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Establishing School Safety: Lessons Learned From a High Needs School

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

ESTABLISHING SCHOOL SAFETY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM A HIGH NEEDS SCHOOL

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

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Abstract

Various social determinants hinder children's optimal functioning, particularly, poverty. This study explored students' perceptions of school safety, bullying behaviour, and school programming in a high needs school. Student responses on the Safe Schools Survey were analyzed and the effect of poverty on students' perceptions of school safety and bullying behaviour were tested. The school's bullying initiatives were assessed with the Safe Schools Checklist to determine the degree to which provincial- and board-level, as well as evidence-based recommendations for safe schools were met. Three themes emerged from interviews with school personnel: 1) The school's knowledge on the impact of the community on student needs and their behaviour in school; 2) The school's role in meeting student needs; and 3) Barriers to creating a safe school for students. Based on the study's findings, implications for schools and counselling practice are discussed. Future directions for research are identified.

Keywords

Bullying Behaviour, Intervention, Poverty, Prevention, School Safety.

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Chapter 1

1 « Introduction »

Healthy development is crucial for children's physical and mental well-being. An environment of social and intellectual stimulation combined with adequate resources and support enable children to perform optimally, which equips them with the necessary skills to reach their full potential. However, various social determinants hinder children's positive development and optimal functioning, particularly, poverty. A review of literature relevant to child poverty and mental health as well as the effects of poverty on schools is presented. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether poverty is associated with students' perceptions of school safety, bullying, and school programming (in regards to bullying) in one high needs public elementary school in Southwestern Ontario. Student responses from several sections of the School Board's Safe Schools Survey, pertaining to mental wellness, perceptions of safety, Safe Schools initiatives, and students' experiences of bullying were analyzed. An examination of bullying and Safe Schools policies and legislations at the school board and provincial level assisted in the assessment of school-based supports for students and adherence to programming. The high needs school's Safe Schools Action Plan and evidence-based recommendations for safe schools were consulted. Additionally, educators were interviewed to gain a better understanding of their knowledge and attitudes on bullying, their perspectives on how poverty affects the school, their views on programming, and barriers to program implementation. The present study employed a mixed methods research design.

1.1 « Optimal Development »

Healthy children. Children require cognitively, emotionally, physically, and socially enriching environments for healthy development. This is fostered by various factors within a safe and positive environment. Maggi, Irwin, Siddiqi, and Hertzman (2010) outline five fundamental conditions of development that help children reach their optimal functioning, which are applicable cross-culturally. Children must have: 1) A secure attachment to a trusted caregiver, which also involves quality care and time received from

the caregiver; 2) a responsive parenting style that comprises of consistent care, support, and affection; 3) nutrition; 4) support, stimulation, and nurturance from their families (influenced by parenting styles and families' resources that are devoted to child-rearing); and 5) neighbourhood cohesion (mobilization of resources, surroundings that are free from harm, inclusiveness, and belonging). Huebner, Suldo, and Valois (2005) posit that life satisfaction is an indicator of well-being, defined as an individual's subjective evaluation of their life within the consideration of specific domains (e.g. family, school). In a sample of adolescents, they found that low life satisfaction is associated with stressful events and psychopathological behaviour. Likewise, it is crucial to provide encouraging and rewarding experiences to children. Children also require healthcare resources, timely access to health services (Rosenberg, 2013), stable housing (Schmitz, Wagner, & Menke, 1995), and opportunities for interaction with their peers (Fabes, Hanish, Martin, Moss, & Reesing, 2012; Mooij, 2012). Engagement in play is an important factor in promoting healthy development, as children learn skills (e.g. collaboration, confidence, critical thinking) that are transferable to other domains of life (Jacobson, 2008). Early childhood education has a significant influence on children's school achievement and intellectual success (Barnett 1995; Barnett 1998). A study with a Canadian sample of four to five year-olds found children's verbal ability scores were positively associated with their residence in affluent neighborhoods (Kohen, Brooks-Gunn, Leventhal, & Hertzman, 2002). Conversely, children's verbal ability scores were positively associated with their residence in poor neighbourhoods with low cohesion. These findings were consistent after controlling for family socioeconomic factors. Moreover, scores on behaviour problems were higher in children who lived in neighbourhoods that had fewer affluent residents, high rates of unemployment, and low neighbourhood cohesion (Kohen, et al., 2002).

Healthy schools. Children live in a contextual world where their experiences from one domain permeate and influence another. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory provides the framework for this concept as he described that social environments, which he defined as systems, are nested within larger systems. From the closest to the farthest system proximity, relative to the individual child, the systems comprise of: the microsystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that the microsystem comprises of systems, relationships, and environments that have direct influence over children; children also have direct contact with these systems; the exosystem indirectly influences children and pertains to systems in which children do not directly participate in or interact with; and the macrosystem involves the overarching cultural context of both the microsystem and the exosystem. Schools are one of the institutions in the microsystem that most immediately and directly impact child development and thus, may be considered one of the first places of socialization beyond children's families. In schools, children continue to learn about how society operates, methods of interaction, and socially acceptable norms. In order for children to extend their learning and succeed academically, schools must offer a positive and safe learning environment. A sense of belonging reduces feelings of alienation and social isolation (Edwards & Mullis, 2001), which enhances children's sense of safety within their school. Kroninger, Domm, Webster, and Troutman (2010) suggest that there are three main indicators of a healthy school culture. First is collaboration, the degree to which school personnel and students work cooperatively to achieve goals. The second is collegiality, which includes students' sense of belonging, inclusion, and the emotional support they receive from school staff and other students. The third is efficacy, which refers to stakeholders' input in the school (Kroninger et al., 2010).

1.2 « Children's Mental Health »

The onset of serious internalizing (e.g. anxiety and depression) and externalizing (e.g. aggression, oppositional behaviours) problems and mental health illnesses oftentimes occurs before the age of 20 (Rosenberg, 2013); they are debilitating, impairs daily functioning, and may persist into adulthood. The most common emotional and behavioural problems children and youth experience are: anxiety, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), depression, mood disorders, schizophrenia, and eating disorders (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013). In Canada, it is estimated that 10 to 20% of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder; mental illnesses and disorders are the single most disabling group of disorders worldwide (Canadian Mental Health Association [CMHA], 2013). Thus, it is essential to provide children and youth with appropriate support, adequate resources, and access to mental

health services. According to CMHA (2013), Canada's youth suicide rate is the third highest in the industrialized world and is only surpassed by injuries. Mental disorders in youth are ranked as the second highest hospital care expenditure in the country (CMHA, 2013). Therefore, prevention, early identification, and treatment are crucial in mitigating the long-term effects of mental illness in terms of children's development as well as in improving school achievement and health outcomes.

1.3 « The Effects of Poverty on Children and Youth »

Poverty is a social determinant of health (Das, Do, Friedman, McKenzie, & Scott, 2007; McDonough & Berglund, 2003; Swinnerton, 2006). In Canada, the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), otherwise known as the poverty line, defines low-income households. The LICO is the most commonly used measure in Canada and is an income threshold below which a family will likely expend 20 percentage points more on basic needs in comparison with an average family (Statistics Canada, 2009). In 2006, 14.6% of children and youth under the age of 18 residing in the City of London, Ontario, lived in families with incomes below the after-tax LICO (City of London Social Research and Planning Unit, 2011). It is important to note that the City of London has the highest child poverty rate in comparison to provincial and national levels; 13.7% and 13.1% respectively (City of London Social Research and Planning Unit, 2011). The causal effects of family and community poverty on poorer mental, emotional, and behavioural health are well documented (Yoshikawa, Aber, & Beardslee, 2012); which impact the components that are required for optimal child development and may lead to disadvantaged developmental trajectories.

General health and functioning. Poverty is also connected to children's performance in school (Fantuzzo et al., 2005; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Maggi and colleagues (2010) propose it may be due to the deficiency in resources associated with poverty. Other studies have indicated that children in families with a lower socioeconomic status (SES) have poorer social skills and cognitive functioning compared to their peers from economically advantaged families (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klevanov, 1994; McLoyd, 1990; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Furthermore, reading literacy among nine and ten year-olds are related to socioeconomic position in 43 resource poor countries (Willms, 2006).

Mental health. Poverty and mental health should be considered as a dynamic factor as opposed to a static factor. This is largely due to the fact that children who live in poverty experience a greater risk of mental health issues and behavioral problems and the severity of these issues are dependent on the length of time that children are poor (McLeod & Shanahan, 1996). A longitudinal study indicates children's residence in a low SES background is strongly associated with psychosocial difficulties (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2005)**.**

Meltzer, Vostanis, Goodman, and Ford (2007) conducted a study in Great Britain and assessed perceived neighbourhood trust and safety and its relationship to childhood psychopathology while taking child, family, and objective neighbourhood characteristics, which have been shown to affect childhood psychopathology, into consideration. Approximately 3,000 11 to 16 year-olds completed interviews regarding neighbourhood trustworthiness while parents were questioned about socio-demographic characteristics of the child and family, social capital, and neighbourhood prosperity. Results revealed that children who reside in areas that were classified as 'hard pressed' were more likely to have negative attitudes, trust, and feelings, as well as negative neighbourhood perceptions, which were strongly associated with childhood psychopathology.

A study conducted by Singh and Ghandour (2012) revealed consistent findings. The impact of neighbourhood social conditions, household SES, and potential intervening mechanisms on the prevalence of a range of childhood behavioural problems in children from different age groups were examined. The researchers also aimed to provide an estimate of the prevalence of behavioural problems by a variety of neighborhoods, household, and child-level characteristics. Data from the study utilized the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health and in particular, a measure of serious behavioural problems (SBP) in 6 to 17 year-old children. SES was measured by parental education as well as household poverty status. Neighbourhood social conditions were measured by perceptions of safety, vandalism within the area, the presence of litter, and poor housing conditions. Parents provided a self-report of their children's behaviours. Results show that children who reside in poverty, the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and whose

parents have the lowest education level (lower than high school education) are at a greater risk of SBP compared to their peers from more advantaged neighbourhoods. A greater risk of behavioural problems is also associated with unfavorable neighbourhood conditions even when controlling for household SES and demographic characteristics. Hence, this study provides additional support for the impact of neighbourhoods on child development.

A limitation in Singh and Ghandour's (2012) study was the data source: researchers relied solely on parents' reports of their children's behavioural problems. This is a threat to internal validity as parents may have biased their responses to provide more positive ratings for their child's behaviours, reflected inaccurate memories, or deliberately chose not to record problem behaviours due to social desirability bias. Parents also reported on neighbourhood conditions so it is possible that some responses were inflated.

Compared with Singh and Ghandour's (2012) study, McLeod and Shanahan's (1996) longitudinal study was more specific to the relationship between poverty and children's mental health; they investigated the relationship between children's family histories of poverty and their developmental trajectories of mental health. McLeod and Shanahan's (1996) study suggests children who experience early and persistent economic disadvantages have a greater risk of experiencing mental health issues, particularly depression and antisocial tendencies. They provided support that mental health issues in children may increase with the length of time that their family is poor. McLeod and Shanahan's (1996) study utilized data from the Children of the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY) data set was used to address the study's research questions. The NLSY tracks young men and women's labor market experience over the span of multiple years through interviews with a series of cohorts. A cohort of women between the ages of 14 and 21 were interviewed annually beginning from 1979. Seven years later, the first of a series of assessment of women's children were conducted to monitor their developmental progress (McLeod & Shanahan, 1996). Assessments of the women's children were conducted in three times in subsequent years, with a two-year interval between assessments. The assessments included interviews with the mothers, interviewer ratings of the home environment, and the direct assessments of children's cognitive and

intellectual ability; the mothers were asked about their total family income for the previous year at each annual interview (McLeod & Shanahan, 1996). Scores for depression and antisocial behaviour were examined for changes over time. Results indicate that children with early histories of persistent poverty have higher levels of depression and this effect persisted over a five-year period, regardless of their later poverty experiences (McLeod & Shanahan, 1996). Similar to the study by Singh and Ghandour (2012), McLeod and Shanahan's (1996) study children's mental health status were obtained on the basis of mothers' reports. The reports may reflect the perceptions of the mothers as opposed to the actual mental health statuses of their children; however, children were directly assessed in McLeod and Shanahan's (1996) study to ensure reliability.

Schools. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical orientation, children bring their experiences from their home into the classroom; in turn, their family's socioeconomic status is reflected in their surrounding community. Community poverty has a strong influence on school disorder (Welsh, Stokes, & Greene, 2000) and additionally, the impact community variables have on school disorders are mediated by the stability of the school. In examining children from disadvantaged communities, the effects of community and neighbourhood poverty on school climate and children's school experiences are investigated.

Lleras (2008) conducted an investigation with over 10 000 Grade 10 students of various ethnic backgrounds in 659 American schools to examine whether students in particular school contexts or groups are more likely to experience hostility. Student reports of classroom disorder, perceptions of school safety, verbal harassment, and school-level variables (e.g. the percentage of economically disadvantaged students, school size, and the percent of students from an ethnic minority background in the school) were examined. Results indicated that students were more likely to experience disruptive classrooms in large and high-poverty public high schools. It is important to note that the survey, which was used in the study, was administered eight years prior to the study's publication. Hence, some information from the surveys may not be applicable due to changes in school legislation and efforts to improve school climate in recent years.

However, the large sample size ensures statistical robustness of study findings. This study raises questions as to what factors cause disruption in classrooms, particularly in high-poverty schools. Some explanations may include poor school readiness, such as emotional immaturity, low social competence, and poor communication skills. A deficit in school readiness may result in behaviour problems, consequently, affecting levels of school disruption. In Ontario schools, adolescents who report negative school environments also reported higher levels of substance use, psychosomatic symptoms, and serious injuries (Freeman, King, Kuntsche, & Pickett, 2011).

School factors such as positive classroom climate and effective instructional practices are less likely to be experienced by children living in poverty (Pianta, LaParo, Payne, Cox, & Bradley, 2002) and these characteristics predict subsequent social adjustment and behavior problems (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). Dhami, Hoglund, Leadbeater, and Boone (2005) investigated whether gender interacts with school-level poverty as well as individual differences at school entry and how it affects Grade 1 boys' and girls' risks for peer victimization. This longitudinal study surveyed 432 students' experiences of peer physical and relational victimization and receipt of prosocial acts. Families rated their child's behavioural and emotional problems, along with social competence. Main findings indicate an increased risk for physical victimization in girls with high levels of behavioural problems and boys with low levels of social competence. This suggests individual differences at the time of school entry affect risk for physical victimization. Children who indicate high levels of behavioural problems are at an increased risk for being victimized by their peers.

Several of the study's limitations are threats to external validity. A sample of students from a single grade level, who are primarily Caucasian, and who reside in an urban area greatly affect the generalizability of study findings. Children who experienced trouble with the survey were interviewed. This method may have affected their responses in inducing feelings of embarrassment or inferiority. Additionally, observer bias in these interviews may have influenced the interpretation of student responses. Lastly, limitations in the nature of the self-report survey apply to this study as in the previous studies mentioned.

Behavioural problems, increased risks for disruption, and bullying. The rates of antisocial behaviour in children with histories of persistent poverty are greater compared to children who are poor for a shorter period of time or are from more affluent family backgrounds (McLeod & Shanahan, 1996). More specifically, bullying falls into the category of antisocial behaviour. Acts of bullying involve physical, verbal, social, and sexual bullying as well as cyberbullying. The School Board in the current study defines bullying as a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance. The definitions of bullying vary across studies; thus, the definition used by the School Board will be used in the present study.

This literature review is primarily focused on studies that investigate the effects of poverty on children's mental health and school climate. Since poverty is a predictor of behavioural problems, the next logical step is to examine the impact of behavioural problems in school settings. Behaviour problems are suggested to play an important role in determining victimization within peer groups (Schwartz, McFadyen-Ketchum, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1999). Additionally, social disorganization theory (Sampson & Groves, 1989) posits several school-level indicators of disorder (e.g. high concentration of student poverty) are likely associated with a diminished school climate, which could potentially be predictors of bullying-related attitudes and behaviour (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009). The purpose of the Bradshaw (2009) study was to consider school- and student-level factors that are associated with an increased risk for involvement in bullying, reduced perceptions of safety, and attitudes supporting aggressive retaliation. Four outcomes are associated with bullying and school violence: frequent peer victimization, attitudes toward aggressive retaliation, perception of safety, and frequent perpetration of bullying. Data was collected from a large-scale, school-based online survey from approximately 22,000 students from 95 elementary and middle schools. Perceptions of safety were assessed through a single item on a four-point Likert scale. Bradshaw et al. (2009) found school-level indicators of disorder (e.g. student-teacher ratio, concentration of student poverty suspension rate, and student mobility) are

significant predictors of bullying-related attitudes and experiences. While this study's findings may be generalized to the general population, limitations exist. The definition of bullying may not have been applied uniformly among students. Also, causal relationships cannot be inferred from the data because of the cross-sectional design.

Two international studies reveal that adolescents whose parents are from a lower socioeconomic background (expressed as educational achievement or economic wealth) have a greater risk of victimization in bullying incidents (Nordhagen, Nielsen, Stigum, & Köhler, 2005; von Rueden, Gosch, Rajmil, Bisegger, & Ravens-Sieberer, 2006). However, the two studies only investigated the link between poverty and bullying experiences in Nordic and European children and adolescents. The study by Due et al. (2009) provides a broader scope by surveying participants from Europe and North America. Due et al. (2009) examined the socioeconomic distribution of adolescents who are exposed to bullying across countries and the contribution of the macroeconomic environment. An international survey was given to students ages 11, 13, and 15 from nationally represented samples of approximately 6,000 schools in 35 countries across Europe and North America for the 2001/2002 school year. Consistent with the two previously mentioned studies, Due et al. (2009) found that socioeconomic inequality exists in the exposure to adolescent bullying. Therefore, adolescents of greater socioeconomic disadvantage may have a higher risk of bullying victimization.

1.4 « Perceptions of School Safety »

The social development model (Hawkins & Weis, 1985), derived from integrating social control and social learning theories, posits that when students develop a positive social bond with their school, they are more likely to remain academically engaged and less likely to engage in antisocial behaviors. This suggests the relationships students have with the people within the school impact their behaviour. Meyer-Adams and Conner (2008) examined the relationships among a school's psychosocial environment and the prevalence and types of bullying behaviours that result from that particular environment. They were also interested in investigating relationships among students' perceptions of bullying behaviours, school safety, and the psychosocial environments of schools. Study variables were measured in Grades 6 to 8 students through approximately 7,500 student

surveys. Findings provide support for the idea that lower perceptions of school safety are tied to victimization in bullying incidents, resulting in more negative perceptions of students' psychosocial environment. Study limitations include non-experimental data; hence specific causality of variables cannot be stated. There is also a possibility that the data was outdated since Meyer-Adams and Connor (2008) used data that was collected more than a decade prior to the publication of their study. Boulton et al. (2009) examined the associations between bullying victimizations, perceptions of safety in the classroom and playground, and the teacher-student relationship in 364 primary school students in Grades 4 to 6. Their study was based on the assertion that past research shows bullying is inversely associated with perceptions of personal safety within schools (Bauman, 2008; Beran & Tutty, 2002; Noaks & Noaks, 2000; Sharp, 1995; Slee & Rigby, 1993). Participants were selected on a convenience basis and individual and small group interviews were conducted. The subtypes of bullying (physical, verbal, social exclusion, relational) were measured. Results indicate bullying was significantly and negatively correlated with perceived safety in the classroom and on the playground. Convenience sampling was used in this study and while this method is less time-consuming and requires less effort compared to other systematic methods of sampling, the sample was not representative of the general population.

In a study that examined 472 students between Grades 1 to 6 in seven elementary Catholic and public schools in Calgary, Beran and Tutty (2002) explored the frequency of bullying in elementary school children while taking age and gender differences into consideration as well as the relationship between reports of student safety, and available adult support. All students completed a bullying survey and provided self-reports of their perceptions of safety. Results indicated higher perceived school safety was associated with less verbal bullying. An additional finding was that support from teachers is a protective factor and a mediator between bullying and feelings of safety.
These studies provide greater empirical support to the idea that disruption in schools and experiences of victimization hinder students from attaining positive school experiences. Perceptions of safety are also affected negatively, however, support from schools could potentially mediate the two variables.

1.5 « School-Based Supports for Students »

With the knowledge that bullying victimization leads to negative perceptions of school safety (Bachman, Gunter, & Bakken, 2011; Bauman, 2008; Boulton, 2009; Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008), it is crucial that schools provide support to help students feel safe. It is important to offer protection as well as to buffer students from adverse school experiences since research indicates increased feelings of safety is associated with more positive student outcomes (Bachman et al., 2011; Mooij, 2012; Ratner, 2006). Social support that will help children cope with the negative effects of being bullied should be provided, as supportive school environments engage students in the prevention of bullying, enhance personal coping skills, and positive feelings of themselves (Dickinson, Coggan, & Bennett, 2003; Eliot, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2010). Supportive relationships can help students cope with being victimized. Having rapport with teachers (Boulton et al., 2009) and gaining social competency help to decrease antisocial behaviour (Harachi, Abbott, Catalano, Haggerty, & Fleming, 1999). In a study by Kam, Greenberg, and Walls (2003) that investigated the quality of implementation in an effectiveness trial of an intervention in six public schools, support from school principals and a high degree of classroom implementation by teachers contributed to the success of the intervention. Global approaches that involve staff, students, parents, and community representatives may have a highly effective impact on the emotional state of students, their behaviour, and performance at school (Midthassel, Minton S, & O'Moore, 2009). Students are more likely to accept and abide by rules, regardless of SES, if all significant adults in their lives know and consistently apply rules (Gottfredson, 2001).

Consistent with past research, Mooij (2012) found school leadership variables are important in helping students feel safe at school. School leadership variables include: the school's attentiveness to student involvement and external procedures, such as incorporating assistance of the police. On the other hand, involving external institutions in the development of rules pertaining to conduct is a negative predictor of feelings of school safety at school and in the school surroundings (Mooij, 2012). A study by Menacker, Hurwitz, and Weldon (1988) examined the development and implementation of the Chicago Uniform Discipline Code (UDC) in elementary public schools and

examined the UDC's effectiveness in regulating school misbehaviour. An evaluation of UDC revealed that it was ineffective in reducing levels of problem behaviour. The UDC was not properly implemented primarily due to the fact that teachers and school administrators were not significantly involved in its development. Results suggest that for disciplinary policies to be effective, they must be strongly supported by principals and consistently enforced (Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988). Much of existing school-based research from the past decade has focused on prevention and intervention strategies; however, Meltzer at al. (2007) found that there is little point in offering activities that promote self-esteem and encourage integration unless children are safe or are helped to feel safe.

1.6 « Organizational and Program Adherence »

Program adherence and program integrity are interchangeable terms that are defined by the degree to which proposed interventions and protocols are implemented as designed; and in doing so, effectively meets the needs of the target population. Program adherence is considered one of the primary aspects of treatment outcome research (Dumas, Lynch, Laughlin, Smith, & Prinz, 2001). It is crucial that program developers train others to implement their program in such a way that closely resembles how the program is intended. Quality control and ensuring program adherence is advantageous for two reasons: it increases program effectiveness and allows for proper evaluation.

In an examination of factors that are related to the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of evidence-based interventions in schools, Forman, Olin, Hoagwood, Crowe, and Sake (2009) sought out the developers of 29 intervention programs to identify possible facilitators and barriers. Some barriers that were reported include: time, school personnel's beliefs about the interventions, competition with established priorities in the school, and competition with federal guidelines (e.g. abiding by the curriculum). Several steps were outlined in regard to successful implementation and sustainability of programs. Support from school principals, school administrators, and teachers ensure the reinforcement of rules and consequences. Financial support is needed to fund implementers of the program, materials, and program evaluation. Lastly, continual

coaching, consultation, mentoring, and training will help to maintain program integrity and sustainability (Forman et al., 2009).

In examining predictors of student misconduct including community poverty, residential stability, community crime, school size, and student perceptions of the school climate, Welsh, Greene, and Jenkins (1999) recommend that community-level factors, such as poverty, be assessed when designing school-based prevention programs. This is important so student needs can be met while being confident that the most effective programs and initiatives are being implemented to encourage feelings of school safety. More importantly, however, is to determine whether schools adhere to initiatives and what factors increase program adherence.

In a study by Dariotis, Bumbarger, Duncan, and Greenberg (2008), five factors that are significantly related to program adherence were outlined: target recipient responsivity, quality of program materials, implementer prioritization, community collaborative system report, and parental support. Thirty-two participants representing seven school-based programs (eleven community-mentoring; seven school-based; four family prevention; and one family treatment) completed surveys on the implementation experiences of their respective programs. Program adherence was measured with a single measure on a four-point Likert scale, and the researchers asserted that all implementers of school-based programs reported the incorporation of adaptations. School-based programs have greater perceived implementation barriers (e.g. insufficient time), as well as the lowest levels of adherence, compared to other types of programs. The results pertaining to school-based programs indicate that schools report low scores in making the program a priority of the organization, having a strong champion, quality of materials and resource allocation, and parental and community support for their programs. No school-based programs reported absolute adherence and the authors posit that this may be related to the adaptations teachers make as a result of academic pressures, including reducing the number of lessons, shortening the number of lessons, or spending less time on certain topic areas. The finding that academic demands may take precedence over prevention program components is consistent with the results of Hazel's (2010) study in which school factors that can impact bullying perceptions of a suburban elementary school, in the United

States, were examined. Findings indicate there is limited school-wide and classroom attention to students' emotional and safety needs due to a focus on academics.

Since all school-based programs made some adaptations, it was difficult to assess how factors related to full program adherence. In a study by Dariotis and colleagues (2008), a larger sample size would have provided researchers with a broader view of the level of adherence since programs were further divided by program type. Additionally, the use of a single indicator to assess program adherence may have limited the validity of the study's findings.

Research indicates poverty affects mental health trajectories of children (Kohen et al., 2002; McDonough & Berglund, 2003; McDonough, Sacker, & Wiggins, 2005; Yoshikawa et al., 2012) and children from high poverty areas are more vulnerable to experiencing behaviour problems (McLeod & Shanahan, 1996; Singh & Ghandour, 2012). It places this population of children at an increased risk for bullying victimization and aggressive behaviour, which is a cause for disruption in the school. Since this is associated with more negative perceptions of safety on school grounds, the presence of school-based supports are important. They mediate between experiences of victimization and bullying and perceptions of school safety. Thus, community-level factors such as the SES of a community should be considered when designing, planning, and implementing programs as they may also affect program adherence. Factors that increase program adherence have been outlined, however, research indicates school-based programs often make adaptations to better suit the needs of the student population (Dariotis et al. 2008; Evans, Schultz, & Serpell, 2008; Komro et al., 2008; Ringwalt et al., 2011).

1.7 « Present Study »

In their review, Yoshikawa (2012) and his colleagues stated that research on the influence of poverty and its effects on children's health and development has primarily focused on physical health, cognitive development, and academic achievement, whereas, research on the effects of poverty on children's mental health are limited. In the following sections, the term, "high needs", will be used to describe the study's participant school, which is

situated within a high poverty community. In light of this, the research questions of the present study ask firstly, whether poverty affects student feelings of school safety. Secondly, the relationship between the SES level of a community and a school's level of programming and program adherence were examined. Thirdly, the study investigated whether the needs of the student population in a high needs school are met through school-based programming. Overall, research on the associations of poverty with students' perception of school safety, bullying behaviour, and school programming are limited, particularly research on how community-level poverty affects school programming. Additionally, the majority of currently available research has been conducted in the United States; hence, research from a Canadian context would further advance the field.

It was predicted that poverty affects student feelings of school safety. Second, it was predicted that the high needs school offer initiatives that focus on bullying prevention and intervention. Thirdly, it was predicted that the needs of the student population in the high needs school are effectively met by school personnel.

Chapter 2

2 « Methods »

2.1 « High Needs School »

To address the stated research questions, one public elementary school (School X) within the School Board in Southwestern Ontario was selected. Various hubs in the city are identified as high needs areas, with levels of high poverty in comparison to other regions in the city. The high needs school was randomly selected from one high-need hub with the use of demographic information from the city as well as the school board. The selection of one school as the focus in the present study allows for an in-depth examination of bullying behaviour and school-based programming in a high needs school.

2.2 « Low Needs School »

One school (School Y) from a low needs community, with a lower poverty level, was randomly selected to serve as a comparator.

2.3 « Participants »

Student responses. The School Board distributes a Safe Schools Survey annually to their students to complete beginning in Grade 4. Survey responses of School X's students, in Grades 4 to 6 were examined and analyzed. These grade levels were selected on the premise of past research that indicate elementary school students experience more bullying incidents compared to middle school students (Bentley & Li, 1995; Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009; Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, & Jugert, 2006). In a study that identified the frequency of bullying in elementary school children between Grades 1 to 3 and Grades 4 to 6, Beran and Tutty (2002) found the older group experienced more bullying from their peers as opposed to students from the younger grades.

Teachers and school personnel. Two teachers (from the Junior division), the school support counselor, and a school administrator, all from School X, were interviewed in the qualitative component of the study. The school administrator and one teacher were selected based on their roles on the school's Safe Schools Committee. The school support counselor was recommended by the school administrator based on her experience working with students and families who require emotional or behavioural supports. In order to gain a broad understanding of Safe Schools initiatives and bullying behaviours, one teacher who was not a member of the Safe Schools committee was selected to participate in the study.

2.4 « Procedure »

The present study was a mixed methods research design with an exploratory nature. For the quantitative component, student responses from the School Board's Safe Schools Survey (Appendix A), which were available in a pre-existing database at the School Board, were examined and analyzed using descriptive and statistical analyses. The Survey is comprised of questions about perceptions of school safety and student experiences of bullying in their school. The Safe Schools Survey services two purposes: 1) To obtain information from all students in Grades 4 to 12 on their perceptions of safety and experiences of bullying at their school, and 2) To gather student views on reactions to bullying and approaches they felt would be effective in dealing with bullying (Thames Valley District School Board [TVDSB], 2012a). Measures of mental wellness and perceptions of safety were examined. Student responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. A single indicator in the Safe School Initiative section provides a greater understanding on students' feelings of safety subsequent to the implementation of initiatives at their school. A measure of victimization in bullying incidents examines the proportion of students who have been victimized. Various forms of bullying include: verbal, physical, social, sexual, the use of technology, based on one's sexual orientation, and based on one's ethnic background.

The second component of the design included a qualitative component that resembled the format of a case study. Two sources of evidence were used. The first source of evidence

included open-ended interviews with school personnel from School X. Written informed consent was obtained prior to each interview (Appendix B). Interviews comprised of seven open-ended questions (Appendix C) and required approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Interview questions pertaining to educators' knowledge and views of poverty and its impact on the school and existing bullying prevention and intervention initiatives were asked. Responses from the interviews addressed the second research question of whether community poverty affects a school's programming and level of adherence to school-based programming. Interview responses also shed light on the barriers of program implementation. Audio recordings of interviews were made. The second source of evidence included documents of School X's Safe Schools initiatives, handouts, and e-mails between members of the Safe Schools Committee.

The third component of the study involved the evaluation of School X with the Safe Schools Checklist, which was developed by the study's researchers (Appendix G). In Sautner's (2008) literature review on inclusive education and violence prevention in schools, she stated that it is difficult to establish a clear picture of what constitutes a safe school due to the lack of consensus and consistent terminology. Hence, Ontario's *Safe Schools Strategy, Safe Schools Act*, the School Board's Safe Schools' policies and regulations, combined with the Ontario Ministry of Education's reports and evidence-based recommendations for bullying prevention and intervention programs, were aggregated on the Safe Schools Checklist. There are 19 items on the Safe Schools Checklist: 10 items under Section 1 (Provincial Legislations); 10 items under Section 2 (School Board Policies and Regulations); 5 items under Section 3 (Ministry Recommendations); and 4 items under Section 4 (Evidence-Based Recommendations of Bullying Intervention and Prevention Programs). The purpose of the Safe Schools Checklist was to provide a basis for discerning how School X's values, beliefs, code of conduct, bullying prevention and intervention initiatives, and most importantly, their Safe Schools Action Plan align with the expectations at the provincial and board levels - whether bullying initiatives meet student needs effectively, as well as School X's strengths and barriers in creating a safe and positive learning environment.

The Safe Schools Action Plan is a strategic plan that strives to influence change at the school level; it involves goals in four categories: prevention, policy and procedures, intervention, and school climate. Subsequent to the completion of a school assessment checklist, each school is given a score for each category to assist with the identification of a maximum of three goals. Safe Schools Teams/Committees are school-based teams, which is comprised of students, educators, parents, non-teaching staff, and community members who meet on a regular basis to determine and address the needs of the school, identify goals, and develop action plans. Their primary goals are to initiate whole school approaches as well as to gain active involvement from all stakeholders (TVSDB, 2012b). Upon the identification of goals, the Safe Schools Team/Committee is required to indicate specific implementation strategies, which category the goals are related to, identify the stakeholders who will be involved in the implementation and outcome of the goals, how the school will communicate the goals to stakeholders, and timelines for indicators of success in order to monitor and evaluate the school's progress (TVDSB, 2012b).

2.5 « Analyses »

Descriptive analyses were conducted on students' demographic information. A one-way between subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to test for the effects of poverty on students' perceptions of school safety and bullying behaviours. An examination of whether student needs are met through school-based programming, were carried out by thematic analysis of interviews with school personnel and the use of the Safe Schools Checklist.

Creswell's (2007) qualitative content analysis procedure was used to analyze interview data and the result of the analysis revealed themes that represent commonalities across participants. Content analysis comprised of six steps. First, interviews were transcribed verbatim (Appendix D). Second, all interviews were reviewed in order to gain a general sense of their meaning. Third, data was coded – phrases, sentences, and passages were organized into "chunks". Fourth, codes were used to generate descriptions of what was learned from the interviews (Appendix E). Codes were listed and "meaning units" were

placed under each appropriate code. All meaning units were reviewed to look for connections between them. The fifth step involved organizing the descriptions into themes (Appendix F). Themes emerged when the codes were combined into groups and the meaning units were used to illustrate each theme. Lastly, the final step of the analysis involved the interpretation of interview data.

Trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) described the importance of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. Thus, several provisions were made when the qualitative data was analyzed, to promote confidence in the current study. To ensure interviewees' honesty, interviewees were told that there were no right or wrong answers for each question and they were given the option to skip any questions if they caused feelings of discomfort. Reflective journals were written subsequent to each interview (Appendix H) to record the interviewer's impression of each session. Sources of evidence, which included interviews with school personnel and school documentation, were triangulated to increase robustness. Additionally, direct quotes from interviewees were included in the following section to increase confidence in the study's findings.

Chapter 3

3 « Results »

The purpose of the present study was to examine the influence of poverty on students' perceptions of school safety, bullying behaviour, and school programming with respect to bullying prevention and intervention. Poverty was measured by proxy – a high needs versus a low needs school. Of particular interest is the high needs school (School X), whereas the low needs school (School Y) served as a comparison with the former. Results of student responses on the Safe Schools Survey are presented and findings from semi-structured interviews with school personnel are incorporated to provide context to student responses.

3.1 « Quantitative Analyses »

Preliminary analyses indicate there was less than 3% of missing data, which did not warrant the exclusion of missing data. Consequently, the mean of nearby points were used to replace missing data. The study population consisted of all Junior students (Grades 4 to 6) in both schools (N=277) with approximately the same number of males (N=133) and females (N=128) (Table 1). A breakdown of the number of students in each grade indicates 77 Grade 4 students (28%), 89 Grade 5 students (32%), and 89 Grade 6 students (32%). Twenty-two students did not indicate their grade level.

Table 1 indicates that School X has a total of 134 students in the Junior division, which is comprised of approximately 49% males and approximately 46% females. The student sample by grade included 36 Grade 4 students (27%), 38 Grade 5 students (28%), and 48 Grade 6 students (48%). Eight students did not indicate their gender and a total of 12 students did not indicate their grade level. School Y has a similar student population (N=143). There were approximately an equal number of males (48%) and females (47%) in the Junior division at this school. The Junior division comprised of 41 Grade 4 students (29%), 51 Grade 5 students (36%), and 41 Grade 6 students (29%). Eight students did not

provide information on their gender. Additionally, 10 students did not indicate their grade level.

Table 1: Characteristics of Students in School X and School Y.

	Frequency (Percentage)				
	Gender		Grade		
School	Males	Females	4	5	6
School X*	65(48.5)	61(45.5)	36(26.9)	38(28.4)	48(35.8)
School Y**	68(47.6)	67(46.9)	41(28.7)	51(35.7)	41(28.7)
Total	133(48.0)	128(46.2)	77(27.8)	89(32.1)	89(32.1)

*Eight students did not indicate their gender and 12 students did not indicate their grade level.
**Eight students did not indicate their gender and 10 students did not indicate their grade level.

The frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation of student responses on the Safe Schools Survey from School X are displayed (Tables 2 to 5).

Table 2: School X - Student Views on the Safe Schools Survey (N=134).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)						
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
This is a safe school for students.	3(2.2)	12(9.0)	24(17.9)	55(41.4)	40(29.9)	3.87	1.01
I feel safe in the school building.	6(4.5)	15(11.2)	15(11.2)	38(28.3)	60(44.8)	3.99	1.19
I feel safe on the school yard.	7(5.2)	22(16.4)	31(23.1)	28(20.9)	46(34.3)	3.65	1.25

Table 3: School X - Students' Personal Experience with Various Forms of Bullying (N=134).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seldom	Never	M	SD
Verbally bullied	10(7.5)	11(8.2)	11(8.2)	37(27.6)	65(48.5)	4.02	1.26
Physically bullied	0(0)	8(6.0)	10(7.5)	35(26.1)	81(60.4)	4.44	.86
Socially bullied	5(3.7)	7(5.2)	10(7.5)	29(21.7)	83(61.9)	4.35	1.06
Sexually bullied	1(.7)	1(.7)	2(1.5)	9(6.7)	121(90.3)	4.84	.54
Bullied using technology	1(.70)	2(1.5)	4(3.0)	19(14.2)	108(80.6)	4.71	.66
Bullied based on sexual orientation	0(0)	1(.7)	0(0)	6(4.5)	127(94.8)	4.93	.33
Bullied based on ethnic background	1(.7)	1(.7)	4(3.0)	8(6.0)	120(89.6)	4.82	.58
Threatened to hand over money	0(0)	0(0)	2(1.5)	8(6.0)	124(92.5)	4.91	.33
Intimidated by a gang or gang member	2(1.5)	0(0)	7(5.2)	18(13.4)	107(79.8)	4.69	.70

Table 4: School X - Students Who Have Personally, Either by Themselves or as Part of a Group, Initiated Various Forms of Bullying (N=134).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seldom	Never	M	SD
Verbally bullied a student	3(2.2)	1(.7)	4(3.0)	31(23.1)	95(70.9)	4.60	.79
Physically bullied a student	1(.7)	1(.7)	4(3.0)	16(11.9)	112(83.6)	4.77	.61
Socially bullied a student	1(.7)	1(.7)	5(3.7)	10(7.5)	117(87.3)	4.80	.61
Sexually bullied a student	1(.7)	0(0)	0(0)	3(2.2)	130(97.0)	4.95	.37
Bullied a student using technology	0(0)	0(0)	1(.7)	9(6.7)	124(92.5)	4.92	.30
Bullied a student based on sexual orientation	1(.7)	0(0)	0(0)	3(2.2)	130(97.0)	4.95	.37
Bullied a student based on ethnic background	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(1.5)	132(98.5)	4.99	.12
Threatened a student to make him/her hand over money	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(.7)	133(99.3)	4.99	.09
Intimidated a student as part of a gang or as a gang	0(0)	2(1.5)	0(0)	8(6.0)	124(92.5)	4.90	.43

member

Table 5: School X - Students' Feelings of Safety Based on What Has Been Done by the School (N=134).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)	M	SD
		1.73	.75
I have always felt safe.	59(44.0)		
I feel safe now.	50(37.3)		
I still feel unsafe.	25(18.6)		

The frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation of student responses on the Safe Schools Survey from School Y are as follows. (Tables 6 to 9).

Table 6: School Y - Student Views on the Safe Schools Survey (N=143).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)						
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
This is a safe school for students.	1(.7)	9(6.3)	16(11.2)	71(49.7)	46(32.2)	4.06	.87
I feel safe in the	3(2.1)	5(3.5)	18(12.6)	32(22.4)	85(59.4)	4.34	.97

school building.							
I feel safe on the school yard.	6(4.2)	7(4.9)	23(16.1)	54(37.8)	53(37.1)	3.99	1.05

Table 7: School Y - Students' Personal Experience with Various Forms of Bullying (N=143).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seldom	Never	M	SD
Verbally bullied	4(2.8)	13(9.1)	9(6.3)	53(37.1)	64(44.8)	4.12	1.06
Physically bullied	1(.7)	9(6.3)	3(2.1)	41(28.7)	89(62.2)	4.44	.87
Socially bullied	7(4.9)	9(6.3)	12(8.4)	32(22.4)	83(58.0)	4.23	1.15
Sexually bullied	1(.7)	3(2.1)	3(2.1)	8(5.6)	128(89.5)	4.81	.64
Bullied using technology	0(0)	2(1.4)	3(2.1)	17(11.9)	121(84.6)	4.80	.54
Bullied based on sexual orientation	1(.7)	2(1.4)	2(1.4)	6(4.2)	132(92.3)	4.86	.56
Bullied based on ethnic background	0(0)	2(1.4)	2(1.4)	15(10.5)	124(86.7)	4.82	.51
Threatened to hand over money	0(0)	1(.7)	1(.7)	8(5.6)	133(93.0)	4.91	.37
Intimidated by a gang or gang member	0(0)	6(4.2)	8(5.6)	21(14.7)	108(75.5)	4.61	.78

Table 8: School Y - Students Who Have Personally, Either by Themselves or as Part of a Group, Initiated Various Forms of Bullying (N=134).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seldom	Never	M	SD
Verbally bullied a student	0(0)	1(.7)	3(2.1)	30(21.0)	109(76.2)	4.72	.79
Physically bullied a student	0(0)	1(.7)	3(2.1)	19(13.3)	120(83.9)	4.80	.61
Socially bullied a student	0(0)	0(0)	1(.7)	17(11.9)	125(87.4)	4.87	.61
Sexually bullied a student	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(1.4)	141(98.6)	4.99	.37
Bullied a student using technology	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(2.8)	139(97.2)	4.97	.30
Bullied a student based on sexual orientation	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(.7)	142(99.3)	4.99	.37
Bullied a student based on ethnic background	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	3(2.1)	140(97.9)	4.98	.12
Threatened a student to make him/her hand over money	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	143(100.0)	5.00	.09
Intimidated a	0(0)	0(0)	1(.7)	8(5.6)	143(93.7)	4.93	.43

student as part of a gang or as a gang member	

Table 9: School Y - Students' Feelings of Safety Based on What Has Been Done by the School (N=134).

Survey Items	Frequency (Percentage)	M	SD
		1.70	.74
I have always felt safe.	66(46.2)		
I feel safe now.	53(37.1)		
I still feel unsafe.	24(16.8)		

$p < .005$

A one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for the effect of poverty on students' views of school safety and bullying behaviour. Students' perceptions of safety in the school building differed significantly across the two schools, $F(1, 275) = 7.24$, $p = .008$. Moreover, students' perceptions of safety on the school yard differed significantly across the two schools, $F(1, 275) = 5.85$, $p = .016$.

Table 10: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Student Views.

Survey Items		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I feel safe in	Between	1	8.503	7.238	.008

the school building.	Groups				
	Within Groups	275	1.175		
I feel safe on the school yard.	Between Groups	1	7.776	5.846	.016
	Within Groups	275	1.330		

$p < .05$

3.2 « Qualitative Analyses »

Interviews were conducted at School X and school personnel were interviewed separately in their office or classroom before the school day began. Interviews began at least one hour prior to the start of the school day to ensure school personnel had adequate time to complete the interviews, however, some interviews were rushed near the end as students started entering the classrooms or the school personnel had to attend another meeting. During one interview, the interviewee was frequently interrupted by office announcements over the public address system.

All interviewees were interested and engaged throughout their interviews and they were eager to provide as much information as possible. Interview data revealed good insights from school personnel. Results from the interviews reveal three primary themes that indicate how a particular school from a high-risk community addresses the effects of poverty on the student population. School personnel perceive that the Safe Schools policies are met and achieved, thus, there is a general consensus that the school is a safe environment for students. As well, school personnel shared positive views toward students' receptivity to bullying initiatives. The first theme reveals the school's awareness of the impact of the surrounding community on their students. The second theme alludes to the importance of using a consistent approach among school personnel in creating a safe environment for students. The third theme describes the challenges that

exist during the development and implementation process of programs and initiatives. Each theme was broken down into sub-themes to provide a more detailed description.

3.3 « Knowledge is Power »

This theme speaks about the school's knowledge in the surrounding community and how it aids in their understanding of student needs and well-being. A greater understanding of the needs of the school community enables school personnel to effectively meet students' needs.

Beyond the school's walls. This sub-theme describes the school's awareness of the types of stressors students experience outside of school. Interviewees spoke about the impact of parent-child attachment and relationships on student behaviour. While the school community comprises of various family structures, it was mentioned that students who require additional social and emotional support have experienced more disruptions in their home in comparison to other students. One example of a disruption within the home includes separation and divorce. The interviewees shared that many of the families who have been affected by separation and divorce include single-parent, mother-led families, as well as the inconsistent presence of caregivers. One interviewee said, "They [parents] might have someone in a relationship for a short time and then that one goes and then another comes in. So the consistency of having a solid person in their lives [is lacking]". Beyond the home, it appears aspects of the community may cause stress for students. School personnel have a good awareness that some safety issues are attached to the surrounding residential community. There is one particular area within the community that is a concern for school personnel. When describing the particular area, which is a town house complex, one interviewee mentioned,

> "There are some apartment buildings there that are more on the lower end of the socioeconomic [spectrum]. So it seems like everybody [are] grouped together in one area. There are a lot of complaints in terms of what kind of individuals live in those areas and what their associations are to violence".

The responses of the interviewees indicate that school personnel are well-informed in students' circumstances beyond the school.

Feeding bodies, feeding hearts, feeding minds. The school's response to the influence of external stressors on student well-being are outlined in this sub-theme. Having awareness of the potential impacts of the surrounding community on student behaviour assists in the planning and delivery of appropriate supports for students. All four interviewees mentioned that a primary goal of the school is to meet students' basic needs, such as nutrition and material resources (e.g. clothing and school supplies). Some students attend school without eating breakfast and others are in need of proper winter clothing (e.g. coats, hats, gloves). One interviewee spoke about a recent experience where the student's basic needs were not met at home, "Just the other day, I had a student come to me and she was crying – she hadn't had breakfast". When explaining the importance of meeting students' nutritional needs, another interviewee further elaborated that it is also about ensuring students are "not only coming with the proper food, but with food at all". The school meets students' nutritional needs by operating a breakfast program, which is run by parent volunteers. The school servery is also opened during nutrition breaks and lunch times. An interviewee commented on the school's responsibility for ensuring students are nourished,

> " To some degree you don't want the parents to rely entirely [on the servery] because you think, "Is this just a Band-Aid solution?" We're not empowering parents to take a bigger initiative. It's a toss-up and it's a Catch-22 sometimes, so we'd rather meet the basic needs than not".

One interviewee discussed the importance of using deodorant, taking showers, and being clean with her class. Thus, the interviewee felt some students also require support regarding health and hygiene. The support also extends to meeting students' material needs (e.g. winter clothing) by accepting donations from school staff or external agencies and organizations. Teachers' attentiveness toward the needs of their students is also a common thread among the interviewees, as indicated by the following comment, "some families know that they can go to the school support counselor to get hats and mitts. Sometimes families might not, but our teachers are aware of students and student needs".

Aside from providing nourishment and health education, which are both necessary for growth and physical well-being, other student needs include providing crisis management and socio-emotional support. There is a consensus between the interviewees that students' home environment, particularly the way behaviours are modeled at home, greatly affect their behaviour in school. One interviewee mentioned students learn to react to and handle conflict by seeing how situations are handled at home. Although what they witness may not be the best method in handling certain situations, they learn to handle similar situations in the same manner. This was further explained when one interviewee said,

> "A lot of what happens at home gets brought into the school. I'm going to bring that emotional piece with me to school. I might not be able to communicate it, I might just act out…all of that gets brought into the school and it has a huge impact on the kids here".

Another interviewee shared,

> "Even if the parents aren't getting along and they are arguing or something's going wrong, then that comes to school and as a result, the kids tend to let it boil over because they don't have the coping skills to deal with it".

Since students bring various issues into the school, teachers and school personnel play an important role in diffusing situations, being involved in micro-management, and proactive crisis management. One interviewee spoke about de-escalating conflict and teaching problem-solving skills,

> "You want to build capacity in this school… sometimes it's very reactive because those kids really need the attention. It becomes more immediate and day-to-day, so it becomes more crisis-oriented as opposed to building that capacity. Sometimes I get in that crisis mode of just putting out fires that are happening".

There is also agreement among the interviewees that teachers spend a lot of time sorting out students' problems on their own time, such as ongoing conflict. As a result of the difficulties some students experience in or outside of school, the school strives to empower students by meeting their socio-emotional needs. The school aims to fill the gap where some students do not receive emotional support. This is demonstrated as one interviewee observed,

> "One boy is from a family of six. He's the one who would rather stay here [the school] than go home, but… doesn't get as much attention. Every time I turn around, he's right here, like right beside me, so I just give him some support…a lot of love. Just TLC, someone to talk to, and someone to listen to them."

When asked whether students are receptive to the multiple programs that are offered (e.g. group or individual support), one interviewee mentioned the majority of students are willing to talk and "it's almost like you're not here enough for them".

3.4 « All Aboard »

This theme illustrates the whole school approach that is being used by the school for Safe Schools initiatives, specifically bullying awareness, prevention, and intervention. It also emphasizes the key players and their roles in promoting a safe environment and the success of Safe Schools initiatives. When the school community has a common goal of establishing a learning environment where students feel safe, one interviewee said that "it's much more effective because everybody's talking about it, living, and breathing it. It's a norm and expectation". This supports one of the rationales that as more people are on board with the school's approach, the more inclusive school initiatives become as a result of the support and assistance that is received from many individuals.

School leadership. This sub-theme highlights the roles of school personnel in spearheading Safe Schools initiatives. The efforts of the school administrators, teachers, and school support counselor are discussed.

Interviewees agree that the school principal plays a vital role in connecting and developing rapport with parents and the community outside of the school. One interviewee mentioned that the principal "is very supportive of parents and families and he has always developed rapport with them. When conflict from the community enters the school, they're very quick to de-escalate and diffuse it". He also has an open-door policy for parents, students, and school personnel where they are welcomed to approach him for assistance with issues such as behavioural issues or incidents of bullying and conflict. One role of the vice-principal at School X is to oversee all Safe Schools

initiatives as well as engage the school community in participating in school-wide initiatives.

In addition to school administrators, teachers also play a crucial role in bullying education, prevention, and intervention. Topics of bullying are not included in the academic curriculum, which is why much of teachers' responsibilities involve educating students on the topic. Since bullying comprises of a large portion of the school's Safe Schools initiatives, educators are expected to incorporate bullying education into lessons and class activities. Many teachers integrate topics of bullying in the Health unit to fulfill the expectations of teaching about positive relationships and character development. There is a great degree of flexibility in how the topic of bullying is included in classroom lessons and activities. Teachers also embed bullying in other subjects aside from the Health unit and employ various instructional strategies and formats.

The amount of information students receive on bullying depends on teachers' initiative. One interviewee demonstrated a willingness to talk about bullying with her class, "The police officer comes in and often does workshops with the kids and so making sure I'm following up with those conversations and we're discussing everything that they bring up in those workshops". Teachers also demonstrate creativity in offering many modalities of bullying education and conflict resolution skills. One teacher develops role-play scenarios using current issues that are occurring in her classroom. By acting out the scenarios, the students are invited to problem-solve collaboratively and discuss solutions to each situation. Interview responses indicate that school personnel are constantly thinking outside the box to make bullying education interesting and engaging. For example, one teacher involved senior students in the production of a video where they were asked to act out several scenarios to help discern the difference between conflict and bullying. The scenarios portrayed occurrences that have occurred or could potentially occur. In this sense, students were able to identify with and relate to the scenarios. The video was then used throughout the school to help students learn about conflict and bullying.

The school support counselor also plays an important role in providing appropriate supports as part of the Safe Schools initiatives. The school support counselor is a resource for students (offers age appropriate support programs for different grade levels), school staff, particularly teachers, and parents. Group programming and individual support are available to meet students' social and emotional needs as well as teach conflict resolution and problem solving. The school support counselor also has an open-door policy and students are comfortable approaching her.

Support. This subtheme encompasses the various supports the school offers to help foster feelings of school safety. Assistance is provided for students and teachers. Moreover, engaging families in children's learning experience is an additional form of support. There is an abundance of teaching resources, collegial support, as well as external help from the police officer that is assigned to the school. As well, many teacher resources are available under the Safe Schools section on the School Board's website. One teacher utilizes Smart Board presentations as well as a program to teach the various forms of bullying. The library offers many useful books on the topic of bullying and building positive character traits for teachers. There is good collegial support at the school as there is a team approach to tackling bullying and ultimately, maximizing students' feelings of school safety. One teacher shares about the support that is received from other teachers, "We're always talking and we do meet as a division to discuss as well, but everyone in our division is open to supporting each other so that again is very helpful". The police officer is sometimes invited into classrooms by teachers to address ongoing issues and the School Board employs instructional coaches who are knowledgeable in classroom management and instructional assistance.

For students, the school offers more bullying education awareness and prevention than bullying intervention. Thus, one focus is on character development. Each month, the school selects one character trait (e.g. Caring) upon which they build Safe School initiatives around. The intention of focusing on a different character trait each month is to "make sure [students] learn to look outside of themselves" and to teach interpersonal and problem-solving skills. There is an educational component in which the school holds an assembly to introduce the character trait at the beginning of each month. The practical

component requires educators to provide ways for students to practice the character trait and to apply it on a regular basis. Students are recognized and rewarded for their efforts in practicing the character trait in their classroom. The goal in establishing a safe school is summed up by this response, “I think if you plant those empathy seeds, then you will never really have to talk about bullying. That’s a very idealistic environment, but we try”.

The school also strives to support students by encouraging them to form positive relationships with their families and school personnel. One teacher developed a writing program called Dear Family. In order to encourage regular conversation with their family, students write to a family member on a weekly basis. Topics can vary, however, they are instructed to write about one thing that went well, two things they wish they could change or something they could have done better. Another requirement is to have recipients write back to the student. Alternatively, students may write to school personnel such as other teachers, or the librarian. Overall, all interviewees agree with the statement that, “Staff here are really amazing at making safe and positive connections with our students, knowing the environment they come from. So there is quite a lot of staff the students feel comfortable talking to and approaching”.

The interviewees suggested that parent engagement appears to be lacking at the school. Parents are welcomed to school events such as monthly assemblies that focus on a character trait, however, one interviewee stated that, “It won’t be a high turn out probably because we haven’t made a big deal and sent out invitations”. Participants acknowledged that knowing how to reach out and partner with parents is key in having them participate and be involved in their child’s life, but it is not without challenges including: families’ financial situation, the need to care for younger children in the family, and appropriate connections such as phone availability.

3.5 « Creating Safe Environments is Not Without Hurdles »

The final theme focuses on the barriers to the planning and the implementation of bullying prevention and intervention initiatives. The definition of bullying and

insufficient time to plan and implement programs are challenges of establishing a safe school, however, the school has since taken steps to address this barrier.

The definition of bullying. Interviewees collectively agreed that students had trouble differentiating between incidents of conflict and bullying. One individual expressed that, "The kids don't know the difference and there is a difference. Parents don't know the difference". Another interviewee elaborated,

> "Oftentimes, the challenge is the word and how we approach those instances has become so broad in our community and sometimes it has lost its meaning. Part of our campaign this year was really focusing on what the difference is".

Time. All interviewees agree that time is another barrier in delivering Safe Schools and bullying initiatives. It was mentioned, "Time is always an issue. Time and resources are an issue…there's never enough time because the need grows bigger and bigger". Some interviewees responded in frustration when discussing this barrier. There is a general consensus that teachers need to juggle between meeting students' academic needs and socio-emotional needs. The following statement is a good summary of how teachers feel when juggling between the two,

> "We have to cover the curriculum, we got report cards coming up and they're due in January so you need to make sure you've taught everything you've got to teach by then. Some things kind of get left in the dust. [After a conflict] They're very elevated and they need a place to sit down, calm down, and have someone to talk to. It takes that extra time out of the day where you could be teaching."

Other interviewees mentioned some students require one-on-one quality time. Unfortunately, given the way the school system is, it is not always available.

3.6 « Analysis of the Safe Schools Checklist »

The Safe Schools Checklist is comprised of policies and regulations concerning safe schools and bullying at the school board level, provincial level, and recommendations from the Ontario Ministry of Education (Table 11). Additionally, evidence-based recommendations for bullying prevention and intervention programs were incorporated

into the Safe Schools Checklist (Table 12). Overall, the School X meets the majority of policies, regulations, and recommendations that are in the Safe Schools Checklist.

Table 11: Provincial- and School-Board Level Policies, Procedures, and Regulations.

Provincial Legislations	Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2012
	Bill 18, Safe Schools Act, 2000
	Bill 212, Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007
Provincial Reports	Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, 2010
	Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action, 2006
	Shaping Safe Schools: A bullying Prevention Action Plan, 2005
School Board Policies and Regulations	Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, No. 4008g
	Code of Conduct, No. 4008b
	Safe Schools Policy, No. 4008
	Safe School Procedure, No. 4008a
School Board Publication	Safe School Handbook: Staff Guide, 2009

Table 12: Evidence-Based Recommendations.

Item	Authors

1. Rules and initiatives are strongly supported and consistently reinforced by the principal and teachers.	(Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrada, 2009) (Booren, Handy, & Power, 2011) (Hong & Eamon, 2012) (Mooij, 2012) (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012)
2. Teachers are involved in the development of safety rules and procedures.	(Hanish, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Fabes, Martin, & Denning, 2004) (Mooij, 2012) (Mooij, Smeets, & de Wit, 2011)
3. Bullying prevention is embedded within the school curriculum.	(Andreou, Didaskalou, & Vlachou, 2007) (Eslea & Smith, 1998) (Ortega & Lera, 2000) (Rigby, 2004) (Wurf, 2012)
4. The school incorporates the assistance of the police into creating a safe learning environment.	(Byrne, 1997) (Vandebosch, Beirens, D'Haese, Wegge, & Pabian, 2012) (Wong 2004) (Woods, Coyle, Hoglund, & Leadbeater,

2007)

The last component of the analysis involved examining whether School X's programming, specifically Safe Schools and bullying initiatives, abide by the School Board's policies and regulation, provincial legislation, and evidence-based recommendations. School X's achievements in meeting policies and procedures at the regional school board level are as follows.

School X met eight out of ten criteria on the school board level. In terms of prevention strategies, the school ensures all students are supervised in the schoolyard, hallways, and off-site activities (e.g. field trips). Teachers and student leaders, who have been trained to assist in conflict or bullying situations, are stationed outdoors during recess. They are required to wear bright construction vests so that students are able to identify them easily should they require assistance while they are outdoors. Cameras are installed indoors and are frequently used. Additionally, teachers employ different instructional strategies to teach students effective ways of dealing with conflict and anger. Some strategies that are utilized at the school include role-playing and group work that involve working collaboratively with peers to accomplish a common goal (e.g. putting together a Christmas hamper as a class). School wide, cooperative learning appears to be the primary method in engaging students in prosocial learning.

The school has implemented The Bullying Box for students who have encountered or witnessed incidents of bullying. The Bullying Box is a method of anonymous reporting for students to teachers and school administrators. When reporting an incident, students are required to complete a form and fill out information pertaining to the incident. Forms with age-appropriate language are available for Junior and Senior students and they are available in every classroom to ensure accessibility to students. This initiative was implemented at the start of the academic year and is only available for students. A recommendation at the school board level is to provide a form of anonymous reporting for parents. There does not appear to be a method that enables parents to report incidents

of bullying anonymously, however, interviews with school personnel reveal that parents are usually comfortable approaching teachers and school administrators directly.

Subsequent to the anonymous reporting of bullying incidents, school personnel work to support victims, perpetrators, and students who had been affected. The school support counselor is the primary school personnel who is responsible for providing group and individual supports for students. Relevant and age-appropriate programs are available to help students with character development as well as interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Programs and supports that are available for students are clearly outlined, as recommended by the School Board.

Bullying prevention, roles, and responsibilities for reporting procedure and consequences for bullying are clearly delineated in student agendas as an additional resource for students and parents. The School Board encourages stakeholders in the development of Safe Schools practices and policies. At the time interviews with school personnel took place, the school's Safe Schools Committee had one parent member and was seeking an individual to assume the role of a community member. Although the school strives to inform parents about Safe Schools initiatives on a regular basis, primarily through the school's newsletters, it is unclear whether other parents and stakeholders are invited in the development and planning of Safe Schools practices and policies aside from the parent member and community member on the Safe Schools Committee. Moreover, the requirement for awareness programs to be offered by the school and community partners to parents and caregivers has not been met.

Following the School Board's recommendations are five criteria from the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Safe Schools Strategy*. School X met four out of the five criteria in this section. The bullying prevention policy is incorporated in the School Code of Conduct. Information concerning the *Safe Schools Act* as well as school policies and processes are communicated with parents, staff, and students through student agendas and the school's newsletters. The school has also identified a lead person, the vice-principal, to deal with Safe Schools and bullying prevention issues. The role involves steer heading the Safe Schools Committee and ensuring the development and

implementation of Safe Schools initiatives. The school has also established student leadership (e.g. peer-led initiatives and leadership training) to assist school staff in bullying education and prevention. The school would like to ensure students' voices are heard in developing Safe Schools initiatives. Thus, a senior student was nominated by teachers to be a student representative on the Safe Schools Committee. Additionally, several students who demonstrate maturity and model behaviour, were selected by teachers to act as student leaders, whose role is to assist their peers with conflict management and resolution after receiving training. The fifth criteria, which recommends schools to include a parent and caregiver training component to all bullying prevention initiatives, had not been achieved by the school.

Next, School X was examined to see whether it had met the recommendations delineated from Ontario's *Safe Schools Act*. The school met seven out of ten criteria. Bullying is identified as a primary priority in the school. It is at the forefront of Safe Schools programming. Thus, the school has established a Safe Schools Committee, which comprises of one school administrator, two teachers, one school personnel who is not a teacher, one senior student, and one parent. The team is currently seeking a community representative to complete the team. The term bullying is clearly defined. School leadership and teachers have focused on differentiating between bullying and conflict. The school's vice principal created posters with clear definitions of both terms and examples of inappropriate behaviour from both categories are outlined on the posters. The posters were given to every teacher to post in their classrooms and are posted in the hallways. Two versions of the poster with age-appropriate vocabulary are available for Junior and Senior students.

School X has implemented school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plans and procedures. It is important to note that the only initiative specific to bullying prevention is the Bullying Box, which allows anonymous reporting of bullying incidents for students. There are no bullying intervention plans, per se, but a multitude of programs that focus on character development, emotional support, and the promotion of positive and prosocial behaviour are offered. At the whole school level, Safe Schools initiatives focus on a different value each calendar month. For example, the month of October

centered on Kindness, November focused on Bullying, and December emphasized Caring. Different programs are available for both Junior and Senior students. Specific programs include: Go Girls!, Heroes, Kelso's Choices, Lunch Bunch, Roots of Empathy, and the VIP (Values, Influences, Peers) Program (Appendix I). In addition to the implementation of bullying prevention and intervention initiatives, the school also engages all members of the school community in their Safe Schools Action Plan. Students, teachers, and school administrators are involved in all Safe Schools initiatives. Initiatives that have been carried out include the Bullying Box, 1,000 Acts of Kindness (Appendix I), conflict and bullying awareness, and the organization of Christmas hampers for families within the school community. Although information on the Safe School's initiatives and goals are regularly addressed (as recommended in the *Safe Schools Act*) in the school's newsletter, it does not appear the Safe Schools Action Plan, and the school's progress in meeting their goals are communicated to stakeholders.

Despite the School X's efforts to achieve the majority of the recommendations in the *Safe Schools Act*, there are several criteria they have not yet achieved. The school does not invite stakeholders' responses and involvement in decision-making. There is a link on the school's website that leads to a section on the School Board's website where the public's input on policies and procedures are welcomed. However, School X does not have an overt way of allowing stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process of their Safe Schools initiatives. Similarly, while School X engages parents and guardians in their Safe Schools Action Plan, it has not a priority of the school to do so. Parents and guardians are welcomed to monthly assemblies when the feature character trait of the month is introduced, however, this is not directly communicated to parents (e.g. through formal invitations). There is a link on the school's website to the School Board's Parent Involvement Committee, where the school board promotes the engagement of families in their children's educational experience. Parents are welcomed to sign up to receive the School Board's Parent Involvement Committee newsletter in order to receive information on various ways of getting involved. However, involvement is not specific to their child or children's school. Lastly, regular training in Safe Schools strategies is mandated for the principal and teachers at each school, but this is not available to school staff and administrators at School X.

The last section of the Safe Schools Checklist is comprised of criteria that were selected on the basis of evidence-based indicators of bullying prevention and intervention programs. School X has three out of four criteria in place. Safe Schools rules and initiatives are strongly supported and consistently reinforced by school administrators and teachers. Teachers are involved in the development of Safe Schools rules and procedures and the assistance of the police is incorporated into creating a safe learning environment. One police officer is assigned to School X and their primary role is to facilitate the VIP program for Grade 6 students and present at assemblies that feature the month's character trait. As well, teachers may ask the officer for assistance in dealing with issues in the classroom (e.g. stealing). The only criteria School X has not met in this section of the Safe Schools Checklist is that bullying prevention is not embedded in the school curriculum. However, this applies to all schools under the School Board. Consequently, School X has given the responsibility to teachers to incorporate the topic of bullying into lessons. Interviewees agree that a common unit in which teachers teach bullying prevention is Health and Safety, since one of the foci is on the formation of positive relationships.

School X achieved the majority of the recommendations on the Safe Schools Checklist with the exception of several unmet criteria. These criteria include the inclusion of stakeholders in the development of Safe Schools policies and practices, an educational component to bullying prevention initiatives for parents and caregivers, regular training in Safe Schools strategies for school personnel, and the inclusion of bullying prevention in the academic curriculum.

Chapter 4

4 « Discussion »

Every child is entitled to a safe and caring school environment. Students who feel safe and are free from bullying in their learning environment are able to dedicate their full attention and efforts to academic expectations, which is essential for scholarly success. The present study was exploratory in nature with the purpose of investigating students' feelings of school safety, bullying behaviours, and school programming in a high needs school. Results of the present study suggest that significant differences exist between a high and low needs school in regards to students' perceived school safety in the school building and on the schoolyard. Although School X does not have bullying prevention and intervention programs, prevention and intervention initiatives fall under the Safe Schools umbrella. Ultimately, the creation of a safe space for students in a high needs school, is a balancing act that not only comprises of meeting students' academic needs, but also their physical, emotional, psychological, and social needs. It is crucial for students, school personnel, parents and caregivers, and community agencies to be on the same page as partnerships between all groups ensure the successful development and implementation of initiatives in creating a safe school environment.

More than half of all the junior students from School X and School Y feel their school is a safe place. However, student perceptions of school safety differed significantly between both schools on two items. The two items were about students' views on their feelings of safety in the school building and their feelings of safety on the schoolyard. Playgrounds and schoolyards may be less supervised in comparison to other areas. There may also be more places where incidents of bullying can happen in an open space. One explanation may be due to neighbourhood stressors that cause students to become fearful and anxious of certain occurrences. Their overall perceptions of school safety may be affected when those feelings are brought into the school. The lack of extra-curricular activities that are offered to students may be another explanation for the significant differences in feelings of safety in the school building and on the schoolyard. Extra-curricular activities offer safe, supervised, and structured activities. Involvement in extra-curricular activities has

positive outcomes on child development (Lagacé-Séguin & Case, 2010). Extra-curricular activities also provide students with additional support networks, which may act as a buffer to stressors. A lack of extra-curricular activities for children in the high needs community may affect their perceptions of school safety in the sense that there are fewer outlets for children to express themselves and receive emotional support from others.

Student responses support past research findings that schoolyards are the most common places where students experience bullying (Bentley & Li, 1995; Craig, Pepler, Atlas, 2000; Fite et al., 2013). When comparing student perceptions of school safety between elementary and secondary school students, Vaillancourt and colleagues (2010) found the schoolyard and outdoor recess/break times are hazardous for elementary students. On the other hand, secondary students found hallways, the cafeteria, and outdoor recess/break unsafe. In this study, more students, in both schools, indicate that they feel safe in the school building in comparison to the schoolyard. This suggests community poverty, more specifically, a school's level of need, does not particularly affect students' perceptions of school safety since similar results were found in both schools.

A greater number of students may feel safer in the school building as opposed to the schoolyard due to a number of reasons: a higher degree of teacher supervision, closer proximity to teachers, school staff and volunteers, and knowledge of multiple safe places in the school. Perhaps the likelihood of receiving help in the school building is greater and students are able to receive assistance faster. Oftentimes, teachers on yard supervision are assigned to monitor a large area. When students require help with a situation while on the schoolyard, the teacher may be handling another situation or is some distance away. Also, students may defend one another in incidents of bullying or aggression, so a close proximity to a greater number of peers in the school building could be a protective factor.

This study also found that in School X, the most common form of bullying students experience is verbal bullying, followed by social bullying, physical bullying, and intimidation by a gang or gang member. This supports past research that the most common form of bullying in schools are verbal, physical, and emotional bullying (Beran

& Tutty, 2002; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; Kepenekci & Çinkir, 2006). Conversely these are also the most common forms of bullying students engage in, in the same order. This is consistent with Bentley and Li's (1995) study, where they found verbal abuse was the most common form of bullying among elementary school children.

Meanwhile in School Y, the most common form of bullying students experience is social bullying, followed by verbal bullying, intimidation by a gang or gang member, and physical bullying. The four most common forms of bullying students engage in include verbal and physical bullying as the top two bullying behaviours, and social bullying and intimidation to others as part of a gang or gang member. Since the same bullying behaviours persist across both schools, this suggests that these types of bullying behaviours occur in schools regardless of the impact of the community or the school's level of need.

The qualitative data indicates that there is a general consensus among interviewees that students' fundamental needs are met prior to meeting other needs. They are aware of how the community's needs are brought into the school. Teachers and school personnel ensure students are nourished so that they are able to attend to directions, concentrate on tasks, and learn. In accordance to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, humans' physiological needs such as food, water, and sleep, need to be met before advancing to higher level needs, like feelings of safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. In addition to meeting students' basic needs, school personnel recognize that they must first engage in crisis management with students before they can progress to fulfill academic requirements. One interviewee said,

> "Usually when you start off the school year, it's building rapport, getting to know the kids, and establishing the ground rules. So you spend a lot of time and curriculum is kind of pushed aside… once you get that going, then the curriculum has more priority… the social stuff is weighted heavier and then as we go, it makes it easier for the academics and it builds success that way. So it's getting all the rapport and the social stuff and then you build the academic".

The school's perspective and strategy in managing crises prior to focusing on academics is consistent with the Courtois and Ford's (2009) research that children are unable to learn when they are in crisis mode. Typical brain development in children constitutes the development of neural networks necessary for a "learning brain". However, when children experience trauma, it interferes with typical brain development. Ultimately, exposure to consistent trauma shifts the "learning brain" which is focused on learning to the "survival brain", which is focused on survival and consists of flight, fight, or freeze responses. Evidently, parts of the brain that promote learning (e.g. memory, problem-solving) may be compromised in a brain that is focused on survival.

Once student's fundamental needs are provided for, educators move towards a more academic focus. However, they experience competing priorities in meeting requirements that are in the curriculum versus students' socio-emotional needs, like education on bullying prevention and intervention. Bullying education is not in the Junior level curriculum, which is why the quality and quantity of information on bullying students receive depend on teachers' initiatives. In regards to this topic, one interviewee commented,

> "The difficulty is each teacher does things, so it's going to vary by classroom, how much is done. We don't have a program and say, "Here it is, this is how many weeks it is, and you must do it". It's more up to the teacher".

Since teachers do not have a program to follow when teaching about bullying prevention and intervention, students may not all be receiving the same information. Occasionally, the school's Safe Schools Committee provides bullying-related topics for teachers to discuss with their students and teachers have utilized various instructional approaches and strategies (e.g. books, role-plays, student-made videos) to accomplish the task. Although an abundance of resources are available to assist teachers and they have a great degree of freedom on how information is presented, their approaches are not monitored. This suggests a lack of accountability, or the presence of necessary resource support (in terms of time, particularly), for teachers in the area of educating students on bullying prevention and intervention. Teachers follow the lead of school administrators, who

follow the lead of the school board. One reason behind why school administrators do not monitor teachers on their approaches and methods on bullying education may be due to a lack of accountability by the school board. In light of other school matters, keeping teachers accountable on the quality of their bullying education may not be the school board's top priority. Consequently, there may be limited instruction to do so. This example demonstrates that organizational readiness (e.g. shared visions and goals) is necessary in order to implement change from the school board to individual schools, to school administrators, and finally, to school staff, specifically teachers. The Ontario Ministry of Education launched School Mental Health – ASSIST in 2011, an initiative designed to help Ontario school boards build capacity for educational professionals as well as to build capacity to support students' mental health needs through resources, tools, and effective implementation of evidence-based programs and strategies. The initiative is led by a provincial team in collaboration with several community agencies and institutions to promote organizational readiness within the school system.

According to the School Board's Whole School Approach for Bullying Prevention and Intervention, School X has achieved most of the recommended bullying prevention and intervention initiatives. Akin to the model, the school has more initiatives that focus on bullying prevention in comparison to initiatives that focus on bullying intervention. The areas of bullying intervention the school is involved in include: building a positive school climate and healthy relationships, character development, curriculum connections, training resources, policies and procedures, education and awareness, student engagement and leadership, staff leadership, equity and inclusive education, and Code of Conduct. Areas of bullying prevention the school is involved in comprise of the development of: safety plans, counseling, restorative approaches, peer mediation, progressive discipline, and board level team intervention and support.

The school may benefit from further development and attention to three areas: peer mentoring, the development of community connections, and parent involvement. Although the school does not have a comprehensive bullying prevention program, programs for anger and stress management among others, facilitate the development of good mental health and prevent the development of mental health difficulties (Santor,

Short, & Ferguson, 2009). There is also an emphasis on modifying the school environment to promote prosocial behaviour (character development, positive relationships), both of which provide the foundation for a continuum of prevention strategies. It is important to note that the success of whole school approaches depend on consistency (Barrett, Eber, & Weist, 2013; Damshroder et al., 2009). Although school administrators and school leadership, such as the Safe Schools Committee are committed to achieving the same goals, one interviewee spoke about the lack of consistency between Junior and Senior teachers,

> "I would think some of the barriers are getting all the teachers on board, so making sure all the teachers are consistent with the behaviour that's acceptable and not acceptable. E.g. when you talk about the age group of the kids, what's not acceptable in my room might be acceptable in a Grade 7 or 8 room…then the kids know the teachers aren't on the same page".

Teachers are the main key players in establishing rules and implementing initiatives, but it is important to note that they do not only apply them within the classroom. Students need to receive the same expectations in and outside of their classrooms, as this will help them to gain a sense of predictability and guide their overall behaviours in school.

4.1 « Implications for Schools »

The implications for schools are many. Consistent terminology and language should be used, particularly when referring to incidents of bullying. Craig and Pepler (1997) found supervisors on the schoolyard only intervened in four percent of bullying incidents. Schools can also ensure students feel safe on schoolyards by increasing adult supervision so that school staff are supervising a smaller area. This ensures students will receive assistance in a timely manner and other students are still supervised if a school staff is managing a situation. As well, regular supervision in both high- and low-traffic areas (e.g. washrooms, hallways) and during unstructured times (e.g. lunch and recess) may be helpful in enhancing students' feelings of school safety.

Coyle (2008) found school culture characteristics that supported the implementation of bullying intervention programs, include: a sense of family, warmth, collaboration, and connections among staff and between staff and students. School personnel and mental health professionals must develop a reputation of trustworthiness and effectiveness with students so that they will feel safe approaching adults with their experiences of bullying. One interviewee spoke about how one bullying incident was dealt with, "Some instances are very serious and need to be held accountable. They aren't always held accountable for it. Just recently we had an incident where some girls were suspended and some teachers were like, "Finally"". School personnel and counselors can develop the reputation by taking reports of bullying seriously, taking the time to gain a comprehensive understanding of incidents, and be swift in managing incidents and delivering consequences.

Caring adult role models will help students feel more comfortable approaching school personnel and enhance feelings of school connectedness. Teachers play a pivotal role in promoting students' feelings of school safety as well as in creating a positive school climate (Whitlock, 2006) since they interact with students for most of the school day. The goal is for teachers to become a safe haven for students and be a protective factor against school safety issues. However, it is not only the responsibility of teacher, but for all school personnel to form positive relationships with students. The establishment of caring connections and supportive school-based relationships is positively associated with feelings of school safety and student health and well-being (Chan et al., 2013; Dods, 2013; Lee, Borden, Serido, & Perkins, 2009). Lastly, mentoring relationships have been found to have positive behavioural and socio-emotional outcomes on students (Boulton et al., 2007; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011; Elledge, Cavell, Ogle, & Newgent, 2010). Therefore, schools may consider offering peer or adult mentoring programs as an additional opportunity for students to form positive connections with an individual at school.

Oftentimes, teachers are supported through various avenues such as literature and collegial support when they provide education on bullying for students, however, they will also benefit greatly from regular - and sustained- professional development

opportunities. Lund, Blake, Ewing, and Banks (2012) surveyed school psychologists and school counselors on bullying in their schools and related training. Although the majority of respondents had received some training in bullying assessment or intervention, the majority of the training occurred during in-service training or at professional conferences. This suggests training may have been limited in intensity and duration. Consistent training will provide knowledge such as how best to connect with students so that they feel safe sharing their safety concerns, how to approach sensitive situations, as well as current knowledge on bullying prevention and interventions. School personnel may also receive regular consultation and share effective strategies and approaches, which will enhance their capacity to detect problems (Santor et al., 2009). Most importantly, health and mental health training will educate teachers on the importance of self-care so that they can care for their students' well-being more effectively.

To address the lack of time in implementing programs and initiatives to promote school safety, more mental health professionals (e.g. counselors, school psychologists, social workers) are needed. However, the responsibility falls on school boards to address this need since they make decisions on resource allocation. Although teachers' roles do not only encompass helping students' to achieve academically, the increase of individuals who specialize in mental health services will help alleviate competing responsibilities. As well, students will have more opportunities to be heard, which is supported by the following quote,

> "It's almost like, you're not here enough for them and I'll oftentimes…pass a student in the hallway and they'll ask when we can talk. I think they're at that point in their lives where they just want somebody to listen to them".

An important aspect in establishing safe schools is proactive parental involvement in school initiatives (Jordan & Austin, 2012; Lee & Song, 2012). Schools can raise awareness and educate parents about issues the student body is experiencing by offering regular educational opportunities such as workshops and presentations by school personnel and community agencies. Some school boards, such as the one in the present study, allow parents whose children attend a school within the district to join their parent committee. While this allows parents to be represented in all processes of decision-

making, the input received may not be specific to the needs of individual schools. Schools can address this by establishing their own parent committees that deal with specific issues at the school, assist in the development of safety and bullying procedures, as well as the implementation of safety initiatives.

Schools should communicate the development and progress of bullying initiatives and goals to stakeholders. The school in the present study informs stakeholders about Safe Schools initiatives on a monthly basis in the school newsletter. However, parents may not always receive them (e.g. if students misplace them or forget to bring them home). A summary of the results of a systematic review and meta-analysis on the effectiveness of school-based anti-bullying programs reveal that one of the most important program components that were associated with a decrease in bullying is providing information for parents (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). Since it is of high importance that stakeholders, especially parents, are aware of a school's safety and bullying initiatives, alternate avenues of communication, such as posting an electronic copy of the school newsletter or school-based support programs on the school and class web sites, sending the information via email, holding regular parent meetings, and actively inviting parents to information and training sessions, should be considered.

The establishment of a safe school that is free from bullying is a shared responsibility among parents, teachers, school leaders, and community members. A multi-level approach is needed. This refers to the involvement of teachers from all grade levels, school administrators, and district or regional superintendents in having coordinated knowledge, practice, and priority across the decision-making continuum (Barrett et al., 2013). Regular communication and collaboration between students, school personnel, stakeholders, and health care professionals with regard to bullying incidents are important in using a whole-community approach to tackle school bullying (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Goebert, Else, Matsu, Chung-Do, & Chang, 2011; Srabstein et al., 2008). It is also important to consider students' concerns of stigmatization when they are seeking help. Schools can brainstorm ways in which students can approach school personnel, particularly school counselors without being labeled. Examples include meeting students in a multi-purpose space instead of a space that is designated for a

specific purpose (e.g. a school counselor's office where group or individual counseling are held) or meeting with students outside of school hours.

Continual and sustainable efforts, such as regularly engaging students in dialogue about safety and bullying initiatives, should be made to establish safe school environments. It was mentioned by an interviewee that consideration must be put into organizing one-time events, such as inviting motivational speakers as part of bullying prevention initiatives "because unless they're regularly in front and a constant reminder, they're one-shot deals". At School X, students have the opportunity to take The Pledge to End Bullying during Bullying Awareness Week. The Pledge is a community-wide initiative that aims to raise public awareness about bullying. The same interviewee described, "Care needs to be taken that The Pledge isn't just a routine – you say it, you do it, and it's done the five minutes after. How do we live it?" Due to the high turn-over of leadership roles in schools, it is recommended that schools have detailed documentation of school safety and bullying initiatives, that can assist future school leaders. In order to provide ongoing efforts to maintain safe learning environments, it is critical that programs and supports are delivered seamlessly.

4.2 « Implications for Counselling Practice »

School counselors' unique roles can have a significant influence on schools. They are considered to be leaders to others in the school, consultants to the school community (e.g. teachers, school personnel) and to the broader community, parent educators, as well as group and individual counselors (Bauman, 2008). Guidance counselors also assume important roles in addressing school bullying (Power-Elliot & Harris, 2012). Parent training is a primary factor that is associated with a decrease in bullying (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). Schools may allow school counselors and guidance counselors to offer regular information sessions on different topics of bullying to educate parents and caregivers.

Active and ongoing involvement of community agencies in schools, in comparison to inviting agencies to facilitate a one-time workshop or presentation, may be an important

component in tackling bullying problems in schools. Members from community agencies may not have a thorough knowledge of a school's community, student-teacher dynamics, community influences that impact student needs, and the issues students are experiencing. Although one-time presentations are beneficial in providing knowledge to school personnel on how to deal with bullying problems, they offer a cookie-cutter approach. Schools have different needs and require approaches that are tailored to their specific needs. This is one reason that community agencies' continual involvement in schools may have a great impact on bullying reduction.

School psychologists have an important role in providing psychological services to the student population at the schools they are assigned to, but oftentimes, they divide their time between multiple schools and spend much of their time on the road. Situations may arise where teachers and school personnel are not adequately equipped to deal with them and they may require support from mental health professions. School personnel may also be uncertain in how situations should be addressed in the most effective way. School personnel require individuals with specialized training to offer immediate assistance. To address this, a crisis or help line can be offered for school personnel to call and consult with mental health professionals when emergency situations arise and thus, provide opportunities for case consultations and conferencing. A specialized community mental health team could be established with the sole purpose of providing consultation and assistance to schools. Ultimately, the primary goal of these initiatives is to build bridges between school communities and community agencies to increase access to resources as well as to provide the best care possible to students.

4.3 « Limitations »

Several limitations exist in the present study that involves the methodology and a measure that was used. This study had a small sample size. Although this allows for an in-depth picture of students' perceptions of school safety, bullying behaviour, and the school's response to student needs, the focus was on one individual school. An examination of the same aspects of school safety in a greater number of schools would provide a broader and more complete picture of the influences of poverty on schools. Out

of the four school personnel who were interviewed, three were members of the Safe Schools Committee. Their responses may have biased the qualitative data, as it is likely members of the Safe Schools Committee share similar goals and views towards creating a safe school environment.

The Safe Schools Survey was administered by students' teachers. Since there was no script that accompanied the survey to guide teachers during the administration process, the generalizability of the survey may have been affected if different definitions of terms or examples were given. Moreover, the wording that was used for some items on the survey is another limitation. One interviewee commented on her views and experiences with the administration of the Safe Schools Survey,

> "The survey is complicated language for some of the kids. I was out in a rural school once and they were just going to me and [shrugs]. It's hard because there are very different life experiences. Here was a very protective farm, rural community. Grade 4's are looking at these things and they didn't even know what sexual orientation and some of these things were".

In the section about student perceptions of school safety, only two places – the school building and the schoolyard – were provided. Including items of areas in the school building (e.g. washrooms, change rooms, stairwells) or on the schoolyard (e.g. areas with dense greenery, under playground equipment) would yield a better picture of the specific places where students feel unsafe. Students were also asked to indicate the frequency at which they are bullied or bully others on nine forms of bullying behaviour. Some students may not know what behaviours each type of bullying encompass, thus, providing examples of each form of bullying would be beneficial for students' understanding.

4.4 « Strengths »

The present study has some strengths that are important to note in the context of both previous research and potential contributions. First, studies that examine students' bullying behaviours in high needs schools and school programming have primarily originated from the United States. The current study was conducted in a Canadian context, and contributes to existing literature in the research area by providing an

additional perspective. Next, the exploratory nature of the study allowed an extensive examination of how the broader community impacts student needs and school bullying behaviour, the school's efforts in addressing student needs, and barriers in implementing bullying prevention and intervention initiatives. Most importantly, study findings were enhanced with the voices of individuals who interact with students on a daily basis and are most intimately invested in their well-being. The use of a community sample, as opposed to a sample of children who are in the mental health system, increased the generalizability of study findings, as it was representative of the general population. Lastly, the development of the Safe Schools Checklist was unique in the sense that it was a conglomeration of many school board- and provincial-level policies and procedures with the focus of establishing safe schools. The use of the Safe Schools Checklist enabled a comprehensive assessment of a high needs school's efforts in tackling school bullying.

4.5 « Future Directions »

In light of the present study's small sample size, a replication of the study with a greater number of high needs schools is recommended to test whether results of the present study are similar across schools. An equal number of school personnel who are not apart of the Safe Schools Committee and school staff who are members should be interviewed to gain a broader understanding of each school's bullying situation and students' perceived school safety.

Further research can extend this study's findings in many ways. Researchers may further investigate whether grade and gender differences exist in students' perceptions of school safety and bullying behaviour. In a sample of elementary students in Grades 4 to 6, findings reveal that victims who were the youngest of the study sample, are at risk for being bullied by their peers and older students (Bentley & Li, 1995). Scheithauer and colleagues (2006) also had similar findings that the rates of bullying victimization were higher in younger students. An in-depth look into this aspect would help schools to allocate appropriate supports to students who require it the most. Additionally, studies reveal immigrant children and children of ethnic minority experience more bullying victimization in comparison to their peers (Strohmeier, Kärnä, & Salmivalli, 2011;

Larochette, Murphy, & Craig, 2010; Lindsay & McPherson, 2012; Murphy; & Craig, 2010; Zinner, Conelea, Glew, Woods, & Budman, 2012). Children with learning and physical disabilities also experience higher rates of victimization (Ingesson, 2007; Luciano & Savage, 2007; Mepham, 2010; Twyman et al., 2010). Therefore, future studies could examine whether students' perceived school safety differ from typically developing students. How school personnel envision their roles may affect their behaviour and willingness to take part in certain initiatives. Future studies could also investigate teachers' and school leadership's attitudes on their responsibilities and how their views impact their priorities.

There are several research areas beyond the school that researchers can explore. Bowes and colleagues (2009) found that socio-environmental factors (e.g. problems with neighbours, family factors) are associated with an increased risk bullying involvement. Hence, factors that are linked to poverty (e.g. parent-child relationship, neighbourhood residential instability, accessibility to community mental health services) and how they affect students' perception of school safety and bullying behaviour in schools could be examined. Since ongoing school and community partnerships are paramount in successful bullying prevention and intervention programs, ways in this can establish should be researched.

4.6 « Conclusion »

Positive school climate is negatively related to bullying behaviours (Lee & Song, 2012). There is a dearth of research that directly examines students' and teachers' perceptions on bullying prevention and intervention initiatives and school safety, particularly from high needs schools. Moreover, Astor, Guerra, and Van Acker (2010) suggested understanding differences in more than one perspective might facilitate better development and implementation of programs that address school violence and safety issues. The present study fills this gap and sheds light on students' perceived feelings of school safety, bullying behaviours, and the factors and barriers that school programming in a high needs school. Despite barriers, the high needs school has made great strides in achieving board- and provincial-level school safety initiatives. School-based bullying intervention and

prevention programs should extend their focus beyond schools to families and local communities. The findings of the present study indicate the importance of having an awareness of how the broader community impacts student needs in a high needs school and the importance of promoting holistic student well-being by offering a multi-leveled approach to school programming.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Safe Schools Survey (Page 1)

SAFE SCHOOLS SURVEY 2012

GENDER: O Male O Female GRADE: O 4 O 5 O 6 O 7 O 8

Shade Circles Like This ● not like this ✓ X

STUDENT VIEWS

Fill in one bubble for each statement to show if YOU agree or disagree.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
This is a safe school for students.	O	O	O	O	O
Students show respect for all other students.	O	O	O	O	O
Students show respect for all staff.	O	O	O	O	O
Staff show respect for all students.	O	O	O	O	O
Students are proud of this school.	O	O	O	O	O
There is a caring, respectful atmosphere at this school.	O	O	O	O	O
I feel safe in the school building.	O	O	O	O	O
I feel safe on the school yard.	O	O	O	O	O

STUDENT FEELLINGS

I feel like I really belong at this school.	O	O	O	O	O
I learn better at school when I'm not feeling worried, sad, or angry.	O	O	O	O	O
People at this school are concerned about the feelings of others.	O	O	O	O	O
I know where to get help if I or a friend am feeling worried, sad, or angry.	O	O	O	O	O
Students at my school are taught to care about the feelings of others.	O	O	O	O	O
We talk at school about how we feel or how we handle stress.	O	O	O	O	O

Fill in one bubble for how often the following describes you personally at school this year.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seldom	Never
I feel worried, sad, or stressed at school.	O	O	O	O	O
I feel angry or upset at school.	O	O	O	O	O
Other students tease you, call you names, or gossip about you for feeling worried, sad, or angry.	O	O	O	O	O

INCLUSION

Do you ever feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at your school because of any of the following? (Please bubble in the items that apply to you).

- O No, I always feel welcome
- O My sex (male/female)
- O My ethnocultural or racial background
- O My Aboriginal background (First Nation, Metis, Inuit)
- O My appearance
- O My religion or faith
- O My language background (my first language)
- O My grades or marks
- O My family's level of income
- O A disability that I have
- O My sexual orientation
- O Other reason(s)_____

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Appendix A: Safe Schools Survey (Page 2)


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USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Do you use text messaging?	O Yes	O No
Do you use any social networks such as Facebook, Twitter?	O Yes	O No
Do you have your own personal cell phone?	O Yes	O No

Have you personally experienced any of the following during this school year?	Never	Once or Twice	2 or 3 Times a Month	About Once a Week	Almost Every Day
Someone forwarding your email or text message without your permission.	O	O	O	O	O
Someone spreading a rumor about you online.	O	O	O	O	O
Someone sending you a threatening email or text message.	O	O	O	O	O
Someone posting an embarrassing picture of you online without your permission.	O	O	O	O	O

Have you done any of the following to another student during this school year?	Never	Once or Twice	2 or 3 Times a Month	About Once a Week	Almost Every Day
Forwarded someone else's email or text message without their permission.	O	O	O	O	O
Spread a rumor about someone online.	O	O	O	O	O
Sent a threatening email or text message.	O	O	O	O	O
Posted an embarrassing picture of someone online without their permission.	O	O	O	O	O

SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Your school has done things to try and reduce bullying to make students feel safe.

Do you personally feel safer because of what has been done? *(bubble one)*

O I have always felt safe O I feel safer now O I still feel unsafe

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

Appendix A: Safe Schools Survey (Page 3)

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

If you know of a friend who is being bullied how likely would YOU be to do the following:

	Not Very Likely 1	2	3	4	5 Very Likely
talk to your friend about what is happening to him/her	O	O	O	O	O
talk to another student about what is happening to your friend	O	O	O	O	O
talk to your parent(s) about what is happening to your friend	O	O	O	O	O
tell your friend's parents	O	O	O	O	O
tell a school staff member (e.g., teacher) about what is happening to your friend	O	O	O	O	O
tell the police about what is happening to your friend	O	O	O	O	O
talk to a trusted adult in the community about what is happening to your friend	O	O	O	O	O
ignore what is happening to your friend	O	O	O	O	O
approach the person responsible for the bullying	O	O	O	O	O
report the bullying anonymously at school	O	O	O	O	O

DEALING WITH BULLYING

Suggestions about how to deal with bullying are listed. Fill in one bubble for each suggestion to show how helpful YOU think it would be in dealing with bullying.

	Not Very Likely 1	2	3	4	5 Very Likely
School presentations by adults about bullying.	O	O	O	O	O
School presentations by students about bullying.	O	O	O	O	O
Some way to report anonymously at school.	O	O	O	O	O
Increase supervision at school by school staff.	O	O	O	O	O
Monitoring of the Internet by parents.	O	O	O	O	O
Students need to understand the harm caused by bullying.	O	O	O	O	O
Improve the skills of students to deal with bullying.	O	O	O	O	O
Buddy system for students.	O	O	O	O	O
Classroom discussions about bullying.	O	O	O	O	O
Rewards for reporting bullying incidents.	O	O	O	O	O
Consequences for bullying.	O	O	O	O	O
Call the police.	O	O	O	O	O
Having a trusted staff member to talk to.	O	O	O	O	O
Follow through so they see that something happens.	O	O	O	O	O
See that there are consequences for the bully.	O	O	O	O	O
Encourage students to be Upstanders.	O	O	O	O	O

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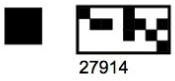
Appendix A: Safe Schools Survey (Page 4)



27914

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Do you use text messaging?	O Yes	O No
Do you use any social networks such as Facebook, Twitter?	O Yes	O No
Do you have your own personal cell phone?	O Yes	O No

Have you personally experienced any of the following during this school year?	Never	Once or Twice	2 or 3 Times a Month	About Once a Week	Almost Every Day
Someone forwarding your email or text message without your permission.	O	O	O	O	O
Someone spreading a rumor about you online.	O	O	O	O	O
Someone sending you a threatening email or text message.	O	O	O	O	O
Someone posting an embarrassing picture of you online without your permission.	O	O	O	O	O

Have you done any of the following to another student during this school year?	Never	Once or Twice	2 or 3 Times a Month	About Once a Week	Almost Every Day
Forwarded someone else's email or text message without their permission.	O	O	O	O	O
Spread a rumor about someone online.	O	O	O	O	O
Sent a threatening email or text message.	O	O	O	O	O
Posted an embarrassing picture of someone online without their permission.	O	O	O	O	O

SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Your school has done things to try and reduce bullying to make students feel safe.

Do you personally feel safer because of what has been done? *(bubble one)*

O I have always felt safe O I feel safer now O I still feel unsafe

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

Appendix B: Interview Consent Form

Western Education

An Examination of the Influence of Poverty on Students' Perceptions of School Safety, Bullying Behaviour, and School Programming: A Case Study

Investigators: Susan Rodger, Ph.D., C. Psych. and Jacqueline Lau
University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction

My name is Jacqueline Lau and I am a M.Ed. candidate in the Counselling Psychology Program at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research on the influence of poverty on students' feelings of safety at school, bullying behaviours, and their school's bullying prevention programs and initiatives and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate whether poverty is associated with negative feelings of school safety and bullying behaviours, whether the socioeconomic (SES) level of a community affects a school's bullying prevention and intervention programs, and whether students' needs in a high poverty area are met through these programs.

Participation

Should you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an interview where you will be asked about your views of poverty and its impact on the school, existing bullying programs at the school, your school's *Safe Schools* strategies, and barriers of program implementation. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format. Interviews will be conducted at a location and time convenient to you and the researcher and it will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality

The information collected will remain strictly confidential. Information that could identify you will not be used in any publication or presentations of the study results. Only the investigators of this study will have access to study data. All information collected for the study will be kept on a password-encrypted computer of a secure network and locked in the Centre for School-Based Mental Health. The information is gathered for research

purposes only and will be retained for 5 years and will then be destroyed confidentially.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks from your participation in this study. Your participation may inform the design, planning, and implementation of bullying initiatives for elementary school children in high poverty communities.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status. We ask that if you would like to volunteer to participate in this study, that you would contact the researchers directly to indicate your willingness; please reach them via email at the information provided below.

Thank-you,
Jacqueline Lau (M.A. Counselling Psychology Candidate)

Dr. Susan Rodger (Ph.D., C. Psych.)

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Broadly speaking, what are some common needs of this community? What are some common student needs that you see at this school? Do you think the broader needs of the community have an impact on your students' experiences at school here? (e.g. community poverty, safety, etc.)

2. With regards to student wellbeing, what would you say are the priorities of the school? (ie. Bullying prevention? Healthy Active Living? Stress Management/Coping Skills? Nutrition? Nothing?).

3. Can you tell me about your role/responsibilities as a teacher in carrying out the *Safe Schools Plan* (e.g. planning, development, etc.)? Can you tell me about the Safe Schools Team in this school?

4. To what degree do you feel the safe schools policies are met and achieved?

5. What are some barriers to the planning/implementation of bullying prevention and intervention initiatives at your school? Have you made adaptations to existing bullying initiatives?

6. In terms of the implementation of school-based programs at the school thus far, (not just those that focus on bullying e.g. Steps to Respect, Passport to the Internet, S.O.S. DVD), what has worked and what has not?

7. What are your thoughts on the students' receptivity to the school's bullying initiatives? Has taking The Pledge to End Bullying affected the way you teach? How?

Appendix D: Content Analysis - Codes

POVERTY

External Stressors

The breakdown of the family

They [parents] might have someone in a relationship for a short time and then that one goes and then another comes in. So the consistency of having a solid person in their lives.

…complex needs. Attention from their parents… they sound like some of them… don't have attention from them.

a lot of single parents – mom and children. A lot of separation, divorce, and absent parenting.

support in terms of where the kids can play, supporting families on a more of a social and emotional level as well and mental health.

Neighbourhood safety

A lot of the needs of the community is social-emotional.

there's a lot of safety issues with…a lot of them live in complexes

There is one area in particular that's close to our school and it's a lot of town houses and most of the families live there. So there are some apartment buildings there that are more on the lower end of the socioeconomic. So it seems like everybody's grouped together in one area. There are a lot of complaints in terms of what kind of individual lives in those areas and what their associations are to violence

Effects of external stressors on students' behavior at school

Depending on what kind of people they've grown up with. The people in their household, how they look at things is modeled for them. They're seeing that's how things are being handled.

Even if the parents aren't getting along and they are arguing or something's going wrong, then that comes to school and the kids as a result, they tend to let it boil over because they don't have the coping skills to deal with it.

and this [the school] is where we see a lot of behaviours come out be of a lot of home situation that they're facing.

there's not a not of extracurricular activities for them out in the community so a lot of what happens at home, gets brought into the school…I'm going to bring that emotional piece with me to school. I might not be able to communicate it, I might just act out…all of that gets brought into the school and it has a huge impact on the kids here.

The School's Focus in Light of the External Stressors

Meeting students' basic needs

I'll have to talk to them about deodorant, showers, being clean, etc. so they need some of that support.

[In regards to the school's servery] To some degree you don't want the parents to rely entirely because you think about, "Is this just a band-aid solution" we're not empowering parents to take a bigger initiative. It's a toss-up and it's a Catch-22 sometimes, so we'd rather meet the basic needs than not.

you want to say, "Have you had breakfast?" because that might be where you want to start

Food

Food issues….the kids actually need the food

a lot of the kids come [to school] with a block of cheese

we have the servery which we feed breakfast and we also feed kids who come down any time during either lunch break – so there's always food.

food, clothing.

mostly nutrition, health, um…not only coming with the proper food, but with food at all

Making sure that they're warm and not hungry.

There's also a breakfast program for kids in the morning…Just the other day, I had a student come to me and she was crying – she hadn't had breakfast.

Material resources

the actual resource stuff for school

I'll get comments from kids saying, "We just didn't have enough money today".

Some families know that [they can go to the school support counselor to get hats and mitts] and sometimes families might not, but our teachers are aware of students and student needs.

Social-emotional needs

a lot of the kids have high conflict.

usually the issues will happen on nutrition breaks

instruction on character, support for safety…support in all aspects like emotionally

A lot of love. Just TLC, someone to talk to them and hear them

the majority of them are ready and very willing to talk. It's almost like, you're not here enough for them

One boy is from a family of 6, I think, so there's 6 kids in the family. He's the one who would rather stay here than go home, but… doesn't get as much attention. Every time I turn around, he's right here, like right beside me, so just give him some extra [support].

Crisis management

You're doing a lot of micro-managing and proactive crisis management

You want to build capacity in this school… sometimes it's very reactive because those kids that are needing the attention, it becomes more immediate and day-to-day. So it becomes more crisis oriented as opposed to building that capacity.

At this school we are high in suspensions. Um…but they're the same kids.

A lot of teachers spend a lot of their time helping to sort through [the kids'] problems on their own time…The kinds of problems where they'll need to talk to someone or the conflict problems that are ongoing.

…they need a place to sit down and calm down and relax and have someone to talk to and…takes that extra time out of the day where you could be teaching

BALANCE

Whole School Approach

So far, nothing has really failed, per se, but I think, because it's becoming known and people are more involved that it's actually working.

When you look at all these issues, the school puts it into place and it's much more effective because everybody's talking about it or living and breathing it. It's a norm and expectation.

It's all tied together

a lot of communication, so a lot of talking, and teaming them up to have a common goal.

as more people join, it's more widespread…more inclusive, more support.

We're really good here about communication between the teachers, like just let them know who to look at for.

[At staff meetings], it's [bullying] never really on the agenda type deal, but, it's something that turns into discussing or… just FYI, or look out for these types of things

Leadership of the principal

The principal is very supportive of those parents and families and he has always developed rapport with them and so when the conflict from the community enters the school, they're very quick to…deescalate and diffuse it.

[The principal has an] open door policy and parents can come in, and the kids can come in

He [the principal] would go out into the community and he knew the families and helped where he could.

Support from the school support counselor

Our school support counselor is very active.
We have several groups organized through the School Support Counselor.
It's all under the umbrella of Safe Schools [initiatives], but it's meeting the social and emotional need, the relationship need, the conflict resolution needs, the problem solving needs. Because Safe Schools is so broad.
With all those programs… the teacher is still the key person in the classroom.
The school counselor programmer. She takes small groups… she takes groups during recess and that works really well because it's a little place where they can call their own and it's outside of the classroom.
There's group programming, there's individual support.
Students know that there's a school support counselor and I have an open-door policy.
[The school support counselor] has an area where there's shoes and especially in the winter there's hats, and coats, and mitts, and they can go to her and get some or some of the classrooms have them.
Teachers' roles and responsibilities (the majority of the work (in terms of addressing bullying) is up to teachers)
because it's a school initiative, it's obvious it's taught and it's apparent. It's not so much directed by, "It's in the curriculum, you have to address it"
We have gone the route of leaving it to the teachers.
Flexibility in terms of what the teachers decide to do.
The difficulty is each teacher does things, so it's going to vary by classroom, how much is done.
We don't have a program and say, "Here it is, this is how many weeks it is, and you must do it". It's more up to the teacher.
It's not like a program… there are stuff in the curriculum that's on health and safety.
They're in their Health [class], so they can cover it in Health, but see, some of the teachers, they do this in their Language [class].
They can focus on something like bullying and teasing through their Language
You can do it as a class or you can acknowledge individual efforts, however they want to do it.
The police officers come in often do workshops with the kids and so making sure I'm following up with those conversations and we're discussing everything that they bring up in those workshops.
I usually incorporate it [bullying prevention] into Health because there are some expectations under Health in Relationships, and forming positive relationships.
You can have a unit on it like for health, like for procedures and safety… I think we just innately put in.
There's character development in the traits, in our health [unit]
it depends on the teachers' ability to integrate topics into a current reading or writing expectations.
based on the teacher's initiative
We do a lot of role-play… So I'll have situations or scenarios where they act it out and we talk about what it should look like and what it shouldn't look like… they come up with, "What could you do, what are some next steps, how could you help even though you weren't involved in this situation, what could you have done as a bystander".
we're trying to implement something called a Thinking Room, which is sort of like a detention room with a nicer name and the kids can go in there and think about what they're done and then we just try to get the kids to talk and talk to each other.
And then drama's my biggest thing…that seems to be the best one.
So finding creative strategies – I often resort to doing lots of groups that at least I can see those kids in some format, not necessarily individual
The Grade 4/5 teacher organized a soccer game so then the students all signed up and then they get a time on the field…resolved. And then if there's fighting, no one's allowed on there and

we'll try it again. When something comes up and it can't be addressed in each form, then we come up with some solution for it.
we're always outside of the box
The seniors have made a video with different scenarios so the kids can discern [the difference between conflict and bullying]… got our students to showcase some scenarios… things that would actually happen during the day or has happened to them. That's what he filmed…or like situations so kids could identify… resonates with them.
one of the teachers developed a video and put it on YouTube, the difference between conflict and bullying. So then classes can use that.
Some of our older grades, like our Grade 7s, put together a video that was viewed by the rest of the school…let's get the definition under wraps.

The Establishment of a Safe School Environment Involves:
Teaching bullying through character development
bullying prevention… We work hard at that everyday, all day long.
Setting up teams and trying to get the Safe Schools plan
making sure the kids feel safe, and helping out with the initiatives that the Safe Schools team comes up with.
We want to make sure they learn to look outside of themselves, how to be a giving and caring person.
I come from an area where I would like to focus not so much on bullying per se, but building the capacity to be kind and generous. I think if you planned those empathy seeds, then you will never really have to talk about bullying. That's a very idealistic environment, but we try.
I think meeting the basic needs works really well and that's really appropriate for our school… focusing more on proactive things and building and empowering kids.
just building confidence and helping them with skills and problem-solving so when they're feeling better about themselves and they're more able to cope with problems on the yard.
Working through those with the kids, trying to problem solve with them, and give them the skills
Fostering Positive Relationships at Home and at School
They [students in the class] write letters to their parents every week… that's one way I try to keep the open communication with them. So I have a little writing program called Dear Family. So every Friday the kids write a letter home to somebody – mom or dad, grandpa, grandma, whoever they live with. They write about their week, what they did at school, something they wish… usually something that went well, two things they wish they could change or something they could have done better… Then the parent writes back
I do have a couple kids who nobody will write back to, so I have them writer to teachers and the teachers will write back to them, or the librarian.
I think the most difficult piece is capturing those students who are afraid to speak up.
I think no matter how safe of an environment you provide and having diff avenues of reporting, there will always be that trepidation for the students to say, "Will this help, or will this cause more problems?".
the challenge for staff is communicating those pieces to students and say, "Just tell us" and sometimes students will say, "We don't want to tell because we're afraid that will cause more trouble". So there's that fine line of you wanting to address the bullying, but how do you address it while being sensitive and careful
You never know if you are meeting the needs because the bullying situation is that… what you can see is what you can approach and it's harder to decipher and a lot of times, those bullying situations are underground.
Staff here are really amazing at making safe and positive connections with our students, knowing the environment they come from. So there's quite a lot of staff the students feel comfortable talking to and approaching.

Partnerships with parents

Parents

parents are always welcomed to our assemblies… it won't be a high turn out… probably because…we haven't made a big deal….because we haven't and sent out invitations and…you know 'it's a big deal, come and find out'.

…knowing how to reach parents, engage parents. Engaging parents is key and having parents participate and attend things and engage even in the day-to-day lives of their kids.

parents have other challenges whether it's the socioeconomic piece, whether it's little ones at home that are keeping them busy, whether it's simple things like having appropriate connection in terms of a phone availability.

Families that have mental health issues and parents who struggle to get out of the house… makes it hard to engage in the school environment.

There's a servery so if they need a snack, there's unlimited food down there … it's all parent volunteers that run that program.

Support for Teachers

There are always resources and teachers will sometimes come in with a unique situation where we try to proactively come up with a solution.

Now that it's a team, it's more effective, there's more conversation so it's that ripple, kind of effect and it just supports everything that is already in place and then you also have support from the other teachers

we're always talking and we do meet as a division to discuss as well, but everyone in our division is open to supporting each other so that again is very helpful.

people usually step up and take the initiative right away to help support the kids

at any point, a teacher can call her [the police officer leading the VIP program] and say, "We're struggling with this in the classroom, could you come in and talk about it"

I've had students before who were stealing things in the classroom so I would call her [the police officer] and we would talk about long-term effects of that kind of thing

we have instructional coaches that come and they have a wealth of knowledge from other classrooms and know where to go to help get your support.

I find things on the internet and there's something on the internet called Smart Active and it's just a Smart Board program that teachers put lessons up on and there's been a few that's been put up on cyberbullying and bullying in general that I've used as Smart Board presentations.

Lots of books – there are lots of good library books that build on all the character traits and I bring those in and I read the books to them.

Ongoing efforts

the teachers do focus on community in getting the kids to be supportive, to help alleviate, so it's inclusive and safe and that regardless of their income status, they have what they need to be successful so that's…a school goal.

it really is ongoing. It's not like one specific class

it just happens. We might just stop math class and talk about it. It's just open…very open discussion and time to talk about it.

you have to be that safe haven for kids and sometimes for staff

Care needs to be taken that The Pledge isn't just a routine – you say it, you do it, and it's done the 5 minutes after. How do we live it?

How do we continually reinforce what's on The Pledge? How do we continually live it?

The actual pledge just reinforces what's already in place… better apt to advocate themselves and the consistency is important

that could be something that could be started in September and we could carry it throughout, not just random acts of kindness. It should be… all year, part of the curriculum, it's supposed to do automatic.

It's a good eye opener and it's a good reminder to self-evaluate. "Am I doing this? Am I putting it in my day?".
I still don't feel like we do enough… we had one workshop and we did the Pledge, but that's kind of all done now and… like where is it now? It should be more of a focus and I don't think it's enough of a focus here. With the confines of my classroom, I feel like it is and we do a lot of it, but as a school as a whole, I don't think it's… there aren't enough initiatives and things for them to… you know, do to support.

BARRIERS

The Definition of Bullying
Some is the actual definition of bullying and conflict
Barriers… I guess the understanding of what it is.
The kids don't know the difference and there is a difference. Parents don't know the difference. Oftentimes, the challenge is the word and how we approach those instances has become so broad in our community and sometimes it has lost its meaning… part of our campaign this year, was really focusing on what is the difference…we're instructed to provide some education around that.

Time
Time is always an issue. Time and resources are an issue…there's never enough time because the need grows bigger and bigger.
I think time is a big piece. Even looking at my own life, I envision doing different things, but sometimes I get in that crisis mode of just putting out fires that are happening
Not just planning the time, but getting together that many groups of people, with the parents, the students, the teachers… you can insert it into academics.
Some of them need that one on one quality time and it's just… given the way our system and society works, it's just not always available.
Usually when you start off the school year, it's building rapport, getting to know the kids, and establishing the ground rules. So you spend a lot of time and curriculum is kind of pushed aside… once you get that going, then the curriculum has more priority… the social stuff is weighted heavier and then as we go, it makes it easier for the academics and it builds success that way.
So it's getting all the rapport and the social stuff and then, you build the academic.
they're very elevated and they need a place to sit down and calm down and relax and have someone to talk to and…takes that extra time out of the day where you could be teaching making sure I'm caught up and…yeah, that doesn't always happen. It's a constant balance.
We have to cover the curriculum, we got report cards coming up and they're due in January so you need to make sure you've taught everything you've got to teach by then. Some things kind of get left in the dust.
A lot of teachers spend a lot of their time helping to sort through [the kids'] problems on their own time…The kinds of problems where they'll need to talk to someone or the conflict problems that are ongoing.

Appendix E: Context Analysis – Description of Themes

Over-arching question: How does a school from a high-risk community address the effects of poverty on their student population? Overall theme → it's a balancing act.

1) Knowledge Is Power – this theme speaks about the school's knowledge on the surrounding community and how it aids in understanding student well-being. Consequently, a greater understanding enables the school to effectively meet the needs of their students.

- Effects of external stressors on students' behaviour at school

- Beyond the school's walls – describes the school's awareness on the types of stressors students experience outside of school.
  - Parent-child attachments (e.g. parental separation)
  - Neighbourhood safety
- Feeding bodies, feeding minds - outlines the school's response to the influence of external stressors on student well-being.
  - Meeting students' basic needs (food, material resources)
  - Crisis management
  - Socio-emotional needs

2) All Aboard – this theme illustrates the school's whole school approach for bullying awareness, prevention, and intervention.

- School leadership – highlights the roles of school personnel in spearheading Safe Schools initiatives.
  - The leadership of the principal and the vice principal
  - Teachers' roles and responsibilities
  - Support from the school support counselor
- Support – this subtheme encompasses the various supports that the school offers, in fostering feelings of school safety.
  - Support for teachers
  - Support for students (teaching bullying through character development, positive relationships with school personnel)
  - Partnering with parents

3) Creating Safe Environments is Not Without Hurdles – this theme speaks of the barriers of planning and implementing bullying prevention and intervention initiatives.

- The definition of bullying
- Time

Appendix F: Safe Schools Checklist

Section 1: Provincial Legislations

1. The school has a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan and procedures.
2. Bullying is identified as a priority in the school.
3. Bullying is clearly defined.
4. The school has a Safe Schools Team.
5. The school invites stakeholders' responses and involvement in decision-making
6. The school engages parents/guardians in their *Safe Schools Action Plan.*
7. The school engages the school community in their *Safe Schools Action Plan.*
8. Multiple supports are offered to students to promote positive behaviour.
9. Regular training in Safe School strategies are provided for the principal and teachers.
10. Information on the school's *Safe Schools Action Plan,* goals, and progress are regularly communicated to stakeholders.

Section 2: School Board Policies and Regulations

1. The school involves stakeholders in the development of Safe Schools practices and policies.
2. The school's plans of how bullying prevention education will be implemented throughout all grades in the school are clearly outlined.
3. Information concerning bullying prevention, roles and responsibilities for reporting procedures, and consequences for bullying are clearly outlined in student/school handbooks.
4. The school has provided a method that enables students and parents to anonymously report bullying incidents to teachers and school administrators.
5. The school ensures the supervision of pupils in the schoolyard, corridors, washrooms, and on all out-of-school activities.
6. Supports are available for students who have been bullied, perpetrators, and those who have been affected from witnessing an incident(s) of bullying.
7. Relevant programs and activities are delivered to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values in dealing with and preventing violence.
8. Instructional strategies (e.g. role-playing, cooperative learning) are used to help students deal with anger, conflict, and to develop interpersonal skills.
9. Parents are regularly informed on current Safe Schools policies, procedures, and protocols.
10. Awareness programs to parents/guardians by the school and community partners are regularly offered.

Section 3: Ministry Recommendations

1. The bullying prevention policy is incorporated in the School Code of Conduct.
2. Information concerning the Safe School Act and related school board, and school policies and processes are communicated with parents, staff, and students.
3. A lead person has been identified to deal with Safe Schools and bullying prevention issues.

4. Bullying prevention initiatives include a parent/caregiver training component.
5. The school has established student leadership (e.g. peer-led initiatives and leadership training).

Section 4: Evidence-based Recommendations of Bullying Prevention and Intervention Programs

1. Rules and initiatives are strongly supported and consistently reinforced by the principal and teachers.
2. Teachers are involved in the development of safety rules and procedures.
3. Bullying prevention is embedded within the school curriculum.
4. The school incorporates the assistance of the police into creating a safe learning environment.

Appendix G: Reflective Journals

Interviewee 1

- The interview took place in the interviewee's classroom.
- The classroom space was orderly.
- The Pledge to End Bullying was posted in an accessible place.
- A bulletin board was the designated place where class initiatives (1000 Acts of Kindness) are posted.
- There were several announcements over the PA system throughout the course of the interview.
- Near the end of the interview, the interviewee excused herself briefly to ask a colleague to supervise her class as she wrapped up the interview.
- The interviewee was eager to provide the best answers to the interviewer and spoke at great lengths about her role in the school.

Interviewee 2

- The interview took place in the interviewee's office.
- The interviewee was responding to an email when the interviewer arrived and got ready for the interview while waiting the interviewee to finish.
- The interviewee brought a binder of the school's documentation of the Safe Schools initiatives they had planned thus far, emails between members of the Safe Schools Committee throughout the planning and development process.
- Relevant documentation were photocopied for the interviewer.
- The noise level outside the office got increasingly louder as the interview commenced as it was close to the beginning of the school day.
- The interviewee had wealth of knowledge on Safe Schools, spoke about her past experiences in other schools, and her experience and roles at the current school.

Interviewee 3

- The interview was conducted in the interviewee's classroom.
- The interviewee was interrupted on multiple occasions during the interview due to announcements over the PA system, two of which were addressed to the interviewee, but they told the interviewer they will attend to it after the interview. Also, a colleague went into the classroom to pick up an item, which briefly interrupted the interview process.
- The interviewee was engaged and took time to contemplate her answers.

Interviewee 4:

- The interview took place in the interviewee's office.
- The interviewee provided insightful responses and at times, was reflective before responding.
- The interviewee had another appointment to attend after an hour into the interview and thus. Although they were rushed answering the last several interview questions, they made sure the interviewer had obtained the information that was needed before attending the next appointment.

Appendix H: School-Based Programs at the High Needs School (School X)

Programs/ Safe Schools Initiatives	Description
Go Girls! *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds* (Grades 7and 8)	This is a group mentoring program for girls focuses on body image, healthy eating, physical activity, and relationships. The program aims to equip girls with the tools to assist them in making healthy choices as well as to develop self-esteem and communication skills through an interactive curriculum.
Heroes (Grades 1 – 6)	This is a group that allows children to build on their self-esteem. Participants will learn that everyone has a hero within and can carry out acts that make them heroes.
Kelso's Choice (Full-Day Kindergarten – Primary Students)	This is a conflict management skills program based on the idea that each child is able to be a peacemaker. Participants are taught 9 ways of resolving minor conflicts independently. The program also has an emphasis on helping students to differentiate between minor problems and larger problems that require the help of adults.
Lunch Bunch (All ages)	This group allows students to meet with the school support counselor in an informal setting during lunch times. Students work on a specific goal, such as problem solving skills and conflict resolution strategies through games and discussions. Goals vary from group to group, but the primary focus is on helping students develop positive social skills.
Roots of Empathy (All ages)	This is an evidence-based program that aims to increase students' social and emotional competence and prosocial behaviour while fostering the development of empathy. The program's goal is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and youth in order to reduce levels of bullying, aggression, and violence.
VIP (Values, Influences, & Peers) Program (Grade 6 students)	This is a province-wide educational program that includes a partnership between schools and the police. Police officers present topics in school. Topics

	include: Values and Rules, Peer Pressure, Authority Figures, Alcohol and Tobacco and other Drugs, and Internet Safety and Youth. The goal of the program is to inform students of their rights and responsibility, help students make informed choices related to values and the law, and enhance students' self-esteem.
1000 Acts of Kindness Challenge	The challenge is an initiative of the Anti-Hate & Anti-Bias Program at LUSO Community Services that encourages participants to work together to end hate by completing at least 1000 acts of kindness in one month. The aim of the social is to develop a culture of caring and increase awareness of the impact of being kind.

Appendix I: Ethical Approvals

Western Education

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number:	1304-5
Principal Investigator:	Susan Rodger
Student Name:	Jacqueline Lau
Title:	*An examination of the influence of poverty on students' perceptions of school safety, bullying behavior, and school programming: A case study.*
Expiry Date:	April 30, 2014
Type:	M. Ed. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date:	July 29, 2013.
Revision #:	
Documents Reviewed & Approved:	Western Protocol, Letter of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2012-2013 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

Dr. Alan Edmunds	**Faculty of Education (Chair)**
Dr. John Barnett	**Faculty of Education**
Dr. Wayne Martino	**Faculty of Education**
Dr. George Gadanidis	**Faculty of Education**
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	**Faculty of Education**
Dr. Julie Byrd Clark	**Faculty of Education**
Dr. Kari Veblen	**Faculty of Music**
Dr. Jason Brown	**Faculty of Education**
Dr. Susan Rodger	**Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research *(ex officio)***
Dr. Ruth Wright	**Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board *(ex officio)***
Dr. Kevin Watson	**Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board *(ex officio)***

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Curriculum Vitae

Name: Jacqueline Lau

Education

M.A. Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education
September 2012 – April 2014 (Expected)
The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada

B.A. Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour, Honours
September 2008 – April 2012
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Presentations

The 2013 Robert MacMillan Graduate Research in Education Symposium
April 18, 2013
Lau, J., Rodger, S. (2013, April). *An examination of the influence of poverty on students' perceptions of school safety, bullying behaviour, and school programming: A case study.* PowerPoint presentation presented at the 2013 Robert MacMillan Graduate Research in Education Symposium, London, Canada.

Research Experience

Senior Individual Library Study
September 2011 – March 2012
Supervised by Dr. Kathy Short, PhD, C. Psych.
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

- Responsible for the development of a database of systematic reviews consisting of eight areas of interest in mental health that are of concern to the school board
- Goal: to inform decision-making about mental health promotion and prevention activities which will be extended to others within HWDSB and to staff within the Ministry of Education

Clinical Experience

Student Therapist
September 2013 – April 2014
Vanier Children's Services, London, Ontario, Canada

- Provide brief child and family therapy to children (ages 7 to 14) and their caregivers with the use of various theoretical orientations
- Co-facilitate the Friends for Life group, a 12-week group therapy program, which teaches children and adolescents how to manage their anxiety

Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre
October 2013 – Present
London, Ontario, Canada

- Co-facilitated the Secure Connections: Infant, a 10-week play based group with an emphasis on attachment for mothers and infants up to 15 months
- Provide psycho-education and facilitate discussions to support parent and infant in developing a mutually satisfying and healthy relationship
- Assist with a community group of primary-aged children who have witnessed domestic abuse

Work Experience

Research Assistant
June 2013 – Present
Child and Parent Resource Institute, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, London, Ontario, Canada
Supervised by Dr. Shannon Stewart, PhD, C. Psych.

- Assist with various research projects in the Applied Research & Education Division for interRAI, an international collaborative movement to improve the quality of life of vulnerable persons through a comprehensive assessment system
- Write extensive clinician guidelines intended for international use based on evidence based research

Research Assistant
October 2010 – April 2011
Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
Supervision by Dr. Kathy Georgiades, PhD, C. Psych.

- Assisted with a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)-funded, school-based study examining the extent to which mental health and academic inequities exist among 1,300 immigrant versus non-immigrant students in grades 5-8 in Hamilton, Ontario (Lay title: Hamilton Youth Study)

Publications:

Lau, J., Stewart, S.L., Theall, L., Gleason, K., Beharry, P., Rupert, K., Perry, B., Smith, C., Mathias, K. (2014). Traumatic life events collaborative action plan for children and youth with developmental disabilities. In Stewart, S.L., Theall, L.A., Morris, J.N., et al. *interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative Action Plans (CAPs) for use with the interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Developmental Disability (ChYMH-DD) Instrument, Research Version 1.* Washington, DC: interRAI.

Lau, J., Theall, L., Stewart, S.L., Reimers, T., Ashworth, M., McLean, J., Belleville-Taylor, P., Martin, L., Rabinowitz, R. (2014). Continence collaborative action plan for children and youth with developmental disabilities. In Stewart, S.L., Theall, L.A., Morris, J.N., et al. *interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative Action Plans (CAPs) for use with the interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Developmental Disability (ChYMH-DD) Instrument, Research Version 1.* Washington, DC: interRAI.

Lau, J., Theall, L., Stewart, S.L., Gill, A., Schwartz, N., Dromgole, L. (2014). Education support collaborative action plan for children and youth with developmental disabilities.

In Stewart, S.L., Theall, L.A., Morris, J.N., et al. *interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative Action Plans (CAPs) for use with the interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Developmental Disability (ChYMH-DD) Instrument, Research Version 1.* Washington, DC: interRAI.