



School Climate Improvement and Breaking the Bully-Victim-Bystander Cycle: I. Research Support; and II. Summary of *What works?*

I. Bully prevention research reports that provide the foundation for NSCC's Bully Prevention/Pro-Upstander Efforts:

Catalano, R. F., Haggerty, K. P., Oesterle, S., Fleming, C. B., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). The importance of bonding to school for healthy development: Findings from the Social Development Research Group. *Journal of School Health*, 74, 252-261.

Cohen, J., Pickeral, T., & McCloskey, M. (2008). The Challenge of Assessing School Climate. [Online article]. *Educational Leadership*, 66 (4). (Available on: www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/toc.aspx)

Davis, S. (2007). *Empowering bystanders in bully prevention*. Research Press

Espelage, D.L. & Swearer, S.M. (eds) (2008). *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention*. Taylor & Francis.

Farrington, D. P., & Ttofi, M. M. (2010). *School-based programs to reduce bullying and victimization*. Submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice for publication. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/229377.pdf> (PDF, 144 Pages)

National School Climate Council (2007). *The School Climate Challenge: Narrowing the gap between school climate research and school climate policy, practice guidelines and teacher education policy*. On: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/policy.php/

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.

Özdemir, M. & Stattin, H. (2011). Bullies, victims, and bully-victims: a longitudinal examination of the effects of bullying-victimization experiences on youth well-being. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, Vol 3, 2, pg. 97-102

Pollack, W.S., Modzeleski, W. & Rooney, G. (2008). *Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information students learn may prevent a targeted attack*. United States Secret Service and United States Department Of Education.

Slaby, R.G., Wilson-Brewer, R., & Dash, K. (1994). *Aggressors, victims, and bystanders: Thinking and acting to prevent violence*. (A violence prevention curriculum for grades 6 - 9). Newton, MA: Education Development Center.

Swearer, S.M., Espelage, D.L., & Napolitano, S.A. (2009). *Bullying prevention and intervention: Realistic strategies for schools*. Guilford Press

Swearer, S., Espelage, D. L., Vaillancourt, T., & Hymel, S. (2010). What can be done about school bullying? Linking research to educational practice. *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 38-47.

Twemlow, S.W. & Sacco, F.C. (2011) *Preventing bullying and school violence*. American Psychiatric Association

Twemlow, S.W. & Sacco, F.C. (2008) *Why school anti-bullying programs don't work*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

US Department of Health & Human Services in partnership with the US Department of Education and Department of Justice (2011). *Stopbullying.gov*

II. What works and what does not work?

| WORKS | DOESN'T WORK |
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| Overall Approach | |
| <p><u>Policy</u>: Educational policy that promotes positive school climate or the norms, expectations, beliefs, teaching/learning and leadership practices that support safe, supportive, engaging, helpfully challenging school communities for students to learn and develop in healthy ways.</p> <p>This importantly includes meaningful guidelines that support educators, parents and mental health professionals recognizing students who chronically ‘fall into’ the role of bully and/or victim’ and address barriers to learning.</p> <p>National School Climate Standards: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php</p> | <p>Educational policy that focuses on (i) identifying students who are bullies and (ii) punishing them.</p> <p>Consequences that are enforced as punishment exclusive of behavior modification strategies, programs, counseling, and/or parent/family involvement is assessing and promoting acceptable respectable behavior with peers, teachers and support personnel.</p> |
| <p><u>Mobilizing the “whole village”</u> - students, parents and school personnel understanding the schools strength and needs from a social, emotional and civic as well as intellectual/academic perspective and then using this data to develop instructional and systemic efforts that will – truly – make schools safer, more supportive, engaging, helpfully challenging (and as much as possible) fun: school climate reform.</p> <p>Redefining the role of guidance and other support staff to include providing strategies for teachers and others changing the behavior of students who exhibit bullying behavior.</p> | <p>Individual Counseling (in the absence of systemic interventions) and Mediation</p> |

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| Redefining the role of some staff to include providing strategies for “upstander” behavior that include considerations of the safety of students who intervene on the behalf of other students. | |
| Whole School or Universal Social Skills Training | Assertiveness training for victims of bullying |
| Infusing bully-victim-witness learning objectives & activities into existing curriculum, morning meetings and advisories | Curriculum restricted to single subject or class |
| Consciousness raising about bully-victim-witness behavior | Exclusive focus on rules |
| Focus on human rights | Rights of passage orientation |
| Modeling supportive relationships: on the importance of being helpful “living examples” | Modeling intimidation or humiliation |
| Focus on role of witness as well as bullies and victims | Exclusive focus on bullies or victims |
| Educator-parent-mental health professional partnerships that support the (i) identification of students who chronically ‘fall into’ the role of bully and/or victim and (ii) addressing the needs of the student who do so. | |
| Stakeholder Involvement | |
| Ongoing Efforts, Active Task Force or Coordinating Committee | Time-limited activities or one-time special events |
| Advocacy with School Board | Exclusive Focus on Teachers or Principal |
| Training which includes an ongoing commitment to pay attention to adult as well as student bullying | Assumption of Knowledge |
| Coordination with Parents | Parents as Passive Partners |
| Active Role for Students | Passive Role for Students |
| Best Practices | |
| School leaders support the development of a ‘shared vision’ about ‘what kind of school do we want and need ours to be?’ | One person or a small group of educators focus on bully prevention |
| Clear, committed, long term leadership from the Principal driven. | Short term, fragmented bully prevention efforts which may or many not be strongly and deeply supported by the Principal and/or all staff. |
| School-wide interventions that support safer, more supportive, engaging and helpfully challenging norms, expectations, beliefs, learning/teaching and leadership that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive sanctions, positive behavioral supports; • Dissemination of simple rules and rights • Graduated sanctions • Consistently enforced & fair rules • Safe ways to report bullying as well as recognizing upstander behavior with focus on helping to make the school safer for all • Focus on all forms of bullying, including most prevalent types | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of systemic thinking and interventions • Shaming bullies • Complicated policies • Zero tolerance policies • Selective enforcement of rules and unreasonable rules • Unclear messages about reporting, associating reporting with snitching • Exclusive focus on physical/verbal bullying |
| Peer support networks | Stigmatizing victims via specialized efforts |
| Small group (classroom; Advisory) interventions that promote awareness and skill building that supports upstander behavior, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students about bullying, rules, and the role of the witness: bystander or upstander | Lectures or Preaching Removing victim from familiar classroom setting with friends to a new setting without consideration of removing and/or changing bullying behavior. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, emotional and civic learning: for students and the adults! • Creating a climate for learning • Providing opportunities for students to develop upstander skills and dispositions (role plays, excises, student led activities) • Infusing bully-victim-witness themes into the curriculum and life of the classroom <p>Morning and afternoon meetings that promote relationships among students build confidence and explore concepts, ideas and thoughts about safety and caring.</p> | <p>Punishing victim for defensive behavior when being bullied. (No tolerance policy)</p> |
| <p>School-home-community partnerships that are meaningful, engaged and reflect ongoing learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three essential questions that provide the foundation for school climate standards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Our vision: what kind of school do we want? 2) Policies/rules to support the vision 3) Practices that actualize our vision and policies | <p>School-home-community partnerships that are not meaningful, engaging and reflective of ongoing learning</p> <p>Partnerships that are isolated and not necessarily connected to the vision, policies and implementation of vision and policies. (disjointed)</p> |
| <p>Focus on strengths</p> | <p>Focus on deficits</p> |
| <p>Individual considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing and addressing students who chronically ‘fall into’ the role of bully and/or victim • On the importance of parent-educator-mental health partnerships • On-the-spot interventions and follow-up <p>Paring the victim with a caring adult in the building.</p> | <p>School-based mental health professionals that tend to react to problems and only focus on diagnosis and treatment of problems.</p> <p>Interventions may be postponed until the next day or even later.</p> |
| <p>Measurement and Assessment</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>An initial and comprehensive assessment:</u> School climate surveys that assess how students, parents and school personnel perceive the range of safety-related, relationship-related, teaching/learning related and environmental factors that define the quality and character of school life; • <u>Follow up assessments:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Student led participatory action research | <p>Narrow focus on rates of physical violence</p> <p>Assumptions about what works</p> |

(This grid builds on Dr. Michael B. Greene, Principal, Greene Consulting 2010 “Bullying Prevention: What Works, What Doesn’t Work”. I am grateful to Dr. Greene for this work. I am grateful to Joan Dawson, Ph.D. for her contributions to this work.)

Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D.

- President, National School Climate Center: Educating Minds and Hearts.....Because the Three Rs are Not Enough
- Adjunct Professor in Psychology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University
- Adjunct Professor in Education, School of Professional Studies, City University of New York