Research Based Bully-proofing Strategies.

bparsons5@charter.net
Our Time Today

• Bullying 101
• Identifying potential victims
• Bullying research you can use
• Bullying and academic achievement
• Bully-proofing strategies
• Final thoughts
Educators often struggle with many strategies to Bully-Proof our schools. The solution lies in current research and common sense!
Focused Direction

Consistent and Pervasive Plans

SAFE Schools

Research-Based Bully Proofing Strategies

Staff Training and Buy-in

Character Education

Emergency Preparedness

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Magic Solutions

• There are no “magic solutions” when it comes to bully-proofing your school and your kids.

• While that is true, there is abundant research on bullying. An exhaustive review of the research reveals a clear direction on how to approach this problem.
What Is Bullying?

• Intentional aggression that may be physical, verbal, or emotional.
• Usually committed over an extended period of time – but once is enough!
• Characterized by a real or perceived imbalance of power.
• Compounded by technology (cell phone, internet, computers, blogs, Myspace, Facebook, etc.)
Bullying Behavior

• Physical – hitting, kicking, pinching, choking
• Verbal – threatening, teasing, name calling
• Emotional – ostracizing, rumors, exclusionary behavior.
• Sexual – touching, teasing, threatening

Cyber bullies – My Space, text messaging, etc…
What Hinders Our Efforts?

A. Educators may not understand when the behavior crosses the line into bullying.
B. Educators have too much on their plate as it is.
C. Concern that addressing bullying at the school level gives the impression that it is a “problem in our school.”
D. Educators have little training in identifying bullying and dealing with it.
E. Parents have even less training on how to bully-proof their kids.
F. We have to make it important in our schools.
What Educators Must Know

• BULLIES know how to use power.
• BULLIES know how to manipulate others...you included.
• BULLIES may be popular with students and do well in school.
• Undefined public spaces at school tend to be “unowned” and are more prone to bullying. Students can tell you where these unowned places are!
How Prevalent is ***Bullying***

• Huttunen found that 87% of all students have been involved as a bully, victim, or witness.

• 85% of bullying occurs within the context of peer group interactions (Atlas, 1998).

• 31% of middle school students reported being bullied at least three times a year (Haynie, 2001).
Bullying and Safety

An ABC News poll of 500 high school students from across the nation found that when students identify a potentially violent classmate, it is generally a boy and one who has been bullied, rather than a bully.
Bullying and Safety

• Of the 37 school shootings since 1974, two-thirds of them were directly linked to bullying in some form.
Five Reasons Why Victims Don’t Tell?

- They fear retaliation.
- They think it will make the situation worse.
- They do not believe adults can or will help.
- Telling on peers is considered “snitching.”
- They think it will just “go away.”

(Adair, 2000)
Red Flags For Teachers!

The hidden “red flags” to identify kids who are the victim of bullying:

* The class snickers when a particular student enters the room, answers a question, or draws attention.

* A student is never chosen or is left out of activities (Ex. - small group activities and playground activities)

* A student’s grades, attendance, and demeanor decline.
Bully Targets

- Shakeshaft (1995) identified three gender types particularly at risk of being bullied:
  - Exceptionally attractive girls
  - Exceptionally unattractive girls
  - Boys who appear to be “gay”
  * Students who “care” about school
Three child in six is bullied weekly (Peterson, 1999).

Owens (2000) found that girls who are most at-risk are girls who are new to the school, are unassertive, or had few friends.

Students with speech impediments or physical development issues.

In general, children who have little or no support from others are clearly the most vulnerable (Peterson, 1999).
Bullying Targets

• Boys are involved in 76% of reported bullying. Girls are involved in 45% (Adair, 2000). This stat on girls may be misleading as girls’ bullying is often more subtle.

• Boys use more physical bullying. Girls often rely on emotional bullying (Adair, 2000).
Bully Victims...

- Show low self-esteem (Besag, 1989).
- Suffer from depression, loss of interest in school, fear, and anxiety (Craig, 1997).
- Are more prone to suicidal ideation (Carney, 2000).
*Why Focus on Bullying*?

• Suicidal Ideation!!!

• Pillow thoughts!!!

• A school with a bullying culture will make significantly less academic achievement than a comparable bully-free group (Cleary, 2001).

• Reducing bullying can actually increase student achievement (Feinstein, 2004).
Why Focus on Bullying?

• **Self-esteem** – There is a strong correlation between a student’s self-concept and academic achievement (Feinstein, 2004).

• **Abuse** – There is a strong correlation between school bullying and future domestic abuse (Cullingford, 1997).

• Bullies are more likely to participate in risky behavior such as drinking, drug use, and smoking (JAMA, 2001).
*What To Do – Educate Students*

- Bullying consequences - Rubric
- How to help a victim (10 second rule):
  - Don’t laugh at hateful comments.
  - Remove the victim from the situation.
  - Help the victim report the bullying.
  - Report the bullying yourself.
- Snitching – “What you do to get someone in trouble.”
- Helping – “What you do to get someone out of trouble.”
**What To Do - Educate Staff**

• Plan a school-wide focus on bully-proofing.
• Educate the staff on the impact of bullying on students.
• Educate the entire staff on who the likely victims might be.
• Make sure someone on staff “owns” every potential victim.
• The “owner” should monitor the victim’s grades and social interaction within his/her peer group.
Educate the BUS DRIVERS as well! WHY???
What To Do (AMA)

Equip ALL STAFF with strategies on how to counsel victims. Why ALL staff?

• Do you know of any children who have been teased or picked-on at school?

• Have you ever been teased at school?

• Have you ever reported teasing? What happened?

• What kind of things are you teased about?

Who do you sit with at lunch, at PE, on the playground, or on the bus?
**Counseling the Bully**

- Do not sit the bully and victim together.
- Just after an aggressive act is not the time for moral reasoning. Provide cool down time and location away from students. (WHY????)
- Refer to the bullying rubric. “Right now I have you here for bullying. I do not want to add lying to the consequences!”

Leading questions - “What made you so mad that you_____?”
Final Thoughts on Bullying

Find the adult in the building with the closest relationship with the victim or the bully to provide counseling.

This may or may not be an administrator.
Final Thoughts on Bullying

• Schools where adults bully other adults or children need to confront that current reality.

• For the bully to “care” what the adult has to say to change the behavior the bully has to “like” or at least respect the adult. What implications does this have for educators?
The Future of Your School is in Your Hands!

Schools do not change until the people in them act differently. You have the information in this hand-out to help them act differently.

How will you use it to change your school and the future of the students and adults inside?