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Bully-Proofing

by
Kevin M. McGloin

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Masters of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 2003

Approved by

Date Approved 4-10-03

Abstract

Kevin M. McGloin

Bully-Proofing
May 2003
Dr. Dennis Hurley
School Administration/Supervision

This study was designed to determine if the existing Bully-Proofing Program at the Reeds Road Elementary School is working effectively. Utilizing an action research design fifth and sixth graders completed a bully-proofing survey during the 2002-2003 academic year. This survey elicited student observations and actions of bullying within the school. Forty surveys were randomly chosen for analysis with the final research population being twenty fifth graders and twenty sixth graders (20 female/20males). In analyzing the results verbal bullying was responded to the most, outweighing all other forms. Another statistic is that boys were identified as bullies, more so than girls. The survey not only gave insight on bullying as an observer, as a victim, or as a bully themselves, but gives the indication that bullying is still very apparent within the school. Unfortunately, with so many bullying incidents reported it becomes rather difficult to deem the Bully-Proofing Program a complete success.

Mini-Abstract

Kevin M. McGloin

Bully-Proofing
May 2003
Dr. Dennis Hurley
School Administration/Supervision

This study was designed to determine the effectiveness of the Bully-Proofing Program at the Reeds Road Elementary School. Utilizing an action research design student surveys gave the indication that bullying is still very apparent within the school, making it difficult to consider the program completely effective.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Capasso and Dr. Hurley, my university mentors. I would like to thank my two field mentors, Dr. Zipparo and Ms. Wilson for their internship support and for sharing their administrative experiences. My daughters, Cailey and Madison, deserve a special thank you for making me smile and helping me to recognize what life is all about each and every day. To my colleague, my academic partner, my driving-to-Rowan buddy, my friend, Terry O'Connor, Jr., your kinship is unmeasurable. Most of all I would like to thank my wife Stacy, for without her love, support, and understanding, the completion of this project and degree would not have been possible.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

Many schools today claim to have a zero tolerance for violence within their schools. One such program that addresses violence is that of a Bully-proofing Program. A Bully-proofing Program has been intact at the Reeds Road Elementary School for the past four years. At the beginning of each school year, teachers introduce the Bully-proofing Program to their students. This teaching practice provides review for those that have been part of the school family and serves as an introduction to new additions.

It is a major goal of any elementary school to provide a safe and conducive place for learning. This study focused upon the concept of bullying and the anti-bullying program utilized by the Reeds Road Elementary School.

Purpose of the Study

Students need to feel safe within a school environment to learn. A Bully-proofing Program gives students the necessary skills and tools to deal with bullying situations. As well, the program makes students aware that bullying will not be accepted within the school setting. The Reeds Road Elementary School places a major emphasis upon this program. The school makes a strong initiative to ensure that the staff and students work toward a bully-free school. As you walk through the hallways, listen to the announcements, and observe teacher lessons, bully-proofing is everywhere.

This program is an extension of the school's character education and is in place to stop the bullying actions that occur within a school climate. With so much emphasis placed upon bully-proofing, it is of utmost importance for the Reeds Road Elementary School to realize whether this program is addressing all of the bullying incidents and if indeed all students feel safe within the school. The purpose of this study is to answer the important question: Is the Bully-proofing Program working? This study determined the effectiveness of the Bully-proofing Program found within the Reeds Road Elementary School by utilizing an action research design.

Definitions

Bullying (definition #1) is broadly defined in the educational setting as a student that is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more students. These negative actions can take the form of physical contact, verbal abuse, or making faces and rude gestures. Spreading rumors and excluding the victim from a group are also common forms (Olweus, 2001).

Bullying (definition #2) among children has also been defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more children against another. These negative acts are not intentionally provoked by the victims, and for such acts to be defined as bullying, an imbalance in real or perceived power must exist between the bully and the victim. Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual in nature (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Physical bullying can be defined as punching, poking, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting and excessive tickling (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Verbal bullying is defined as hurtful name-calling, teasing and gossip (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Emotional bullying is defined as rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Sexual bullying is defined as in addition to emotional bullying, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact and sexual assault (Lepore, Vance, Finklestein & Vance, 2000).

Bully-proofing Program is defined as an anti-bullying program that has been implemented and utilized for the past four years within the Reeds Road Elementary School.

Limitation of the Study

The research of the study was limited to the Reeds Road Elementary School housed within the Galloway Township School District. Consequently, the research findings reflected the population and setting of only one of the six elementary schools within the district. In addition, school and district procedures and policies, which must at times be followed, further limited the study.

Setting of the Study

This study took place during the 2002-2003 school year at the Reeds Road Elementary School in Galloway Township, New Jersey. Galloway Township is located in Atlantic County and has a population of approximately 32,000 people inhabiting an area that measures approximately 95 square miles. Galloway Township is a K-8 district in which high school students attend a regional facility. Galloway Township educates approximately 4,000 students under the direction of a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, 2 Curriculum Coordinators, and a Director of Special Education. Students in kindergarten attend two kindergarten centers, students in grades 1 through 6 attend six elementary schools, and students in grades 7 and 8 attend the middle school.

Reeds Road Elementary School has a population of approximately 600 students in grades 1 through 6. The school setting reflects a diversity of ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds. In addition, the school culture consists of students speaking various languages, including 84% English, 5% Spanish, 2% Gujarati, 2% Philipino, 1% Vietnamese, and 6% others. Reeds Road Elementary School has extensive special education programs and is the only elementary school within the district that houses three self-contained classrooms for children with behavioral disabilities. Thirteen percent of the student population regardless of program or placement, have Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

The school is comprised of approximately 70 staff members, including a principal,

vice-principal, two full-time counselors, one full and one part-time nurse, support personnel, teachers, and teacher assistants. Seventy-two percent of the staff hold BA/BS degrees, 26% hold MA/MS degrees, and 2% hold PhD/EdD degrees.

Reeds Road is located within a school district that is experiencing rapid growth as the result of the casino industry that employs many community members. Many seniors relocate to the area and reside in several retirement communities. With the increase of the retired population the school district has had major difficulties in passing the budget. The base budget was \$17,939,014 and was narrowly defeated in 2002 by ten votes. The total cost per pupil within the district is \$8,544. Reeds Road has a high mobility rate of 18.5%-5.1% higher than the state average for the 2000-2001 school year. Due to this mobility rate, class sizes have been increasing, but student to teacher ratio remained 11:1 for the 2000-2001 school year.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study enabled the school to evaluate the Bully-proofing Program, recognizing its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the results of this study afforded the school the ability to analyze its effectiveness and answer the question: Is the Bully-proofing Program working?

Organization of the Study

The preceding text contain a focus of the study, a purpose of the study, definitions, limitations of the study, and the setting in which the study will be conducted. Chapter 2 will consist of a review of literature related to bullying in the educational setting along with recent research studies on bullying in schools and the effectiveness of anti-bullying techniques currently used in the educational system.

The content of Chapter 3 will address the design used for the study and a description of the data collection and population. The material will include a sample of the survey to be used as well as the plan used for analyzing the data. The fourth chapter will contain an analysis of the accumulated data and interpretation of the results. Conclusions and implications of the study will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

It seems that if you ask anybody about their childhood they can recall being bullied. Even though bullying is in the memories of many people, it is something that does not need to exist today. Unfortunately, bullying is still very prevalent in our society in many facets, including schools.

School should be a place where students can feel safe and secure. The reality, however, is that a significant number of students are the target of bullying episodes that result in serious, long-term academic, physical, and emotional consequences (Lumsden, 2002). Bullying can leave scars throughout adulthood, impairing performance and preventing people from achieving their potential (Chase, 2002). Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem (Banks, 1997).

Bullying happens a lot more in schools than many teachers, administrators, and parents realize (Barone, 1997). A teacher spends most of his or her day in the classroom with students, so bullying behaviors in the classroom can be identified and dealt with appropriately. The problem arises because teachers are usually unaware of bullying incidents when they occur in the classroom (Atlas & Peleer, 1998). Research provides evidence that most bullying incidents happen outside of the classroom (Leff, Kupersmidt & Patterson, 1999). Educators desire a good environment that promotes learning for all

students. Teachers, in general, do not welcome bullying into their classrooms or schools. However, research contends that bullying is a very common trait found within any school (Barone, 1997).

Bullying takes many forms from verbal actions to physical ones (Atlas & Peeler, 1998). Sometimes, it is an intertwining of the two (Atlas & Peeleer, 1998). Research shows that verbal bullying outweighs physical bullying or both physical and verbal bullying combined (Atlas & Peeler, 1998). This becomes difficult for a teacher to deal with in the classroom. A lot of verbal bullying goes on without the teacher even realizing it. A teacher's job is to not only to teach his or her students but also to know them. One often thinks that a teacher realizes who needs close observation for bullying activity. However, research reflects that teachers experience difficulty when identifying bullies and their victims (Leef, Kupersmidt & Patterson, 1999).

Research states that gender definitely plays a role when it comes to bullying behavior (Frosschl & Gropper, 1999). Boys commonly initiate a higher percentage of bullying activity than girls (Frosschl & Gropper, 1999). When it comes to victims, boys usually receive more physical bullying, while girls receive more verbal bullying (Barone, 1997). A teacher needs to understand these facts so they learn to utilize them to help identify bullies and victims. The more in tune a teacher is to bullying characteristics, the more likely it is that the identification of victims and the bullies takes place (Leff, Kupersmidt & Patterson, 1999).

Elementary school teachers, according to research, better identify bullies and their victims compared to that of middle school teachers (Leff, Kupersmidt & Patterson, 1999). The intern thinks this is the result of more student to teacher contact time at the elementary level. As an elementary school teacher, the intern will see the students in his classroom all day compared to that of a middle school teacher who might see students for only a half of an hour. No matter how accurate teacher identification of bullying is, the fact remains that most bullying occurs when the teacher is unaware of it (Barone, 1997).

If most of the bullying happens when teachers lack awareness of it, they cannot deal with the bullying incident. With this in mind, it is important for teachers to realize that students experience bullying incidents directly (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Even though peer involvement with bullying incidents is high, only a very small amount of peer intervention takes place, thus bullying incidents continue to flourish within the school setting (Atlas & Pepler, 1998).

Lack of student intervention during a bullying situation occurs for various reasons. First of all, students often lack the skills to defuse a bullying situation (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). If the students do not have the skills or a blue print on what to do, they become reluctant to take a stand. There must be consequences for bullying behaviors. Such consequences enable students to feel comfortable when sticking up for a peer in a bullying situation (Barone, 1997). A victim must realize that if he or she reports a bully, that bully will receive a punishment (Barone, 1997).

What makes a bully and why do they do what they do? Research pinpoints a connection with certain variables and bullying behavior. Students who spent less time under adult supervision, had bad peer influences, felt unsafe in their schools and neighborhoods, and had parents that used physical discipline were more likely to engage in bullying behavior (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000). Students who spent more time with adults, had good peer influences, felt safe in their schools and neighborhoods were less likely to engage in bullying behavior (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000).

Research shows that contextual factors play a role in bullying behavior (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000). Of all of the various factors linked to bullying, adults play the most important role in the development of bullying behavior (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000). With this in mind, it is the teachers', administrators', and parents' job to teach children that bullying is not acceptable. An intervention method in schools allows students to see that schools have a zero tolerance for bullying behavior (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). This intervention program must be something schools utilize to put an end to bullying behavior (Froschl & Gropper, 1999).

More and more school districts are implementing specific anti-bullying programs, and if done right experts say the programs can reduce bullying by 50% (Crary, 2001). Scandinavians were the first to study bullying; Sweden and Japan the first governments to launch anti-bullying campaigns (Walls, 2002). Norway introduced an anti-bullying campaign that decreased bullying behavior by 50% in a two year period (Walls, 2002).

Not only did the intervention program work to reduce bullying at school but also it helped stop bullying in unsupervised areas as well.

Along with an intervention program, in-service and training must be given to the staff so they can better recognize bullies and victims (Barone, 1997). Students must also be taught how to define bullying, given strategies to deal with bullying situations, and must be taught a universal school bully-proofing language (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Counseling assists in dealing with not only the victims of bullies, but also the bullies themselves (Barone, 1997). It is of utmost importance for schools to set up an intervention program to help combat bullying. Students and staff need to work together to help decrease bullying behaviors and hopefully rid all schools, and maybe even society, of bullies.

Sexual Bullying Case

Presently, legal cases are being presented in which students at younger ages are bullying other students in sexual ways. One such case, *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* deals with student to student sexual bullying within the elementary setting. Davis filed a suit against the county school board and school officials seeking damages due to the sexual bullying of her daughter, Lashonda, by G.F., a fifth grade male classmate. Originally this case was dismissed due to the Federal District Court finding that student-to-student bullying provides no grounds for Title IX private cause of action for damages.

The main focus of the suit was that Davis claimed that G.F.'s sexual bullying of Lashonda created an intimidating, hostile, offensive, and abusive school environment that violated Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which, in relevant part, prohibits a student from being subjected to discrimination under any education program activity receiving Federal financial assistance, 20 U.S.C. 1681(a). In order for Davis to receive damages under Title IX, the school board would have to have knowledge of the sexual bullying and would have to act deliberately indifferent to the bullying itself. In addition, the harassment of Lashonda had to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it could be said that it deprived Lashonda of access to the educational opportunities or benefits provided by the school.

The school itself is the recipient of federal funding under Title IX. An entity that receives funding under Title IX may be liable for subjecting students to discrimination. A school district can be held liable if they are aware of student-to-student sexual bullying and are deliberately indifferent to the sexual advances, as well as if the harasser is under the school's disciplinary authority. Lashonda was sexually bullied during school hours and on school grounds. G.F. was a student that was under the disciplinary authority of the school. There are allegations to support the claim of Davis that over a five-month period G.F. sexually bullied Lashonda. The verbal and physical bullying of Lashonda was so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it had a concrete, negative effect on her, according to Davis (Lashonda's grades dropped tremendously during the time she

was being bullied). Ultimately, G.F. also pleaded guilty to criminal sexual misconduct.

Davis also claims that G.F. sexually bullied others within the school setting. The victims of G.F. (including Lashonda), according to Davis, reported incidents to the school principal. Davis also states that she may be able to show deliberate indifference on the part of the board of education, which did not investigate or put an end to the sexual bullying. The case was remanded for further proceedings, waiting for evidence and proof of the claims made by Davis. If Davis can prove her claims, damages under Title IX will be granted.

Conclusion

Teaching today is a lot different than years ago. The teacher is not only the facilitator of information but is also a counselor, parent, friend, and many other roles all incorporated into one. Basically, teachers do much more than just teach the core subjects. The intern's ultimate goal as a teacher is to provide my students with the best learning environment possible. It is difficult to have an excellent learning environment when bullying situations occur. As a teacher, the intern tries to be as tuned in as possible to his class, but realizes that one cannot see and hear everything. Research shows that a lot more bullying incidents occur than a teacher recognizes (Barone, 1997). As well, many bullying incidents occur outside of the classrooms where the teacher is not present (Leff, Kupersmidt & Patterson, 1999).

The intern's school makes a strong initiative to ensure that the staff and students work

toward a bully-free school. As you walk through the hallways, listen to the announcements, and observe teacher lessons, bully-proofing is everywhere. As prevalent as it might be, the question still remains: Is the Bully-proofing Program working?

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Description of the Research Design

This study reflects the compilation of data highlighting the various responses from students regarding bullying within the Reeds Road Elementary School. This information was gathered during the 2002-2003 academic school year. The utilization of a survey eliciting student observations and actions provided the necessary data to determine the overall effectiveness of the bully-proofing program found within the Reeds Road Elementary School.

Development and Design of the Research Instruments

The study utilized a survey to gain pertinent data from students that attend the Reeds Road Elementary School (see Appendix A). The survey itself focused upon obtaining student observations and actions to determine the effectiveness of the bully-proofing program. The instrument's design was made student friendly so that the students could easily understand and answer the survey questions. Along with the importance of the survey being student friendly, it was important to be convenient for the staff members to administer to their students.

The survey was introduced to the students that were participating within the study in order to promote student understanding. Students were afforded the opportunity to ask questions regarding the survey and its process. They were also informed that surveys

would be completely anonymously, meaning that names would not be disclosed to anyone.

Description of the Sample

The study was conducted at the Reeds Road Elementary School, located in a rural-like area in Atlantic County. Fifth and Sixth graders were chosen as a sample because they have the most experience with the bully-proofing program, as many of them have attended Reeds Road and been familiar with this program for most of their school careers. As well, fifth and sixth graders, in general, possess the maturity level necessary to complete a survey of this depth.

Once all the surveys have been completed, twenty fifth grade surveys and twenty sixth grade surveys will be chosen for analysis. Each group of twenty students was comprised of ten females and ten males. This random sampling accurately reflected the overall student community.

Description of the Data Collection

The surveys were given to all the fifth and sixth grade teachers to administer at their convenience. Before the surveys were issued an explanation of the survey was given to all students. After the completion of the surveys teachers returned them accordingly. At that point all of the surveys were placed in appropriate piles and a random sampling was conducted.

Description of Data Analysis

The data analyzed will be drawn from the surveys that were administered to the fifth and sixth graders at the Reeds Road Elementary School. Through a random sampling the data will be analyzed to identify bullying situations and scenarios but most importantly decide whether the bully-proofing program is effective.

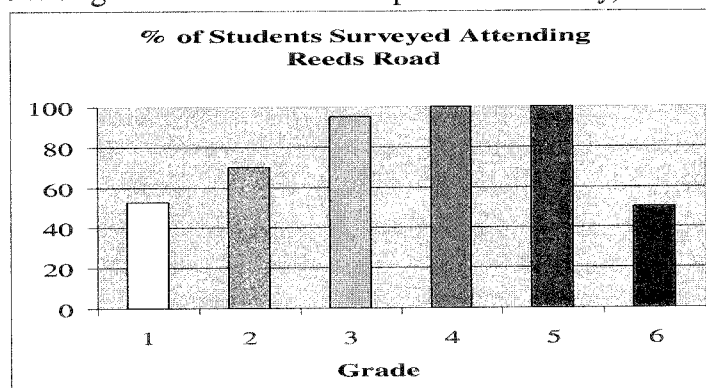
Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

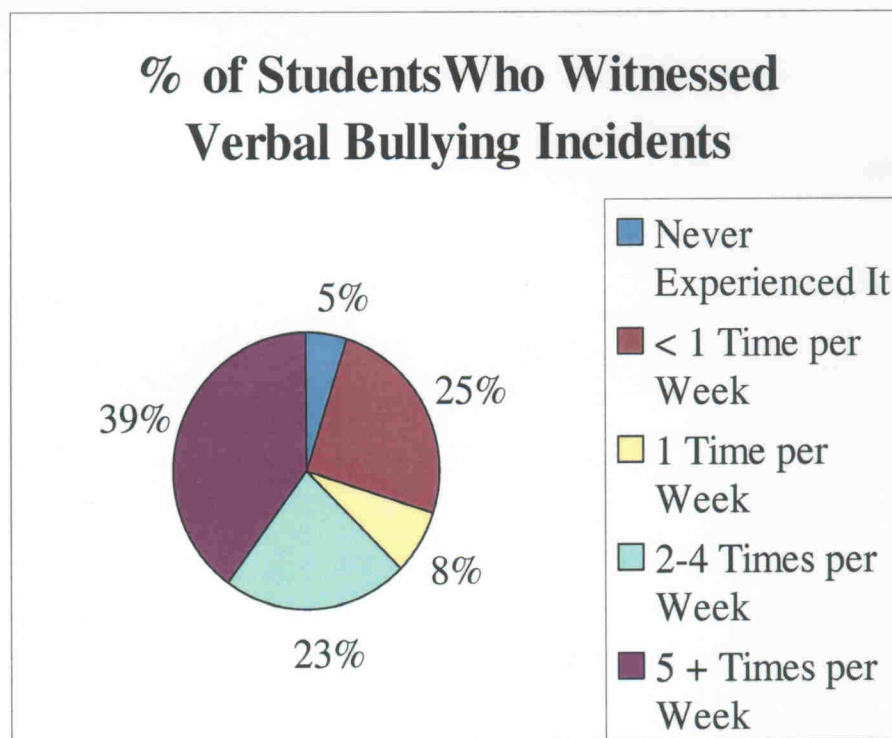
The design of this study was developed to analyze the effectiveness of the existing bully-proofing program found within the Reeds Road Elementary School. Through the use of a survey the efficiency of this program could be determined along with identifying bullying situations and scenarios.

The survey was administered to 40 fifth and sixth graders that had been in the school since the initiation of the Bully-proofing Program. There was an even split of 50% 5th graders and 50% sixth graders that were surveyed. As well, 50% of the students were female and the other 50% male. Out of the forty students 5% walked to school, 2.5% were driven to school by car, and the remaining 92.5% of the students arrived by bus.

Out of the students that were surveyed 52.5% attended the school in first grade, 70% attended the school in second grade, 95% attended the school in third grade, 100% attended the school in fourth grade, 100% attended the school in fifth grade, and 50% attended the school in sixth grade. (The 50% in sixth grade can be attributed to the 20 fifth grade students that completed the survey)



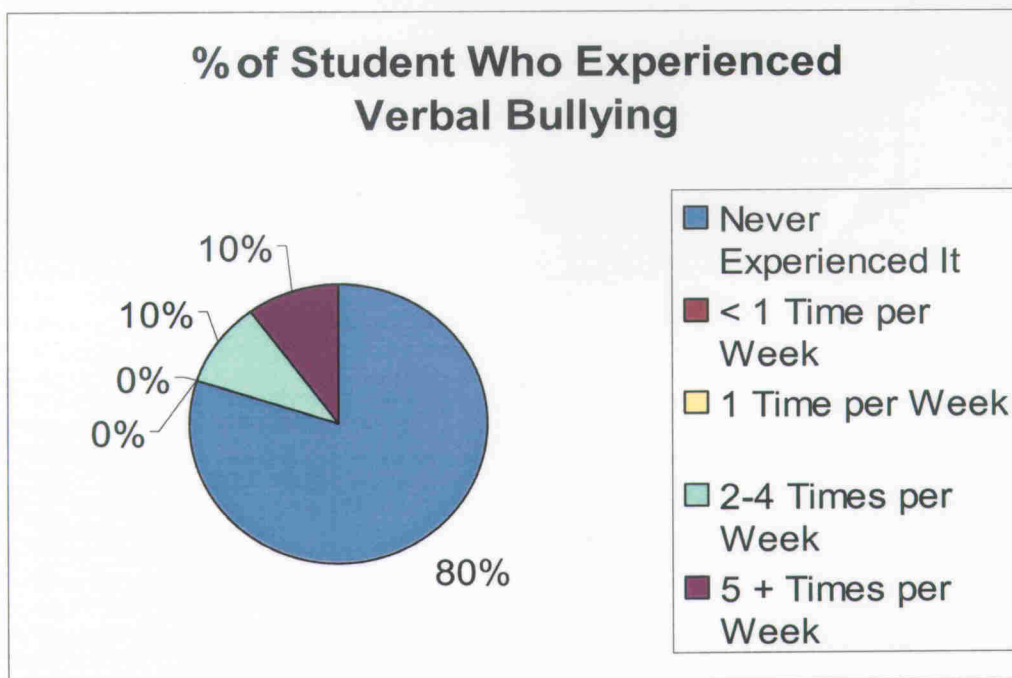
The survey itself concentrated on specific bullying situations and reactions. The students were first asked to respond if they witnessed bullying incidents. Seven different bullying scenarios were given and the students had the choice of checking off never, < 1 time per week, 1 time per week, 2-4 times per week, 5 or more times per week. Of all the seven scenarios, I heard kids say mean things, tease or call someone names stood out from all the others. 5% of the students said they never have experienced it, 25% said less than 1 time per week, 7.5% said 1 time per week, 22.5% said 2-4 times per week, and 40% 5 or more times per week.



Following this set of questions students had a chance to respond to what they did when they witnessed the bullying situations. 37.5% stood up to the kid that was

teasing or hurting the other kid, while 32.5% did nothing. Out of the witnessed bullying 22.5% was done by a girl, 60% by a boy, and 60% by a group. 17.5% told no one about the bullying incident, 52.5% told a friend, 35% told an adult at school, 32.5% told a parent, and 17.5 told other. Out of the witnessed bullying 35% responded that it happened in the classroom, 87.5% the playground, 52.5% hallways/lunchroom, 27.5 % going to and from school, and 7.5% in the bathroom.

The students were asked to respond again to the same seven bullying scenarios except they were asked if the bullying situation happened to them. Out of all of the scenarios, once again other kids said mean things, teased called me names stood out. 10% responded that this happened to them 2-4 times per week, while another 10% answered 5 times or more per week.

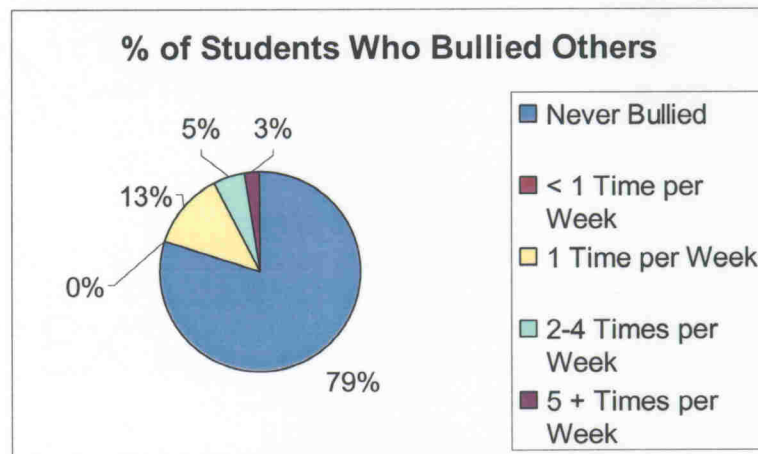


42.5% of the bullied students ignored the bullying or walked away, 37.5% got help from another kid, and 25% did nothing.

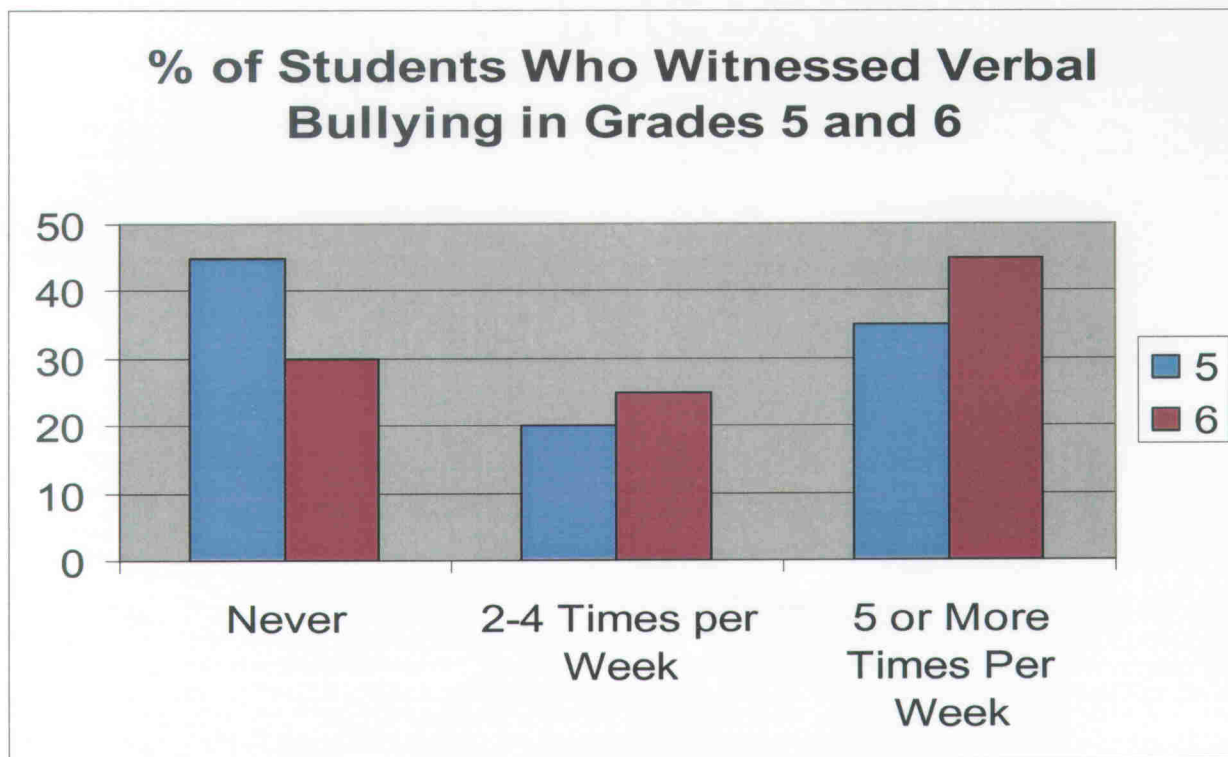
The students identified the bullies as 37.5 %girls, 57.5% boys, and 30% as a group. 12.5% of the students told no one, 62.5% told a friend, 25% told an adult at school, 37.5% a parent, and 7.5 other. 32.5% of the bullying occurred in the classroom, 65% on the playground, 30% in the hallways/lunchroom, 15% going to and from school, and 2.5% in the bathroom.

After the students answered the questions on personal bullying situations they were asked how safe and unsafe they felt in school. Out of the five places the students seem to feel the safest in the classroom and bathroom compared to going to and from school, in the hallways and lunchroom, and the playground.

The last part of the survey asked the students to respond to the seven original scenarios except to answer if they did the bullying situation. For a third time the scenario of I said mean things, teased or called kids names stood out. 12.5% of the students responded that they did this 1 time per week, 5% 2-4 times per week, and 2.5% 5 or more times per week.



As stated earlier in the results, of the 40 students surveyed 20 of them were fifth graders and 20 of them were sixth graders. I thought it was important to compare and contrast results from the two grade levels. A trend seen in the survey as a whole could also be seen in the two different grade levels. In the question of what kind of bullying the students witnessed I heard kids say mean things, tease or call someone names was witnessed the most out of the 7 scenarios. 20% of the fifth graders witnessed this type of bullying 2-4 times per week, while 35% of them witnessed it 5 or more times per week. 25% of the sixth graders witnessed this type of bullying behavior 2-4 times per week, while 45% of them witnessed it 5 or more times per week.



The students reacted very differently to the witnessed bullying behavior. 50% of the fifth graders stood up to the kid that was bullying another student, 40% asked the student that was bullied to play with them, 45% got help from an adult at school, and 15% did nothing about it. 50% of the sixth graders did nothing about it, 25% stood up to the bully, 15% asked the kid to play with them, and 10% got help from an adult at school.

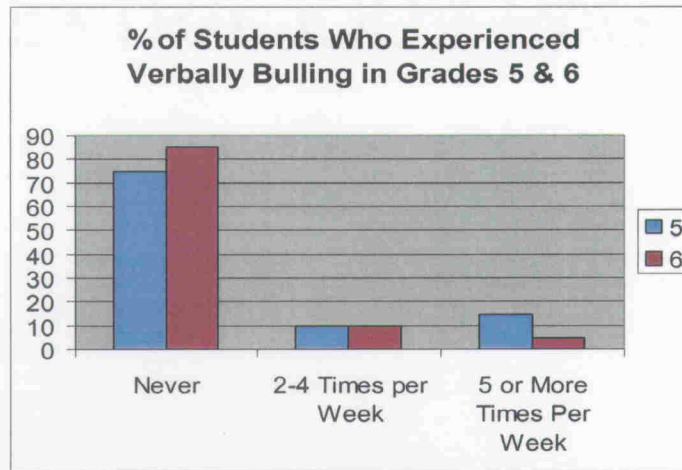
30% of the fifth graders reported that they witnessed bullying by a girl, 70% by a boy, and 60% by a group. 15% of the sixth graders reported that they witnessed bullying by a girl, 50% by a boy, and 60% by a group.

5% of the fifth graders told no one about witnessing the bullying, 50% told a friend, 45% told an adult in the school, 50% told a parent, and 20% told other. 30% of the sixth graders told no one about witnessing the bullying, 55% told a friend, 25% told an adult at school, 15% told a parent, and 15% told other.

25% of the fifth graders witnessed bullying in the classroom, 95% on the playground, 45% in the hallways/lunchroom, 35% going to and from school, and 10% in the bathroom. 45% of the sixth graders witnessed bullying in the classroom, 80% on the playground, 60% in the hallways/lunchroom, 20% going to and from school, and 5% in the bathroom.

When the students were asked to respond to the original seven scenarios, except if the bullying happened to them, other kids said mean things, teased or called me names topped the list again. 10% of the fifth graders responded that it happened to them 2-4 times per week and 15% 5 or more times per week. 10% of the sixth graders

had this bullying situation happen to them 2-4 times per week and 5% 5 or more times per week.



55% of the fifth graders got help from another kid, 55% told the kid to stop, 35% ignored or walked away from the bully, and 25% did nothing. 10% of the sixth graders got help from another kid, 25% told the kid to stop, 50% ignored or walked away from the bully and 25% did nothing.

The fifth graders reported that they were bullied 40% by a girl, 60% by a boy and 20% by a group. The sixth graders reported that they were bullied 35% by a girl, 55% by a boy and 40% by a group.

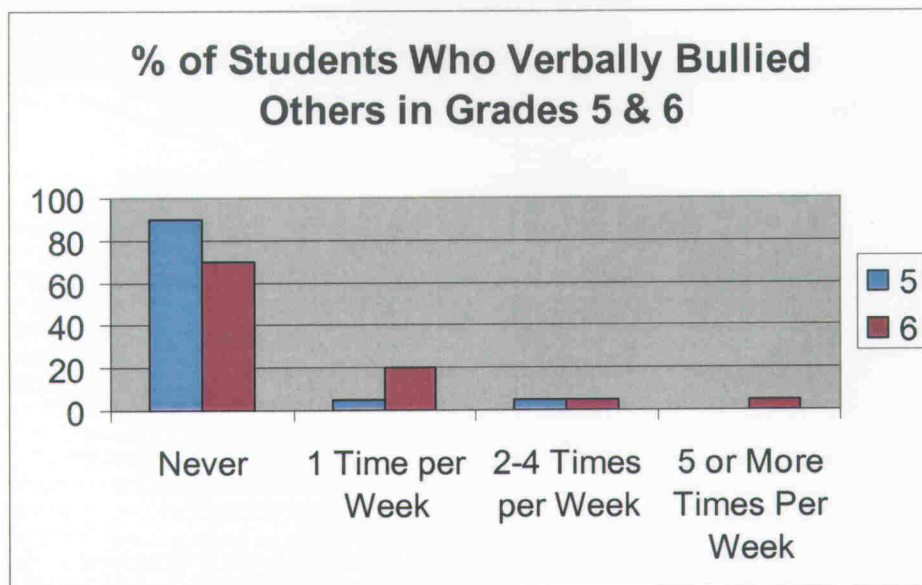
0% of the fifth graders that were bullied told no one, 75% told a friend, 35% told an adult at school, 50% told a parent, 10% told other. 25% of the sixth graders that were bullied told no one, 50% told a friend, 15% told an adult at school, 25% told a parent, 5% told other.

35% of the fifth graders reported being bullied in the classroom, 70% on the playground, 40% in the hallways/lunchroom, 20% going to and from school, 5% in

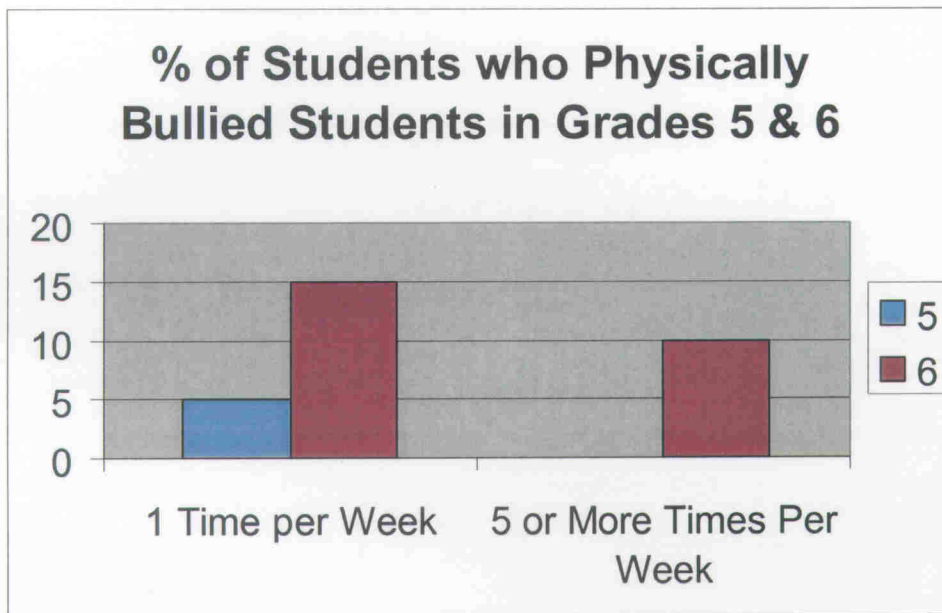
the bathroom. 30% of the sixth graders reported being bullied in the classroom, 60% on the playground, 20% in the hallways/lunchroom, 10% going to and from school, 0% in the bathroom.

25% of the fifth grade students felt kind of unsafe on the playground, while 10% of the sixth grade students felt very unsafe and scared and 10% felt kind of unsafe on the playground. 5% of the sixth graders felt very unsafe and scared going to and from school, 10% unsafe and scared, 10% kind of unsafe, while the 10% of the fifth grade students felt kind of unsafe going to and from school.

When the students were asked about if they did any bullying 5% of the fifth graders said meant things, teased or called kids name 1 time per week and 5% did it 2-4 times per week. 20% of the sixth graders said mean things, teased or called kids names 1 time per week, 5% 2-4 times per week, and 5% 5 or more times per week.



Interestingly, 5% of the fifth graders hit, pushed or kicked another student 1 time per week compared to 15% of the 6th graders 1 time per week and 10% 5 or more times per week.



Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

The survey was administered to forty 5th and 6th grade students that been at the school since the introduction of the Bully-proofing Program. A breakdown of 10 males and 10 females were surveyed from each specific grade level. Drawing results from specific 5th and 6th graders that had been at the school since the Bully-proofing Program was introduced was important to me. It was important because I thought that the results from these students would give me a better idea of if the Bully-proofing Program could be deemed successful.

The results that I examined looked at the survey as a whole and then from the specific grade levels of 5th and 6th grade. I found the results of the survey very interesting and think that many different conclusions can be reached.

The survey started off by asking the students some demographic information. Then the students were asked about if they had witnessed bullying behavior within the past month. Out of the seven possible witnessed bullying incidents one stood out from the others. 95% of the forty students surveyed witnessed kids saying mean things, teasing or calling someone names. This 95% was the identical on both the 6th and 5th grade surveys.

I found this percentage both disturbing and also interesting at the same time. It was disturbing to me because it was such a high percentage and I found myself

rather upset with the outcome. On the other hand, it was interesting because it can be linked to previous research. Previous research states that verbal bullying outweighs all other kinds and this specific scenario is verbal bullying.

I think that this specific bullying scenario has such a high percentage because the opportunity for kids to say mean things, tease or call someone names is so immense. During a school day, students have so many chances to verbally bully one another. The verbal attack can easily be done without teacher awareness. I also think, as stated earlier, that almost everyone can remember a time in their childhood that someone said something mean to them, teased or called them a name. The unfortunate aspect is that it is still very common practice and is happening at a high percentage in my school.

Something that the survey tried to do was to get responses from the students on how they reacted when they saw a bullying situation. The students had the opportunity to respond to seven possible reactions. As a whole 37.5% of the students stood up to the kid who was teasing or hurting the other kid and 27.5% got help from an adult at school. However, 32.5% did nothing.

There was a major difference when comparing fifth grade to sixth grade reactions to witnessed bullying. When it came to fifth grade 50% of them stood up to the kid that was bullying another student, 45% got adult help, and 15% did nothing about it. 25% of the sixth graders stood up to the bully, only 10% got adult help, and 50%

of them did nothing about it.

In comparing the two grade levels a difference of 25% standing up to a bully, 35% getting adult help and 35% doing nothing about the bullying is significant. I find it a little difficult to draw a conclusion as of to why a major difference can be seen amongst the fifth and sixth graders. As students get older more peer pressure becomes evident and a little more peer pressure might play a part in these differences.

The sixth grade might feel that getting help from an adult might be considered tattling by his or her peers. If this were true this would also play a part in the high percentage of sixth graders that did nothing about the bullying incident. They might fear that telling about the bullying situation might be looked down upon by their peers. When it comes to standing up to the bully I do not think that the fifth graders are more courageous than the sixth graders. Maybe the fifth graders are not as concerned about what others might say if they become involved in the bullying situation.

When asked who was bullying other students boys and a group were the higher percentage compared to girls. A little fluctuation could be seen between fifth and sixth grade but overall the boys and a group seemed to be the bullies. In previous research it has stated that boys commonly initiate a higher percentage of bullying activity than girls. Something that was not asked that maybe should have been

asked in the survey was if the group was made up of male or females. This might have given a better definition of the group.

When the students were asked where they witnessed the bullying the larger percentages responded on the playground and in the hallways/lunchroom. I think that these areas have a high percentage of bullying activity because they are not as structured and less supervised. I know that when the students are on the playground the ratio of teachers to students is approximately 1 teacher to 35 students. This becomes difficult for a teacher to see and hear everything that is going on. Bullies are very aware of this situation and use this to their advantage when bullying other students. As well, the lunchroom is a mass of students with lack of supervision because of the ratio of teachers to students.

An interesting difference in the fifth and sixth grade responses was the higher percentage (45% compared to 25%) of the sixth graders witnessing bullying in the classroom. I do not know what would cause such a difference. It could be the fact that bullies have not been reacted to and therefore feel as if they can bully in any given setting. The witnessed bullying in sixth grade has not been dealt with as well as it has in fifth grade. With this in mind the bullying activity would be more prevalent in areas that are supervised, such as the classroom.

Responses to personal bullying attacks by the students once again was weighted with the kids saying mean things, teasing or calling other students names.

There was a decrease in the percentage of this happening personally compared to witnessed bullying (62.5% compared to 95%), however, it still was a rather large percentage. 65% of the 6th graders and 60% of the fifth graders reported this bullying situation. This once again touches on previous research that verbal bullying happens more frequently.

With this personal bullying the students as whole mostly ignored the bully and walked away. They also got help from another kid and told the bully to stop. 55% of the fifth graders told the students to stop and 65% of the students got help from another kid and 35% ignored the bully and walked away. 50% of the sixth graders ignored the bully and walked away, 25% told the bully to stop and 10% got help from another kid.

This brings into view that the students in fifth and sixth grade handle personal bullying attacks differently. Interestingly though 25% of both fifth and sixth graders did nothing about the bullying situation. Each bullying situation is different for each individual. Therefore, each bullying scenario will be handled differently by the individual. The problem arises when 25% of the students do nothing about the bullying situation the bullying will continue.

Another pattern that could be seen again in the personal bullying is the identification of boys as the largest named bullies. As a whole 57.5% of the students surveyed identified boys as bullies. Only a 5% difference could be seen between the

fifth and sixth grade identification of boys. This again seems to confirm past research that boys are more frequently identified as bullies.

When it came to who the students told about their bullying situation most of them seemed to confide in a friend. 75% of the fifth graders and 50% of the sixth graders told a friend about their bullying problem. I think that this could be linked to strong peer relations that students start to develop as they enter into the later years of their education. Students feel more comfortable sharing problems with their peers.

An interesting difference in the fifth grade compared to sixth grade is that 50% of fifth graders told a parent and 35% told an adult at school while 25% of sixth graders told a parent and 15% told an adult at school. This brings me to the conclusion that sixth graders seem to want to handle the bullying without much adult intervention. The problem is 25% of the sixth graders surveyed told no one about the bullying compared to 0% of the fifth graders. This again concerns me because if no one is told about the bullying nothing can be done to stop it.

Another pattern can be identified that most of the bullying occurred on the playground or in the hallways/lunchroom. This ties into past research that most bullying occurs outside the classroom. However, 35% of the fifth graders and 30% of the sixth graders reported bullying in the classroom. This would seem to be somewhat of a contradiction to the past research. I do remember reading about this

topic that bullying in the classroom, especially verbal in nature, goes unnoticed or goes undetected by teachers. Teachers need to think about this and become very aware of what goes on in their classroom.

When the students were asked to identify how safe they felt in specific places students seemed to identify the classroom, hallway/lunchroom, and the bathroom as the safest places. As a whole the students identified the playground and going to and from school as the places that are unsafe. Demographically, 92.5% of the students take the bus to and from school. I would conclude that the students feel unsafe on the playground and going to and from school because they are the most unsupervised and they are located outside of the school building. I know that the bathroom is not necessarily supervised but it is monitored for unwanted behavior. Even though the playground is supervised by teachers the ratio of teachers to students is large and the playground itself is a large area.

The last part of the survey asked the students if they bully other kids. Following the pattern most of the students responded that they have said mean things, teased or called another student names (55% as a whole, 50% 5th grade, 60% 6th grade). It seems as if this bullying scenario whether it is witnessed, happening, or personally done by an individual knows no bounds.

Two main patterns seem to be evident when analyzing the results. The first one being that of all the seven bullying scenarios noted on the survey saying mean

things, teasing or calling kids names was responded to the most. As stated earlier, this directly ties into past research on this topic and the identification that verbal bullying outweighs all other kinds. The other evident pattern is that boys were identified as bullies, more so than girls. This also can be linked to past research.

The forty students surveyed have given insight on bullying as an observer, as a victim, and as a bully themselves. Whether the survey is looked at as a whole, or split into fifth and sixth grade it can be concluded that bullying is very apparent in my school. This also brings me to my research question as of to whether or not the Bully-proofing program can be deemed successful. I find it difficult to put the stamp of success on this program when so many students are reporting bullying situations. Unfortunately, this program can not in my eyes be considered successful if so many bullying incidents are still happening.

I was interested in finding out if the Bully-proofing Program at my elementary school works. I think the outcome of the research will really be beneficial not only to me but also to the whole school. A lot of time and effort by the administration, counselors, teachers and students supports this program. As stated earlier, the program continues even after its implementation approximately four years ago. When our counselors first introduced this program, the school staff received in-service training, and have incorporated the Bully-proofing Program into their practice ever since.

I hoped that my research would give me a concrete answer as to whether or not the program can be considered a success. I think the outcome of this paper will impact me as a teacher and the school as a whole. If the program was considered successful I think a strong continuation of the teaching practices of the program would continue. If the research deemed the program unsuccessful, I think that possible modifications of the existing program, modifications of teaching techniques, or a possible change in the whole program would occur.

The completion of the research has painted the picture that bullying is still very prevalent in my school. I plan to share the results with my administrative team and the school counselors. From there, I would like to share my findings with the teachers of my school at a staff meeting. In sharing the research outcomes, implementation of various changes will be needed. Before the changes can take place, much thought and site-based decisions will have to be made. I think that before rushing into anything, follow up research would occur, such as student interviews, school-wide surveys, and things of that nature.

I think the research on the Bully-proofing Program will encourage me as a teacher to consider and think about other programs and policies in my school and their effectiveness. I feel strongly that a stand on aggressive behavior and bullying must be taken in a school setting. I think that in order to take a stand against bullying, one must have a strong program. I think at this point in time, it is difficult

to say that the program is completely unsuccessful. It is still a young program that may take time to prove its effectiveness. This research gives my school and me the understanding that the program needs more strength to stop bullying in our school.

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Appendix A

Bully Survey

Bully Survey

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this survey. As you have noticed there is no place to put your name meaning that the information you provide is confidential. Please fill out the survey truthfully and once again I appreciate your time and honesty.

Please check the answer that describes you:

Grade: 5th grader___ 6th grader___ **Gender:** male___ female___

How do you get to school?: walk___ car___ bus___

Please check all of the grades that you went to this school:

1st grade___ 2nd grade___ 3rd grade___ 4th grade___ 5th grade___ 6th grade___

For the following please check only one dash for each item.

Check only if the item happened to someone else (not you).

During the past month:

	never	less than 1 time per week	1 time per week	2-4 times per week	5 or more times per week
*I saw someone get hit, pushed, or kicked by other kids	___	___	___	___	___
*I heard kids say mean things, tease or call someone names	___	___	___	___	___
*I heard kids tell stories about someone that were not true	___	___	___	___	___
*I saw kids not let someone join in what they were doing	___	___	___	___	___
*I saw or heard that kids took things that did not belong to them	___	___	___	___	___
*I heard kids threaten to hurt someone or take their things	___	___	___	___	___
*I heard kids tease someone about their grades	___	___	___	___	___

If you heard or saw any of the things above happen (check all that apply):

What did you do?:

- *I did nothing ___
- *I asked the kid who was hurt/teased/left out to play with me ___
- *I helped the kid who was hurt/teased/left out get away ___
- *I helped the kid come up with ideas about how to handle the problem ___
- *I got help from an adult at school ___
- *I stood up to the kid who was teasing or hurting the other kid ___

Who was it done by? (remember you can check more than one) :

A girl ___ A boy___ A group ___

Who did you tell? (remember you can check more than one):

no one ___ a friend___ an adult at school___ a parent___ other___

Where did it happen? (remember you can check more than one):

classroom___ playground___ hallways/lunchroom___ going to and from school___ bathroom___

For the following please check only one dash for each item.
Check only if the item happened to you.

During the past month:

	never	less than 1 time per week	1 time per week	2-4 times per week	5 or more times per week
*I was hit, pushed, or kicked by other kids	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Other kids said mean things, teased, or called me names	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Other kids told stories about me that were not true	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Other kids did not let me join in what they were doing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Other kids took things that belong to me	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Other kids threatened to hurt me or take things	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Other kids teased me about my grades	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

If any of these happened to you (check all that apply):

What did you do?:

- *I got help from an adult at school _____
- *I got help from another kid _____
- *I hit, kicked, or pushed the kid _____
- *I told the kid to stop _____
- *I told the kid that I agreed with what he or she said about me _____
- *I avoided the kid so I would not get hurt or teased again _____
- *I got help from my parents _____
- *I ignored it or walked away _____
- *I said mean things, teased, or called the kid names _____
- *I tried to stop the kid by saying or doing something funny _____
- *I said things to myself to help myself feel better _____
- *I did nothing _____

Who was it done by? (remember you can check more than one):

A girl _____ A boy _____ A group _____

Who did you tell? (remember you can check more than one):

no one _____ a friend _____ an adult at school _____ a parent _____ other _____

Where did it happen? (remember you can check more than one):

classroom _____ playground _____ hallways/lunchroom _____ going to and from school _____ bathroom _____

During the past month this is how safe I felt in each of these places (please check only one dash for each item):

	very unsafe and scared	unsafe and scared	kind of unsafe	kind of safe	safe	very safe
*In my classroom	___	___	___	___	___	___
*On the playground	___	___	___	___	___	___
*In the hallways and lunchroom	___	___	___	___	___	___
*Going to and from school	___	___	___	___	___	___
*In the bathroom	___	___	___	___	___	___

For the following please check only one dash for each item.
Check only if the item was done by you

During the past month:

	never	less than 1 time per week	1 time per week	2-4 times per week	5 or more times per week
*I hit, pushed, or kicked other kids	___	___	___	___	___
*I said mean things, teased, or called kids names	___	___	___	___	___
*I told stories about kids that were not true	___	___	___	___	___
*I did not let other kids join in what I was doing	___	___	___	___	___
*I took things that did not belong to me	___	___	___	___	___
*I threatened to hurt other kids or take things	___	___	___	___	___
*I teased other kids about their grades	___	___	___	___	___

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