *National Association of Secondary School Principals'*

    *Bulletin, 83,* 38-47.

Cooper, D., & Snell, J. L. (2003). Bullying? Not Just a Kid Thing. *Educational*

    *Leadership, 60,* 22-25.

Ditzhay, H. E. R., & Burton, E. M. (2003). Bullying: A Perennial School Problem. *The*

    *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 1,* 43-48.

Espelage, D. L., & Swearer, S. M. (2003). Research on School Bullying and

    Victimization: What Have We Learned and Where Do We Go from Here?

    *School Psychology Review, 32,* 365-384.

Feinberg, T. (2003). Bullying Prevention and Intervention. *Principal Leadership, 4,* 10-

    14.

Funk, J. B. (2003). Teacher Perceptions and Practices Regarding School Bullying

    Prevention. *The Journal of School Health, 73,* 347-55.

Garret, A. G. (2003). *Bullying in American Schools: Causes, Preventions, Interventions.*

    Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.

Garrity, C., Jens, K., Porter, W. W., Sager, N., & Short-Camilli, C. (1997). Bully

    Proofing Your School: Creating a Positive Climate. *Intervention in School and*

    *Clinic, 32,* 235-43.

Harris, S & Petrie, G. (2002). A Study of Bullying in the Middle School. *National*

   *Association of Secondary Schools Principals' Bulletin, 86*, 42-53.

Malecki, C. K. (2003). Perceptions of the Frequency and Importance of Social Support

   by Students Classified as Victims, Bullies, and Bully/Victims in an Urban Middle

   School. *The School Psychology Review, 32*, 471-489.

New Jersey Department of Education. *New Jersey's Report Card: Meeting the*

   *Requirements of State Law and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. Retrieved

   June 29, 2004, from http://education.state.nj.us/rc/index.html

Olweus, D. (2003). A Profile of Bullying at School. *Educational Leadership, 6*, 12-17.

Pellegrini, A. D. (2002). Bullying, Victimization, and Sexual Harassment During the

   Transition to Middle School. *Educational Psychologist, 37*, 151-163.

Report Cards on the Schools. (2004, March 7). *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, pp. P1-P36.

Rosenberg, J. (2003, April 13). The Columbine Massacre. The Shocking Event in which

   Two Seniors Went on a Shooting Rampage at Their High School. *About.Com*

   Retrieved July 3, 2004, from http://history1900s.about.com/library/weekly/

   aa041303a.htm

Shralow, B. (2001, May 13). Schools Seek More Minority Teachers. *The Courier Post*,

   pp. 1A, 10A.

Small, M. A. (2003). State Laws and Policies to Address Bullying in Schools. *The School*

   *Psychology Review, 32*, 445-55.

Staniszewski, D. (2003). School Bullying: Changing the Problem by Changing the

   School. *The School Psychology Review, 32*, 431-444.

Suderman, M., Jaffe, P.G., Schieck, E. (1996). Bullying: Information for Parents and

Teachers. *The Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the
London Family Court Clinic.* Retrieved July 11, 2004, from

http://www.lfcc.on.ca/index.htm

The Village of Creve Coeur (IL) Partnership Against Violence in Crime. (2000, August

11). *Student Bullying Survey.* Retrieved October 21, 2004, from

http://www.cc76.k12.il.us/parkview/pave/student_survey.htm

United States Census Bureau. *Census 2000.* Retrieved July 2, 2004, from

http://www.census.gov.

Yoon, J. S., & Kerber, K. (2003). Bullying: Elementary Teachers' Attitudes and

Intervention Strategies. *Research in Education, 69,* 27-35.

Appendices

Appendix A
Teacher Survey

Bully Patrol Teacher Survey
Glassboro Intermediate School

Questions 1-4, please check one answer:

1) Gender          2) Age:                      3) Length of full-time teaching:

_____ Male         _____ Under 30           _____ Less than 3 years

_____ Female       _____ 30-45              _____ 3-10 years

                   _____ Over 45            _____ More than 10 years

                                                _____ More than 20 years

4) Have you ever served on the Bully Patrol?          _____ Yes _____ No

Questions 5-17, please circle one response:

5)      Bullying is a serious problem generally in America:

Strongly            Agree           Neither agree        Disagree        Strongly
Agree                               nor disagree                         Disagree


6)      Bullying is a serious problem in American schools:

Strongly            Agree           Neither agree        Disagree        Strongly
Agree                               nor disagree                         Disagree


7)      Bullying is a serious problem at the Glassboro Intermediate School (GIS):

Strongly            Agree           Neither agree        Disagree        Strongly
Agree                               nor disagree                         Disagree


8)      I have witnessed many instances of bullying at GIS:

Strongly            Agree           Neither agree        Disagree        Strongly
Agree                               nor disagree                         Disagree

9) Bullying has negative impact on students:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


10) Bullying has negative impact on a safe school environment:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


11) Every teacher should serve on the Bully Patrol at least once in their career:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


12) Teachers have the power to decrease bullying at GIS:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


13) Bully Patrols are an important method to decreasing bullying:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


14) Bully Patrol has more advantages than disadvantages:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


15) Bully Patrol is an effective program:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree


16) Bullying increases in grades 7 and 8:

Strongly          Agree          Neither agree          Disagree          Strongly
Agree                            nor disagree                             Disagree

17) Bully patrols help students learn to resolve conflicts in a healthy manner:

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

18) Students and teachers should work together to stop bullying:

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

19) Bully Patrol is effective in creating a safe school environment:

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Appendix B
Student Survey

Bully Patrol Student Survey
Glassboro Intermediate School

In this survey you can share your views on how students treat each other at the Glassboro Intermediate School. For the most part, you will be asked simply to *circle* answers that you agree with.

Here is an example:

Do you enjoy coming to this school? *(Circle one of the numbers)*

| | |
|---|---|
| I always do | 5 |
| I usually do | (4) |
| About half the time | 3 |
| I usually don't | 2 |
| I never do | 1 |

In this example 4 has been circled by a student who usually (but not always) likes coming to this school. A person who never liked coming would circle 1.

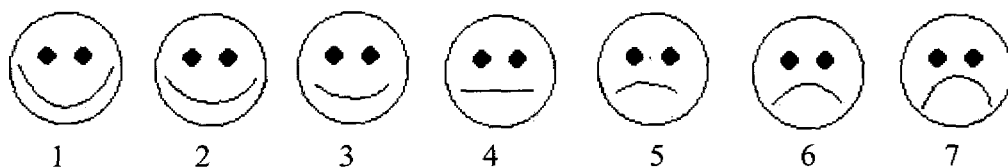Now begin the questionnaire and please do not leave any questions unanswered.

SECTION A

1. Are you male or female *(Circle 1 or 2)*

Male   1
Female 2

2. What grade are you in?

7th
8th

3. Now look at these pictures and place a circle around the number under the face that is most like you when you are at school?



| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. Sometimes a stronger person or group of students will pick on someone weaker than themselves on purpose, and give that person a bad time. How often would you say this happens at this school? *(Circle a number)*

Never        1
Sometimes    2
Often        3

5. We call it *bullying* when someone is hurting or frightening someone perceived to be weaker than themselves for no good reason, over and over again. This may be done in different ways: by hurtful teasing, threatening actions or gestures, name-calling or hitting or kicking.
Have you noticed bullying going on in this school in any of these places?

*(Circle the number giving your answer for each place)*

| Place: | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In the classroom | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| In the hallways | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| At recess/lunch | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| On the way to school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| On way home from school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| On the bus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| At special events, like games or dances in the school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

End of Section A

SECTION B

6. Did any of these things happen to you this school year?

| Your answer: | Never | Sometimes | Often | Very Often |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Being teased in an unpleasant way | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being called hurtful names | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being left out of things on purpose | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being threatened with harm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being hit or kicked | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being forced to do things you didn't want to do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Now I would like you to make another estimate of how often you have been bullied by other students at school this year, this time on a daily or weekly basis. Remember that it is not bullying when two young people of about the same strength have a fight or quarrel every now and then. Bullying is when a stronger person hurts someone who is weaker or believed to be weaker, on purpose, over and over again.

7. How often this year have you been bullied by another student or group of students?

*(Circle a number)*

| At least | Less than | |
|----------|-----------|-------|
| once a week | once a week | Never |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

8. After being bullied, how have you generally felt about it? *(Circle a number)*

I have never been bullied at school                                    1
I have been bullied, but it hasn't really bothered me        2
I've felt mostly angry about it                                          3
I've felt mostly sad and miserable                                   4
I've felt confused

9. How safe do you personally feel from being bullied by another student or a group of students at this school? *(Circle a number)*

I always feel safe                         1
I usually feel safe                        2
I feel safe about half the time      3
I usually don't feel safe              4
I never feel safe                          5

10. Have you ever stayed away from school because of bullying? *(Circle a number)*

No, I've never thought of doing so        1
No, but I've thought of doing so           2
Yes, I have once or twice                     3
Yes, more than twice                           4

11a. Bully Patrol is effective in creating a safe school environment:

Never          1
Sometimes   2
Often          3

11b. Bully patrols help students learn to resolve conflicts in a healthy manner:

Never       1
Sometimes   2
Often       3


11c. Bully Patrol is an effective program:

Never       1
Sometimes   2
Often       3


End of Section B


Section C

. Answer the next two questions ONLY if you have been bullied by another student or group of students.

If you have NEVER been bullied at school skip questions 12 and 13 and go to question 14.

12. Have you told any of the following about your being bullied?

*(Circle for each person)*

| Person | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Your mother | 1 | 0 |
| Your father | 1 | 0 |
| A brother or sister | 1 | 0 |
| A teacher or counselor | 1 | 0 |
| A friend or friends | 1 | 0 |

13. Did things get better after you told someone? *(Circle a number)*
        *(Remember: answer this only if you have been bullied at school)*

I was bullied but never told anyone      1
I told - and it got worse                2
I told - and the situation didn't change 3
I told - and things got better           4

Everybody should answer the next three questions.

14. Do you think that teachers at this school are interested in trying to stop bullying? *(Circle a number)*

Not really          1
Only sometimes      2
Usually they are    3
They always are     4

15. Do you think that students and teachers should work together to stop bullying?
                    *(Circle a number)*

Yes          1
No           2
Don't know   3

16. Would you be interested in talking about the problem of bullying at school with other students to see what can be done about stopping it? *(Circle a number)*

Yes          1
No           2
Don't know   3

Now please add any other comments you would like to make about bullying at your school.

_____

_____

_____