

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH ON BULLYING IN SCHOOLS (November, 2011)

- ✓ Children and youth (and sometimes adults) use bullying to acquire resources and to demonstrate to an audience that they can (or do) dominate.
- ✓ There is usually some history between the bully and the victim. These are not random acts on random victims.
- ✓ Potential bullies turn angry thoughts and frustrations into aggressive behavior toward low-status peers whom they already dislike and who dislike them.
- ✓ Socially connected children choose same-sex bullying as a part of a struggle for dominance, particularly during transitions from one year to the next and from one school to the next when the social hierarchy is in flux and unpopular children can be targeted.
- ✓ Empathy is the key to our program's success.
- ✓ 50% of the time when a peer intervenes, the bullying stops.
- ✓ One good friend can make a crucial difference to children who are harassed / bullied.
- ✓ Broadening the social ties of a bully; increase the variety of peers; better integrate the bully into the social fabric of our school.
- ✓ One strong step educators can take is to periodically ask students about bullying and their social relationships.
- ✓ With guidance from caring, engaged adults, youth can organize themselves as a force that makes bullying less effective as a means of social connection or as an outlet for alienation.
- ✓ The school has to have a strong stand against bullying. The process and procedures cannot be a mystery or at all questioned. If adult attitude and social networking can doom a reform effort, so too can youth social networks.
- ✓ The success of bullies in attaining resources and recognition depends on factors that include: (a) personal characteristics of bullies, (b) the relationship that exists between bullies and those whom they target, and (c) the reaction of classmates who witness bullying.

✓ Two categories of bullies:

Marginalized Bullies:

- ❖ are fighting the social system that keeps them on the periphery;
- ❖ are shunted into peer groups with other bullies;
- ❖ are more often boys than girls;
- ❖ have a host of problems, of which bullying is just one;
- ❖ behavior stems from an inability to control their impulses;
- ❖ are trying to gain status;
- ❖ are usually a victim and a bully at the same time;
- ❖ usually react in reaction to provocation.

Socially-connected Bullies:

- ❖ are often popular and not recognized as a bully;
- ❖ use aggression to control others;
- ❖ are networked and integrated into the social fabric of the school;
- ❖ do not lack for peer or social support;
- ❖ are skilled at bullying without being caught;
- ❖ evenly divided between boys and girls;
- ❖ have a variety of friends;
- ❖ have many strengths, social skills, athleticism and attractiveness;
- ❖ tend to be proactive and goal oriented;
- ❖ use pro-social strategies such as reconciling with a victim after a successful conflict;
- ❖ become less aggressive once they have clear dominance;
- ❖ focus on same-sex bullying as a struggle for dominance when transitions are in flux;
- ❖ target victims who will likely not be defended.