

JPS 2017 School Climate Survey Summary

Jackson Public School District

March 17, 2017

EVERY SCHOLAR • EVERY DAY



READY FOR LIFE

The Jackson Public School District conducted a School Climate Survey in January 2017, and analyzed the JPS School Climate Data to determine trends and make recommendations for interventions and overall positive improvement in school climate district-wide.

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JPS District Early Warning System Committee

- Dr. Margrit Wallace, Chief Academic Officer, Student Academic & Behavior Support
- Amanda Thomas, Director, Multi-Tiered System of Support
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JPS MISSION

“Our *mission*, we are Building Stronger Schools together to have Every Scholar, Every Day, Ready for Life.”

JPS VISION

“The *vision* of Jackson Public Schools is to have high-achieving schools for high-achieving scholars that are physically and emotionally safe.”

Jackson Public School District Goals

- Goal 1: Increase Academic Performance and Achievement
- Goal 2: Provide Safe School Climate
- Goal 3: Maintain Fiscal Integrity & Accountability of Resources

Research Background: Importance of School Climate

The School Climate Council (2007) defines school climate as “norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe” (p.4). School climate is a product of the inter- personal relationships among students, families, teachers, support staff, and administrators. Positive school climate is fostered through a shared vision of respect and engagement across the educational system. Emphasis is also placed on the collective sense of safety and care for the school’s physical environment. A related concept is school culture, which refers to the “unwritten rules and expectations” among the school staff (Gruenert, 2008).

A positive school climate is recognized as an important target for school reform and improving behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for students (Thapa et al., 2012). Specifically, schools with positive climates tend to have less student discipline problems (Thapa et al., 2013) and aggressive and violent behavior (Gregory et al., 2010), and fewer high school suspensions (Lee et al., 2011). Research has also shown associations between school climate and lower levels of alcohol and drug use (LaRusso et al., 2008), bullying (Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2009), and harassment (Attar-Schwartz, 2009). In addition to reducing students’ exposure to risk factors, school climate can promote positive youth development. For example, a favorable school climate has been linked with higher student academic motivation and engagement (Eccles et al., 1993), as well as elevated psychological well-being (Ruus et al., 2007; Shochet et al., 2006). Not surprisingly, schools promoting engaging learning environments tend to have fewer student absences (Gottfredson et al., 2005) and improvements in academic achievement across grade levels (Brand et al., 2003; Stewart, 2008).

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A positive school climate also has benefits for teachers and education support professionals (Bradshaw, Waasdorp et al., 2010). Research shows that when educators feel supported by their administration, they report higher levels of commitment and more collegiality (Singh & Billingsley, 1998). Likewise, schools where educators openly communicate with one another, feel supported by their peers and administration, and establish strong student-educator relationships tend to have better student academic and behavioral outcomes (Brown & Medway, 2007). School climate efforts also have the potential of increasing job satisfaction and teacher retention, which is a major concern given the high rate of turnover in the field of education (Boe et al., 2008; Kaiser, 2011).

Once a school has measured the school climate and identified areas for improvement (e.g., increased supervision in hallways, professional development on cultural diversity), educators need to consider ways to change the school norms, values, and expectations. Integrated and multi-tiered models are often the most effective approaches (Greenberg et al., 2001; O'Connell et al., 2009). Although there is no one-size-fits-all program, there are common features of evidence-based practices related to school climate enhancement.

- ✓ Multi-tiered framework. Although the use of a single, targeted program may change specific problem behaviors in the school (e.g., bullying), there is growing interest in the use of multi-component approaches which provide a continuum of programs and support services in order to both target behavior problems and address the broader social ecology of the school.
- ✓ Communication across partners. Research indicates that prevention programs are not only more effective, but are more likely to be sustained over time if the entire school community (students, staff, and administrators) contributes to developing the program (Greenberg et al., 2003; Rigby, 2007).
- ✓ Assess school climate from multiple perspectives. Parents, students, and staff often differ in their perceptions of the school climate (Bradshaw et al., 2009; Waasdorp et al., 2011). While some may debate which perspective is more accurate, it is important to understand multiple viewpoints on school climate, including areas of convergence and divergence.
- ✓ Data-based decision making. In order to effectively address the emotional and behavioral needs of a school, several different types of data need to be utilized. These data include, but are not limited to: student, parent and staff surveys, discipline data (e.g., office discipline referrals, suspensions), school-wide observational data, as well as school demographics (e.g., enrollment, student mobility). This information can inform decisions about implementation of universal, selective, and targeted prevention programs.

JPS 2017 School Climate Survey

During the first three weeks of second semester, all Jackson Public School District school-level staff were invited to participate in a school climate survey to help JPS improve student and staff relationships, learning conditions, and the overall school environments. These measurements of school climate would provide district and school staff with the necessary data to identify district and school needs, set goals, and track progress toward improvement focused on increasing positive school climate and culture.

The Jackson Public School District has been involved in a comprehensive reform effort focused on implementing culturally responsive approaches to design and maintain positive school climates. A

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survey of positive school climate was conducted beginning January 6 and closing on February 13 throughout the district at all school sites. This survey included administrators, certified teaching staff, non-certified classroom staff, and non-certified non-instructional staff in all schools in the District. 76.53% of school staff participated in the web-based survey.

Teachers, non-certified instructional staff, non-instructional staff and administrators were surveyed on a web-based platform using statements that allowed respondents to scale their responses using a rating scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” This allowed for strength and assertion in responses and provided a means to quantify responses for analysis and problem solving.

All school staff were anonymously surveyed using a research-based School Climate Survey. The questions on the survey were divided into eight categories that included the dimensions and indicators that have been identified as characteristics of a positive school climate.

1. Academic Expectations
2. Safety and Respect
3. Communication
4. Engagement
5. Attitude and Culture
6. Discipline/Bullying/Discrimination/Sexual Harassment
7. Reporting Bullying/Discrimination/Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault

What we do, how we speak, and what opportunities we provide our staff, students, and communities all affect the climate of our schools.” ~ Sean Slade

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Overall, the responses to the School Climate Survey conducted in January 2017, were favorable. Most school climate dimensions received positive ratings with over half of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the positive school climate statements in the survey with the exception of the dimension of Safety and Respect.

Over 85% of the statements on the survey received ratings of strongly agree or agree with 75% or more of respondents, and 29% of statements on the survey received ratings of strongly agree or agree with 90% or more of all participants.

Overwhelmingly, all survey participants expressed confidence in their ability to appropriately report bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

Only 14% of positive school climate statements received strongly disagree or disagree responses. Specific challenge (below 25% positive response) characteristics from each school climate dimension are addressed in the table on Figure 4. 7 of 63 survey statements also indicated significantly high rates (40% or more) of neutral ratings. These characteristics are underlined in Figure 4. Ratings of neutral cannot

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be explained without further inquiry of participants reasons for indicating neutral opinions with those statements, but did attribute to low ratings of strongly agree or agree in those characteristics.

The District Early Warning System Committee additionally analyzed these statements and made recommendations for action (See Figure 4). The District Executive Team will also further analyze this data to confirm necessary improvement strategies to include in an action plan as part of the ongoing District positive school climate reform initiative.

These improvement strategies and progress monitoring criteria included in the action plan will be communicated to stakeholders throughout the District to promote support, professional development opportunities, and allocation of necessary resources.

School Climate Survey	Strengths	Challenges
	Survey Results Figure 1; Figure 2; Figure 3	Figure 1; Figure 2; Figure 4
	Commendations/Recommendations Figure 3; Page 8-9	Figure 4; Page 10-12

“Research shows that a positive school climate directly impacts telling indicators for success such as higher student achievement, lower dropout rates, decreased incidences of violence, and increased teacher retention.” ~ National School Climate Center

JPS School Climate Survey, January 2017

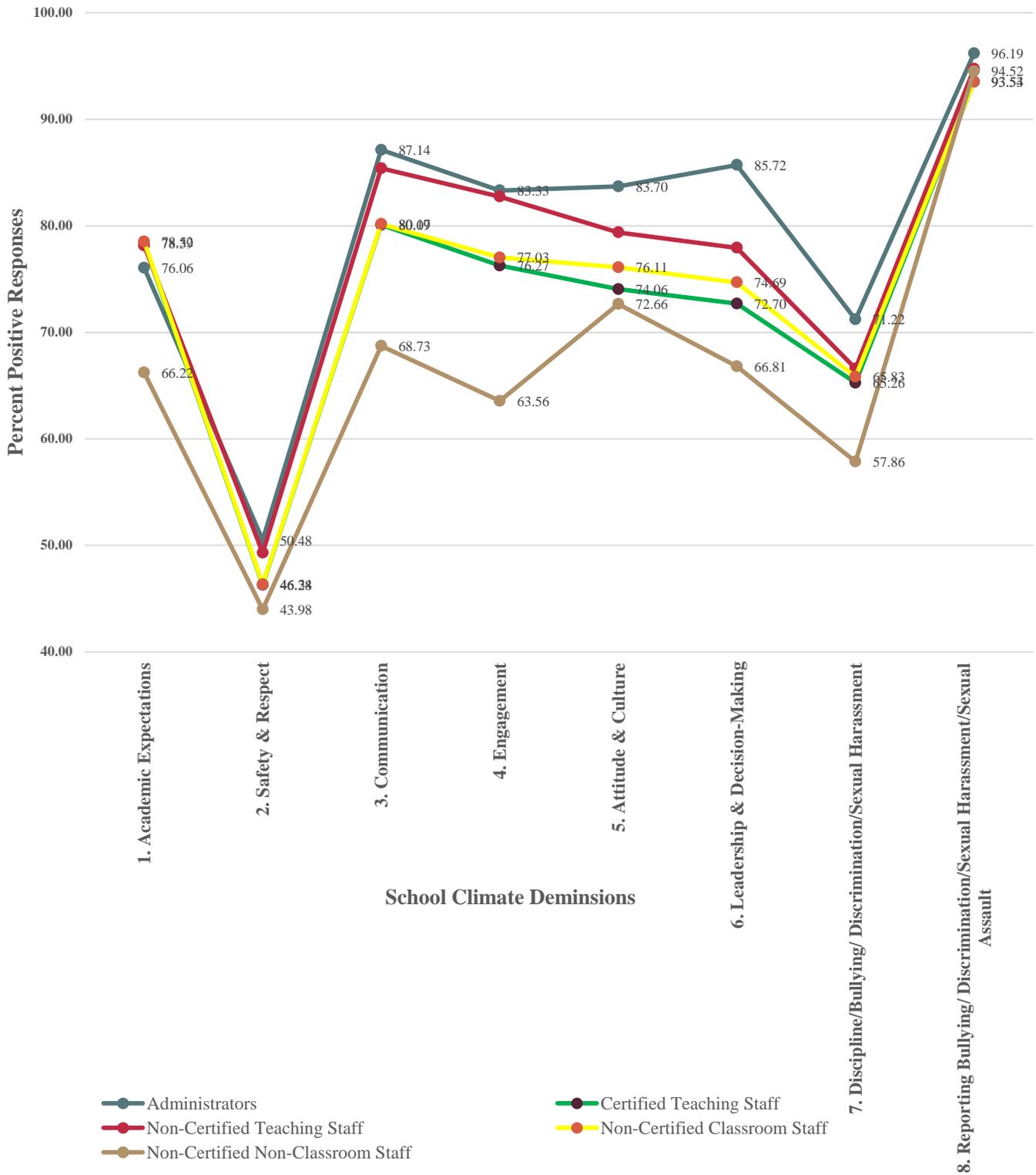


Figure 1: JPS School Climate Survey, January 2017 Summary

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School Climate Survey Dimension Summary

	Administrators	Certified Teaching Staff	Non-Certified Teaching Staff	Non-Certified Classroom Staff	Non-Certified Non-Classroom Staff	MEAN
1. Academic Expectations	76.06%	78.39%	78.16%	78.52%	66.22%	75.47%
2. Safety & Respect	50.48%	46.28%	49.30%	46.34%	43.98%	47.28%
3. Communication	87.14%	80.09%	85.41%	80.17%	68.73%	80.31%
4. Engagement	83.33%	76.27%	82.75%	77.03%	63.56%	76.59%
5. Attitude & Culture	83.70%	74.06%	79.39%	76.11%	72.66%	77.18%
6. Leadership & Decision-Making	85.72%	72.70%	77.94%	74.69%	66.81%	75.57%
7. Discipline/Bullying/Discrimination/Sexual Harassment	71.22%	65.26%	66.60%	65.83%	57.86%	65.35%
8. Reporting Bullying/Discrimination/Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault	96.19%	93.54%	94.74%	93.53%	94.52%	94.50%

Figure 2: JPS School Climate Survey Dimension Summary

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Strengths – Characteristics with 90% or above positive responses were considered strengths.

Characteristics	Commendations:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If I witnessed someone else being bullied, discriminated against, or sexually harassed, I would report it. I know how to report bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and/or assault to school officials. If I were bullied, discriminated against, or sexually harassed, I would report it. I am aware that resources are available in the community to assist me if I, or someone I know, has been a victim of bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and/or assault. Appropriate school conduct and procedures are taught to students along with other skills. 	<p>The overwhelming majority of all school staff reported being able to respond and report bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, as well they are aware of community resources to assist staff or students involved in these actions.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I believe that school officials will respond to my report of bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and/or assault. There is an adult at school that students and teachers can talk to about bullying, discrimination, or harassment if they witnessed or experienced it. An atmosphere of safety and respect exists in our school. 	<p>This is a major component of PBIS. A major focus on implementing PBIS with fidelity has been in place for the past four years. This year every school has had PBIS Site audit by the MTSS Rapid Response Team</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of all school staff reported being able to respond and report bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, as well they are aware of community resources to assist staff or students involved in these actions.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I know how to respond promptly and appropriately if I witness or I am informed of a safety related incident by a student or staff member. Disciplinary procedures are clear and implemented in a fair and consistent manner. 	<p>Over 75% of all school staff strongly agreed or agreed that an atmosphere of safety and respect existed in their schools. 92% Administrators, 76% Teachers, 84% Non – Certified Classroom Staff, 79% Non-Certified, Non-Teaching Staff</p> <p>All schools have been involved in Crisis Management planning and training.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I take responsibility for what I am expected to do in and out of the classroom. The principal communicates clear instructional and behavioral goals to teachers and students. I feel confident about my abilities to deter sexual or racial harassment between a student and teacher. 	<p>This is a major component of PBIS. A major focus on implementing PBIS with fidelity has been in place for the past four years. This year every school has had PBIS Site audit by the MTSS Rapid Response Team</p> <p>91% Administrators, 97% Certified Teachers, 95% Non-Certified Classroom Staff, 92% Administrators, 86% Teachers, 89% Non –Certified Classroom Staff, 81% Non-Certified, Non-Teaching Staff</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of all school staff reported being able to respond and report bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, as well they are aware of community resources to assist staff or students involved in these actions.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> My principal encourages me to perform at the highest level of professional practice. 	<p>90% Administrators, 91% Teachers, 90% Non –Certified Classroom Staff, 81% Non-Certified, Non-Teaching Staff</p>

Figure 3: JPS School Climate Survey Strengths

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Strengths – Characteristics with 90% or above positive responses were considered strengths

Characteristics

Commendations:

15. I understand what my principal expects me to do in and out of the classroom.	91% Administrators, 92% Teachers, 89% Non –Certified Classroom Staff
16. Appropriate safety principles are taught and practiced by staff and students.	All schools have been involved in Crisis Management planning and training. 95% Administrators, 87% Teachers, 89% Non –Certified Classroom Staff, 88% Non-Certified, Non-Teaching Staff
17. Teachers know who they can go to, to discuss and plan for instruction and/or classroom management.	91% Administrators, 85% Teachers, 84% Non –Certified Classroom Staff, 76% Non-Certified, Non-Teaching Staff
18. I feel confident about my abilities to deter bullying, discrimination, or sexual harassment among students.	90% Administrators, 80% Teachers, 78% Non –Certified Classroom Staff, 62% Non-Certified, Non-Teaching Staff Non-certified, Non-Teaching Staff and students should continue to be provided professional development on effect strategies to identify and decrease bullying, discrimination, or sexual harassment among students.

Figure 3: JPS School Climate Survey Strengths

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Challenges – Characteristics below 50% positive responses were considered challenges.

Characteristic	Recommendations:
1. <u>Students at this school fight a lot.</u>	<p>Similar to planning for tiers of academic interventions, the student/students presenting with social, emotional or behavioral concerns may benefit from the MTSS/PBIS/Professional Learning Community/Grade Level Department Team) process. Based upon the specific concerns, the team should develop strategic interventions ranging from environmental and instructional accommodations to instruction of specific skills that are lacking or need improvement. The teams will make decisions pertaining to individual students based on the analysis of data to develop an Intervention Plan and coordinate targeted interventions. The team will also decide the tier in which the interventions will occur and conduct appropriate progress monitoring.</p> <p>The district and school MTSS/PBIS Committee should analyze school discipline data monthly to determine where fighting occurs and which students are involved in fighting and follow through on intervention outcomes.</p>
2. <u>Some teachers are held to a different standard than others.</u>	<p>The knowledge and skills that teachers must master to be effective for all students in our schools are complex and ever-changing. We know that teaching is like rocket science: complicated, collaborative, and capable of taking our students to places yet to be explored. Just as students develop expertise and master skills at different rates, so do those professionals that provide this rigorous instruction.</p> <p>Administrators should provide ongoing professional development and support for staff that is responsive their needs as professionals.</p> <p>Administrators should differentiate professional growth experiences for staff in the buildings as much as possible, while holding all staff accountable following District approved policies and procedures.</p>
3. <u>There is a high incidence of verbal, cyber or physical bullying and/or acts of discrimination in the school.</u>	<p>Every school should explicitly and purposefully address these behaviors. All students, school staff, and parents need to be able to proactively address bullying and/or acts of discrimination in school.</p> <p>This should be planned through school counseling services and all school administrators and counselors should develop an accountability system to monitor progress toward decreasing these behaviors among students and staff as well.</p> <p>See attachment: Bullying: What Schools, Parents and Students Can Do</p>

Figure 4: JPS School Climate Survey Challenges

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Challenges – Characteristics below 50% positive responses were considered challenges.

Characteristic	Recommendations:
4. <u>I have heard another teacher or adult in the school make disparaging remarks about another teacher or group of teachers.</u>	<p>Negative behaviors should be identified through an anonymous survey. The results should be shared with all staff. Expectations for appropriate staff behavior should be communicated to all staff by administrators. This should include what disciplinary actions will be taken for staff who display inappropriate behaviors in the future. Staff should be provided professional development on how to effectively and proactively deal with inappropriate staff behaviors. Administrators should deal appropriately with staff inappropriate behaviors.</p> <p>Provide staff at all levels Bystander Professional Development that focuses on what appears to be possible peer influence effecting professional behavior that is not aligned with Staff ethics or professional expectations. In instances of harmful or violent words, actions, or behaviors, each person has a choice to ignore or accept or intervene to address it behavior.</p>
5. <u>Students at my school have felt bullied, discriminated against or sexually harassed by other teachers.</u>	<p>A schoolwide focus on increased supervision and the promotion of prosocial behavior.</p> <p>Intensive, sustained training for students, teachers, school staff and community members.</p> <p>Individualized intervention for students at heightened risk.</p> <p>The promotion of respect for individual differences and an overall norm of tolerance</p> <p>Staff should proactively recognize conditions which may lead to bullying or discrimination against students and act appropriately. This type of behavior should be immediately reported to supervisors.</p> <p>Staff should deal with students consistently and fairly.</p> <p>All staff should work collaboratively with others for the welfare of students and the school.</p> <p>Discipline problems should be resolved in accordance with law, school board polices, and district and school procedures.</p> <p>Provide staff at all levels Bystander Professional Development that focuses on what appears to be possible peer influence effecting professional behavior that is not aligned with staff ethics or professional expectations. In instances of harmful or violent words, actions, or behaviors, each person has a choice to ignore or accept or intervene to address it behavior.</p>
6. I have heard a student use a slur, epithet or other derogatory putdown.	<p>A schoolwide focus on increased supervision and the promotion of prosocial behavior.</p> <p>Intensive, sustained training for students, teachers, school staff and community members.</p> <p>Specific activities should be provided to promote respect and appreciation for diversity. Students should also be involved in activities that promote their self-respect and development of pride in who they are as essential members of a broader interdependent community where all members are respected and valued.</p> <p>See attachment: <i>Six Lessons from Jena Every School and Educator Should Take To Heart</i></p>

Figure 4: JPS School Climate Survey Challenges

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Challenges – Characteristics below 50% positive responses were considered challenges.

Characteristic	Recommendations:
7. I have heard a student tease or ridicule another student.	<p>Schoolwide focus on developing positive prosocial relationships among all students is essential. This type of behavior will not go away without specific support for developing the skills necessary for each student to successfully navigate the social-emotional web that school provides.</p> <p>Restorative Practices are effective in not only establishing standards for communication, but promoting the development of essential communication and social emotional skills and provides meaningful opportunities to resolve differences. Students learn how to identify their needs and how to appropriately get their emotional needs met. They are empowered with skills to represent their needs effectively. See <i>Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles</i> attachment</p>
8. <u>It would be difficult to sneak a weapon into this school.</u>	<p>Creating a safe place where students can learn and grow depends on a partnership among students, parents, teachers, and other community institutions to prevent school violence. Purposeful planning and communicating those safety plans to all stakeholders provides a greater sense of safety.</p> <p>Schools should also take an in-depth look at what is being done to prevent weapons from entering schools and the safety measures that are helping to keep students safe while they get an education.</p> <p>Each school should evaluate their school's safety objectively. Set targets for improvement. Be honest about crime problems and work toward bettering the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop consistent disciplinary policies, good security procedures, and response plans for emergencies.• Train school personnel in conflict resolution, problem solving, drug prevention, crisis intervention cultural sensitivity, classroom management, and counseling skills.• Make sure they can recognize trouble signs and identify potentially violent students. Bullied students may turn to violence to be heard.• Encourage students to talk about concerns about what's going on in their school, home, and neighborhood. Listen carefully to what they say.• If a student makes a threat of violence, take him or her seriously. Address the problem immediately and act to prevent a potential conflict.• When something violent and frightening happens at school or in the neighborhood, take time to talk about it. Discuss the consequences and get students to think about what other choices besides violence might have been available. Get help from trained counselors if necessary.• Work with students, parents, law enforcement, local government, and community-based groups to develop wider-scope crime prevention efforts.

Figure 4: JPS School Climate Survey Challenges

Resources for Schools

Six Lessons from Jena Every School and Educator Should Take To Heart

BY JENNIFER HOLLADAY

Don't ignore obvious signs of trouble

In Jena, a black student approached a vice-principal and asked, "Can we sit under that tree?" On campus, it was known as the "White Tree" — a place where white students historically gathered. The principal said people could sit wherever they liked. It was an appropriate response, yet one that overlooked the core issue: Why did students feel like they needed to ask for permission? What did the very question reveal about the school's racial climate?

Examine your school's climate

You may think your school is "no Jena High" — but do you know for sure? Are there divisions about which you're unaware?

In a survey conducted in 2005 by Teaching Tolerance, the National Education Association and the Civil Rights Project, the vast majority of teachers nationally said their schools were largely free of racial or ethnic tensions.

Students, however, paint a very different picture.

One in four report being victimized in racial or ethnic incidents in a typical school year, and race and ethnicity aren't the only lines of division, either. Seventy percent of female students say they've been sexually harassed at school; 75 percent of gay students report hearing anti-gay slurs frequently or often at school, and more than a third say they've been physically harassed.

Take bias incidents seriously

After a few black students sat under the "White Tree," three white students hung nooses from it. Jena's white school superintendent, Roy Breithaupt, later told the *Chicago Tribune*, "Adolescents play pranks. I don't think it was a threat against anybody."

In truth, the hanging of nooses was no youthful prank; it was a bias incident connoting racial lynchings. As Caseplia Bailey, whose son Robert is among the Jena Six, told Britain's *Observer*, the act "meant the KKK, it meant ... 'We're going to kill you, we're gonna' hang you 'til you die.'"

By their very nature, bias incidents intend to demean or instill fear in those targeted, and schools must address them quickly, consistently and effectively.

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In highly charged bias incidents, schools should hold forums for educators, students, parents and community members and issue regular updates about the incident, describing what happened, why the incident was unacceptable and how the school has responded thus far. Schools should seek input about ways the school, students, parents and community can work together to resolve the underlying problems.

Use bias incidents as teachable moments

Ask teachers to set aside class time to allow students to reflect on what has happened. Because students can influence peer behavior, ask them to write down suggestions for preventing further incidents and promoting respect and to discuss their suggestions in small groups. Because bias incidents often involve the use of bigoted speech (slurs or epithets), conduct lessons to empower students to make respectful language choices.

Bridge divisions in the school — and the community

Organize school-wide events to help students cross the boundaries that may divide them and learn about respectful behavior. Teaching Tolerance's Mix It Up program (www.mixitup.org) and No Name-Calling Week (Jan. 21-25, 2008, www.nonamecallingweek.org) are excellent initiatives with which to start.

Schools don't exist in isolation, however. If tensions exist in a school, they probably exist in the larger community, too. Whether through structured dialogue programs like those offered by the Study Circles Resource Center (www.studycircles.org) or other social justice programs, like the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crs/>), the events in Jena serve as call to each of us to explore what divides us — and what can unite us.

Provide forums for meaningful discussion

When bias incidents occur, schools must open lines of communication, not shut down debate. In Jena:

After black students gathered around the "White Tree" to protest the school's response to the noose-hanging, the principal called a school assembly and told students it was time to put the incident behind them. The district attorney spoke next, flanked by police officers, warning students: "With a stroke of my pen, I can make your lives disappear" — the equivalent of throwing gasoline on a fire.

When black parents showed up at a school board meeting, they were not allowed to speak. When they showed up again, board members allowed a spokesperson to address them, but then quickly moved on to other business without addressing the parents' concerns.

Bullying: What Schools, Parents and Students Can Do

By Franklin Schargel

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Can you remember the schoolyard jingle that went, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”? Obviously that was not and is not the truth. The death of Rebecca Ann Sedwick, a 12-year-old 7th grader who took her life last month in Polk County Florida proves that words are capable of harming vulnerable young children. Both physical and nonphysical forms can and do happen anywhere in the school, on the way to and from school, and even online. “Over 13 million American kids will be bullied this year, making it the most common form of violence experience by young people in the nation.” (Hirsch, 2012 BULLY (Motion Picture, Weinstein Company)

According to the FBI, “Bullying remains one of the largest problems in schools, with the percentage of students reportedly bullied at least once per week steadily increasing since 1999.” Additionally, cyberbullying has become more rampant and has contributed to the suicides of multiple children. The Internet has unleashed meanness to a degree unseen before. Thanks to the accessibility to the Internet and the affordability of new technology, bullies now have multiple ways to harass their victims. The current generation has the added ability to use technology to expand their reach and the extent of their attacks exponentially.

The most susceptible are also the most vulnerable. A recent report from the Interactive Autism Network found that 63 percent of children with autism have been bullied, over three times as much as those without the disorder.

Most school bullying takes place in areas that are less supervised by adults, such as on the school bus, in the student cafeteria, in restrooms, hallways and locker rooms. Schools need to create an action plan to address these spots by additional adults or using security techniques including closed circuit cameras. They can also establish anonymous reporting tools like suggestion boxes or cyberbullying hotlines where students can send real time text messages or leave a voice mail on the school website.

What Schools Can do to Prevent Bullying

School-Level and Administrative Interventions

Increase reporting of bullying. Assess the awareness and the scope of the bullying problems at school through student and staff surveys. To address the problem of students’ resistance to reporting bullying, some schools have set up a bully hotline. Some schools use a “bully box”: Students drop a note in the box to alert teachers and administrators to problem bullies. Others have developed student questionnaires to determine the nature and extent of bullying problems in school.

- Establish a clear procedure to investigate reports of bullying.

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- Students and parents need to know that the school takes bullying seriously and will take any actions, including arrest to prevent its occurrence.
- Develop activities in less-supervised areas. In these areas (e.g., schoolyards, lunchrooms), trained supervisors spot bullying and initiate activities such as having roving personnel visit those locations, and having closed circuit television that limit opportunities for it.
- Reduce the amount of time students can spend unsupervised. Because much bullying occurs during the least supervised time (e.g., recess, lunch breaks, class changes), reducing the unsupervised amount of time available to students can reduce the amount of bullying.
- Stagger recess, lunch, and class-release times. This approach minimizes the number of bullies and victims present at one time, so supervisors have less trouble spotting bullying. However, supervisors must be mindful that most bullies are in the same grade as their victims.
- Monitor areas where bullying can be expected, such as bathrooms. Adult monitoring can increase the risk that bullies will get caught but may require increased staffing or trained volunteers.
- Assign bullies to a particular location or to particular chores during release times. This approach separates bullies from their intended victims. Some teachers give bullies constructive tasks such as tutoring other students, cleaning up trash, involved in sporting activities, to occupy them during release times.
- Post classroom signs prohibiting bullying and listing the consequences. This puts would-be bullies on notice and outlines the risks they are taking. Teachers, leaders, and staff must consistently enforce the rules for them to have meaning. Schools should post signs in each classroom and apply age-appropriate penalties.
- Have high-level school administrators inform late-enrolling students and their parents about the school's bullying policy. This removes any excuse new students have for bullying, puts parents on notice that the school takes bullying seriously, and stresses the importance the school places on countering it.
- Provide teachers with effective classroom-management training. To address bullying, schools should ensure that all teachers have effective classroom-management

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training. Because research suggests that classes containing students with behavioral, emotional, or learning problems have more bullies and victims, teachers in those classes may require additional, tailored training in spotting and handling bullying.

- Form of a bullying prevention coordinating committee (a small group of energetic teachers, administrators, counselors, and other school staff who plan and monitor school activities.) This committee should develop schoolwide rules and sanctions against bullying, systems to reinforce prosocial behavior, and events to raise school and community awareness about bullying.
- Hold teacher in-service days to review findings from student questionnaires or surveys, discuss bullying problems, and plan the school's violence prevention efforts.
- Schedule regular classroom meetings during which students and teachers engage in discussion, role-playing and artistic activities related to preventing bullying and other forms of violence among students.
- Encourage parent participation by establishing on-campus parent centers that recruit, coordinate, and encourage parents to take part in the educational process and volunteer to assist in school activities and projects.
- Ensure that your school has legally required policies and procedures for sexual, racial and gender discrimination. Make these procedures known to parents and students.
- Develop strategies to reward students for positive, inclusive behavior such as pizza parties, recognition reward, certificates

Teacher Interventions

- Provide classroom activities and discussions related to bullying and violence, including the harm that they cause and strategies to reduce their incidence. Involve students in establishing classroom rules against bullying and steps they can take if they see it happening. For example, students could work together to create the classroom signs mentioned previously.
- Teach cooperation by assigning projects that requires collaboration. Such cooperation teaches students how to compromise and how to assert without demanding. Take care to vary grouping of participants and to monitor the treatment of and by participants in each group.

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- Take immediate action when bullying is observed. All teachers must let children know they care and will not allow anyone to be mistreated. By taking immediate action and dealing directly with the bully, adults support both the victim and the witnesses.
- Confront bullies in private. Challenging bullies in front of their peers may actually enhance their status and lead to further aggression.
- Avoid attempts to mediate a bullying situation. The difference in power between victims and bullies may cause victims to feel further victimized by the process or to believe they are somehow at fault.
- Refer both victims and aggressors to counseling when appropriate.
- Provide protection for bullying victims when necessary. Such protection may include creating a buddy system whereby students have a particular friend or older buddy on whom they can depend and with whom they share class schedule information and plans for the school day.
- Notify parents of both victims and bullies when confrontations occur, and seek to resolve the problem expeditiously at school.
- Listen receptively to parents who report bullying, and investigate reported circumstances so immediate and appropriate school action may be taken.

What Schools Can Do To Discourage Bullying on a School Bus

1. Train the staff (including bus drivers) on what to do if they encounter bullying either in school, in-route to school or around the school.
 1. Create enforceable rules and inform students and parents of the consequences if children or parents commit bullying. Parents at school games should not be permitted to scream at coaches or referees; if they do they should be evicted. If necessary, ban their attendance at all school events. Rules that are created need to be enforceable and enforced.
 2. Rules should be posted in the school, sent home to parents and put in community newspapers so that everyone is aware.

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3. All school buses should have closed circuit televisions so if violence or bullying take place, school administrators and law enforcement people would be aware.
4. An outreach to law enforcement should be made so that law enforcement people are available at the beginning and end of the school day.
5. If fights break out on the bus, consider whether law enforcement personnel should be notified and whether arrests should be made.

Cyberbullying

The word cyberbullying didn't exist a decade ago, yet the problem is pervasive today thanks to the use of social media websites like, Twitter, and Facebook. Cyberbullying is the repeated use of technology to harass, humiliate or threaten. Mobile phones may be the most abused medium. Bullies send threatening or harassing text messages, often involving sex, sexual orientation, or race. Unwelcome sexual comments and threats of sexual abuse are often directed at girls. Boys are more often victims of homophobic harassment, regardless of their true sexual orientation. Racial slurs and threats of violence also are concerns. In one U.S. study 13 percent of students reported being called a hate-related name.

Email, websites, and screen names in chat rooms are masks for electronic bullies, who can attack without warning and with alarming persistence. Several examples of cyberbullying include:

- Taking humiliating pictures of another student and sharing them with others.
- Verbally abusing another student through texting.
- Spreading rumors about a student on Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace.
- Sending emails or instant messages to their victims.

The consequences of bullying can be serious. Victims' schoolwork often suffers. Some students have dropped out of school, been compelled to seek psychiatric help, and even committed suicide as a result of the distress caused by cyberbullies.

What Teachers and Administrators Can Do About Cyberbullying

1. Communicate. Keep everyone affected by electronic bullying informed. Filters for Internet content do not work for most cyber bullying, but helping students combat bullying on their own does. Peer-support and parent-involvement groups also can help.

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2. Encourage openness. Bullies thrive on secrecy, intimidation, and humiliation. They count on their victims' silence. Openness is a key to reducing or eliminating bullying. Urge students to talk to their parents and teachers.
3. Monitor email, Internet, and cell-phone use. Responsible adults should determine when students are mature enough to handle electronic communication — especially when such communication may include cyber-bullying content.
4. Hold bullies responsible. Electronic bullying is a punishable offense. When cyber bullies are identified, hold them accountable. Most schools have anti-harassment policies that should extend to electronic bullying.
5. Contact law enforcement personnel to give professional development training to school staff to look for how to identify cyberbullying.

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What Students Can Do About Cyberbullying

- Don't engage the bully. Most bullies are looking for a reaction from their victims. Lack of a response can help to extinguish the bullying behaviors.
- Don't share secrets
- Protect your own privacy. Do not send pictures of yourself on the Internet.
- Think about the consequences.
- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times and descriptions what the cyberbully says.
- Report instances of cyberbullying to your parent.

What Students Can Do To Stop Bullying

Students may not know what to do when they observe a classmate being bullied or experience such victimization themselves. Classroom discussions and activities may help students develop a variety of appropriate actions that they can take when they witness or experience such victimization. For instance, depending on the situation and their own level of comfort, students can do the following:

- Seek immediate help from an adult and report bullying and victimization incidents to school personnel
- Speak up and/or offer support to the victim when they see him or her being bullied (e.g., picking up the victim's books and handing them to him or her)
- Privately support those being hurt those being hurt with words of kindness or condolence
- Express disapproval of bullying behavior by not joining in the laughter, teasing, or spreading of rumors or gossip
- Attempt to defuse problem situations either single-handedly or in a group (e.g., by taking the bully aside and asking him or her to "cool it")

Things parents can do if they believe their child is being bullied

1. Talk to your child about what happened. Listen to the whole story without interrupting. Be calm and validate what is being said. Remind your child that it is normal to feel upset but it is never all right to be bullied. Ask your child what he/she would like to happen, before you make any suggestions.
2. Don't expect your child to solve things on their own
3. Deal with each incident consistently. Never ignore or downplay complaints about bullying.
4. Keep a log of the incidents, where the bullying took place, who was involved, how frequently, if anyone witnessed it. Do not attempt to confront the person or their family yourself.
5. Contact the school. Find out if the school has an anti-bullying policy. Find out if the school is aware of the bullying and whether anything is being done to address the situation. Make an appointment to speak to a school counselor or school administrator.

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6. If your child asks to stay at home from school, explain that it won't help and it may make things worse.
7. Discuss bullying at school board meetings and with other parents (i.e. PTA).

Schools need to assertively confront this problem and take any instance of bullying seriously. Addressing and preventing bullying requires the participation of all major school constituencies, school leaders, teachers, parents, and students. By taking organized schoolwide measures and providing individuals with the strategies to counteract bullying schools can reduce the instances of bullying and be better prepared to address it when it happens.

LESSON PLAN: CREATING AN ANTI-SLUR POLICY

OVERVIEW: Students work collaboratively to develop an anti-slur policy for their classroom. They consider the categories of name-calling and types of behavior that should be addressed by the policy. They next think about measures for preventing and responding appropriately to name-calling in school, and draw up a draft policy. Students are encouraged to share their class policy with school officials, to learn about the school anti-slur policy (if one exists) and to help educate others in the school about their efforts to reduce name-calling.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to explain the importance of policies, particularly those that address name-calling
- Students will be able to develop a policy that reflects observed needs
- Students will enact the policy they have devised
- Students will develop and implement a school-wide public education program

AGE/EXPERIENCE LEVEL: Grades 6-8

TIME: 90 minutes or two class periods

MATERIALS: Chart paper/markers; pens; Student handouts: *Creating an Anti-Slur Policy for Your Classroom and Sample Anti-Slur Policy*

PROCEDURE:

PART 1—INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)

Suggest to students that we are all accustomed to participating in a school community where we are able, for the most part, to speak freely. We can talk about our political views in class discussions, criticize school policies through student government, and express our interests during clubs all without being penalized. Ask students if there are circumstances under which they feel our words should be bound by rules and consequences in school. Are there times when words can go too far and when students deserve protection from those words? List student responses on the board and discuss them for a few minutes.

Point out that we have all been on the receiving end of name-calling or hurtful language that has, to some degree, compromised our feelings of safety and security in school. Ask students to share examples of times when name-calling has occurred and there were no apparent protections from

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it. If your students have participated in the *Name-Calling in Our School* lesson, they may want to share some of their observations (making sure not to divulge the names or identities of actual students). Ask students to consider what type of interventions or protections, if any, they feel should be put in place in response to such incidents.

PART 2—CREATING AN ANTI-SLUR POLICY (1 HOUR 15 MINUTES)

Tell students that implementing an “anti-slur” policy is one way to create an environment in which expectations about language are clear and there are some protections against name-calling and verbal bullying. Divide the class into groups of about four students each. (If your students do not have the experience to work productively in small groups, you may want to do this as a large group.) Distribute copies of the handout, *Creating an Anti-Slur Policy for Your Classroom*.

This worksheet breaks the process of developing an anti-slur policy into several clear steps:

- Students are asked to list the types of name-calling that are most common in their experience— not the slurs themselves, just the category they fit into, for example names based on people’s religion, appearance or race.
- Students are asked to think about the different types of behaviors associated with name- calling and the specific ways in which negative speech is carried out, for example through teasing or rumors.
- Students are asked to identify strategies for preventing disrespectful speech before it becomes a problem.
- Students are asked to brainstorm fair and realistic consequences for those who intentionally disrespect others.
- Students are asked to identify safe and confidential ways to report incidents and get help.
- When groups have completed their discussions, have them share back to the entire class and create a master list that captures all of their ideas. After class, these ideas can be written up in a narrative form either by the teacher or a small group of student volunteers. They can use the handout, *Sample Anti-Slur Policy*, as a guide. The policy can then be posted prominently in the classroom and signed by all students so that it serves as a group agreement to stop name-calling and disrespectful language.

PART 3—FOLLOW-UP

Once students have created an anti-slur policy for the classroom, form a committee of volunteers to share it with the principal or another school administrator. Ask them to find out if there is a school-wide anti-slur policy already in existence. If not, students can work with the administration to include one in the school handbook. If your school already has an anti-slur policy, students can inquire about ways that teachers and students are educated about it each year. If no plan exists, students can work with teachers, counselors, and/or administrators to:

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Create a plan for making sure that every class reviews and discusses the policy

Make sure the policy is distributed to students and/or posted in places where they are likely to read it

Turn education about the policy into a media campaign by developing eye-catching posters with visuals and phrases that communicate important aspects of the policy, which can be displayed around the school.

CREATING AN ANTI-SLUR POLICY FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

When it comes to a game of kickball in the schoolyard or how to use science equipment in the lab, there are rules that everyone agrees to respect. So why not set some ground rules about the way in which we talk to one another? Name-calling, teasing and other kinds of verbal bullying hurt our feelings, get in the way of learning, and generally contribute to an unsafe school environment. Working in small groups, follow the steps below to develop an anti-slur policy or set of ground rules for your classroom that will help put a stop to disrespectful speech.

1. Think about the kinds of name-calling most frequently heard in your school. If your class has conducted the *Student Survey: Name-Calling and Verbal Bullying*, read carefully through the results. Below list the types of name-calling that are most common. Don't list the slurs themselves, just the category they fit into, for example names based on people's religion, appearance or race.
2. Think about the different types of behaviors associated with name-calling and hurtful language. Some of these behaviors are carried out purposely to put down others and some are unintentional. Below list the specific ways in which negative speech is carried out, for example through teasing or rumors.
3. What can be done to stop name-calling and disrespectful speech before it happens in your classroom or school? Think about who gets bullied, who does the bullying, where it usually happens, and the types of situations that commonly lead to disrespectful speech. Consider rules or routines that have helped you to feel safer in the past. Below brainstorm some strategies for preventing disrespectful speech before it becomes a problem.
4. Now brainstorm some fair and helpful responses to disrespectful speech. What should be the consequences for those who intentionally disrespect others? What if someone is unaware that his/her words are hurtful? What if disrespectful language is used generally, not against a specific person (for example, "Those shoes are so gay" or "That assignment is retarded")? Below list consequences that are specific, fair, and that can be easily carried out in your school. Think about consequences you have experienced in the past that actually made a difference.
5. Finally, list ways that targets of name-calling and bullying, or those who witness it,

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might safely and privately report incidents and get help. How can students get the support they need straightforwardly and without drawing unwanted attention or losing standing with their peers.

Now that you have done some thinking about the kinds of language that are most hurtful and ways to respond, write an “anti-slur policy” for your classroom or school. Your policy should be about one to two paragraphs long and include:

- A statement about why it is important to address disrespectful speech in school
- A list of the categories of disrespectful speech that are discouraged (e.g., names based on race or religion)
- A description of the types of behavior that are discouraged (e.g., rumors or threats)
- Practices that will be put in place to prevent disrespectful speech before it becomes a problem
- Consequences that may be enacted in response to instances of disrespectful speech
- Ways that students can safely and privately report incidents of bullying

SAMPLE ANTI-SLUR POLICY

The District takes very seriously incidents when students make remarks (slurs) against other students, families, staff members or members of the community. A “slur” is speech, for example, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, use of profanity or derogatory comments that refer to real or perceived ethnicity, national origin, immigrant status, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, manner of speech, or any other physical or cultural characteristics.

A “slur” also includes spreading rumors, jokes, notes, stories, drawings, pictures or gestures that make reference to real or perceived ethnicity, national origin, immigrant status, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, manner of speech, or any other physical or cultural characteristics.

Any student who directs a slur towards any other student at school or at a school-related activity and who is reported to the school for making the slur is subject to the disciplinary action described below.

Consequences: Making slurs may result in, but is not limited to, the following:

- Phone call to parent/guardian
- Conference with any or all of the following: students involved, parent/guardian, administration, counselor, staff members
- School/community service
- Detention
- Written apology
- Loss of school privileges
- Suspension

BULLYING

Remember, no one deserves to be bullied. You can still help yourself and ask others to help you.

1. Tell a friend what is happening. Ask him or her to help you. It will be harder for others to pick on you if you have a friend with you for support.
2. Try to ignore the bullying or say 'No' really firmly, then turn and walk away.
3. Try not to show that you are upset or angry.
4. Don't fight back if you can help it.
5. Try to think up funny or clever replies in advance. It helps to have an answer ready.
6. Try to avoid being alone in the places where you know the bully is likely to pick on you.
7. Sometimes asking the bully to repeat what they said can put them off. If they repeat it, you will have made them do something they hadn't planned on and this gives you some control of the situation.
8. Keep a diary of what is happening.
9. Telling about bullying isn't 'telling tales' or 'tattling.' Even if the bully does find out, it is better to have things out in the open.

The Adaline E. Kent Middle School Student/Parent Handbook, Kentfield, CA, at <http://www.kentfieldschools.org/stories/00/57/kenthandbook.pdf>

Ending Bullying By Teaching Kids Not To Be Victims

Current efforts to curtail bullying in schools are misguided and ineffective, according to psychologist Izzy Kalman, because bullying is not the issue. Learning to deal with bullying is.

Kalman, a school psychologist and psychotherapist in Staten Island, New York, explains his approach in his book, *Bullies to Buddies: How to Turn Your Enemies Into Friends* and on his Web site, [Bullies to Buddies](#).

Creating a world where everyone is nice to each other is unrealistic, Kalman writes. People tease other people because they enjoy watching them get upset. The more upset the "victim" gets, the more fun it is to tease him or her. So rather than encourage children to report bullying and then punish bullies, educators need to teach children not to be victims. The keys to that, according to Kalman, are to learn not to let bullies upset you and to treat bullies like friends so they become friends.

If *that* sounds unrealistic, Kalman says he has taught children how to do just that through counseling and role-playing. He also has anecdotes from others who have used his approach successfully. Kalman argues that society often has more to fear from victims than bullies -- in school shootings in the U.S. such as the one at [Columbine High School](#) in 1999, the shooters were not bullies -- they were students who had been harassed and felt like victims.

Kalman, who is on a leave of absence from his school position to devote time to writing and teaching, talked with Education World about his "bullies to buddies" approach.

Education World: What prompted you to write *Bullies to Buddies*?

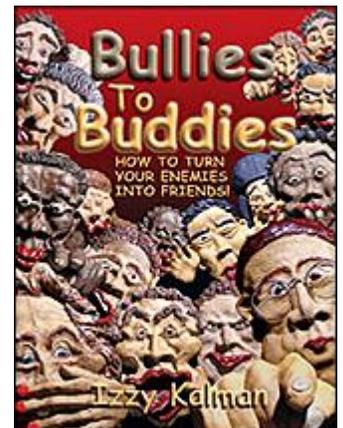
Izzy Kalman: I have been teaching people how to stop being victims of bullying for a couple of decades. Then Columbine happened, and it became even more obvious that victims are behind these shootings. However, I was amazed by the country's response. It seemed our efforts were exactly in the wrong direction. Instead of teaching kids how *not* to be victims, we responded with campaigns and laws to go after bullies. It was obvious to me that such an approach could not possibly succeed and was bound to make matters worse. So I decided I needed to make the solution available to the public. I created the Web site [Bullies to Buddies](#). I wrote a manual called "How to Stop Being Teased and Bullied Without Really Trying," which teaches kids the real reason they are bullied and how to make it stop.

I wrote the book, *Bullies to Buddies: How to Turn Your Enemies Into Friends* because I wanted a more comprehensive and detailed guide for victims. It deals with just about all of the typical bullying situation kids are likely to encounter, as well as teaching kids how to get along better with their parents, teachers, and siblings. It has quizzes after each major section to consolidate what kids learn from the book, which makes it useful as a school social skills textbook.

EW: You say that the current whole school anti-bullying models are not effective. Why do you say that and why do you think they are not working?

Kalman: I have understood for many years that adult intervention in children's fighting is what actually causes most of the fighting (this is basic [Adlerian psychology](#), though I recognized this phenomenon before I learned about Adlerian psychology). That is why at home, when siblings are constantly fighting, you will discover that the parents are going crazy trying to make them stop fighting. What the parents don't realize is that the kids are fighting *because* the parents are trying to stop them!

When parents get in the middle, the fight escalates because the parents are the most important people in the world to the children. Both children want the parents on their



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side. Whatever the kids were fighting about is less important than their parents. Now that the parents are in the middle, they start fighting over the parents, and they are going to fight much harder over the parents than over whatever nonsense they had been fighting about before the parent came along to stop them. The parents then decide who is right and who is wrong. Whichever child they decide against is now very angry and wants to even up the score. So that child creates another fight, and the parents get in the middle again. The parents wonder why the kids fight so hard over such nonsense. What the parents don't realize is the kids are not fighting over nonsense. They are fighting over the parents!

In psychology, this process is known as "triangulation". When a third party gets in the middle of a problem between two other people, the fighting escalates and goes on endlessly.

This very intervention that makes things worse at home between siblings is being promoted by the anti-bully psychology as the right thing to do in school! The school staff members -- teachers and principals -- are the most important people in the school. When they get in the middle of kids' business, the hostilities escalate because each child and his or her parents want the school on their side.

Through my Web site and my national seminars, I am in touch with school counselors throughout the country. Many tell me that their school's anti-bullying programs are driving them crazy and making the bullying worse. One said to me, "Ever since our school adopted it's anti-bullying program, we are having three times as much bullying as before!" We hear that bullying is skyrocketing in our country. Why? With all of our anti-bullying programs and education against bullying, shouldn't it be going down? It's because the programs usually make the problem worse.

An article was published in December 2004 that I believe was so important it should have made headlines in every newspaper. In the *School Psychology Review*, which is the research journal of the [National Association of School Psychologists](#), a Canadian psychologist named David Smith published a paper on whole school anti-bullying programs. He had conducted a meta-analysis of all the research on whole school anti-bullying programs. He looked at all the research to see what's working. You know what he discovered? Eighty-six percent of the published studies showed that the anti-bully program produced no benefit at all or made the bullying problem worse; 14 percent of the studies showed that the program yielded a mild improvement. Not one study showed a major improvement.

EW: How does your approach to preventing bullying differ from the prevailing view?

Kalman: Everyone thinks that the problem is bullying, so we are trying to get rid of bullying. But bullying is part of life. Schools are actually the place where the *least* amount of bullying goes on. It happens most right at home. My surveys of thousands of mental health professionals and educators show that their own children at home are four times more likely to be hit daily by a sibling than by another child in school. Many of these same experts also are bullies or are bullied in their own lives

This whole anti-bully movement is hypocritical. The anti-bully advocates are expecting kids to be able to do what they themselves can't do. The anti-bully advocates are trying, for the first time in the history of the world, to create a society in which everyone is always nice to each other. I have heard of such a place, where everyone is always nice. It is called Heaven, and you have to die to get in.

"Everyone thinks that the problem is bullying, so we are trying to get rid of bullying. But bullying is part of life. Schools are actually the place where the *least* amount of bullying goes on. It happens most right at home."

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The problem is not bullying. The problem is *not knowing how to handle bullying*.. The most dangerous people, both to themselves and to others, are people who think like victims. Bullies don't commit suicide or shoot up schools. Victims do these things. If you think like a victim, you will be bullied by people throughout your life. You will be made miserable by your bosses and spouses and children.

One of the tasks of life is learning how to deal with people being mean to us, and unfortunately, most people never learn to do this well. Even worse, the anti-bully education is teaching us that we *shouldn't have to* learn to deal with it; that we have a *right* not to be bullied, which means that the government is supposed to deal with bullying for us. This can't possibly work. The government can't force people to like and respect me. I am the only one who can accomplish that. All the authorities can do is punish us when we are not nice to each other. That is a really good way to manage social relations!

So I strictly teach people how *not* to be victims. If I am a victim and I have to wait for society to get rid of bullying in order for me to become happy, I will go to the grave being a victim. But if I know how not to be a victim, no one can bully me, and my misery ends almost immediately.

I also teach teachers how to handle bullying between kids. I have two "magic responses" that, when consistently used by teachers, quickly bring about a dramatic reduction in bullying.

These responses are quick and easy, and allow the teachers to go back to being educators instead of policemen and judges. They are explained in detail on my Web site in the manual for adults.

EW: In some ways your approach sounds like the advice of parents of days past to ignore tormentors and they will go away, which wasn't all that effective. How does your advice differ?

"The anti-bully advocates are trying, for the first time in the history of the world, to create a society in which everyone is always nice to each other. I have heard of such a place, where everyone is always nice. It is called Heaven, and you have to die to get in."

Kalman: "Ignoring" usually *is* effective, but you have to ignore well. Trying to "make believe" that the bullying is not bothering you rarely works because it is hard to completely hide our feelings. If you are making believe that you are not getting upset, the other kids can sense it. As long as you feel upset, you are likely to keep on being bullied.

Many people think that I teach "ignoring." This is not accurate. What I really teach is how not to get upset. Victims feel like losers and bullies feel like winners. Victims are dying to win against their bullies but whatever they're doing isn't working. How do bullies win? By getting you upset. How do you win? By refusing to get upset. I demonstrate this with the child through a role-playing game I developed. This game makes the child actually *feel* this truth. They leave the session eager to try it on their bullies.

However, what I teach people is much more than "don't get upset." What I teach is how to treat your bullies like buddies. Then they *become* your buddies. This is the true meaning of the Golden Rule, "treat others the way you want to be treated." Can I get you to treat me like a friend if I treat you like an enemy? Of course not. You will treat me right back like an enemy. The one and only way I can get you to treat me like a friend is if I treat you like a friend -- even when you treat me like an enemy.

We are very aware when others treat us like enemies. What we are rarely aware of is that we are, at the very same time, treating them like enemies. Things like anger, defensiveness, fear and revenge are, by definition, responses to enemies. So victims are treating their bullies like enemies and don't understand why the bullies continue to be mean to them. So I teach several simple rules that I call, "How to turn your bullies into buddies." They are explained in detail in my book. These rules require essentially no

"The problem is not bullying. The problem is *not knowing how to handle bullying*.. The most dangerous people, both to themselves and to others, are people who think like victims. Bullies don't commit suicide or shoot up schools. Victims do these things."

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effort, just a change in attitude, and they work for adults as well as for children. If you consistently use these rules with the people in your life, you will always be a winner and people will like and respect you.

EW: What is the hardest part of your bullies-to-buddies approach for kids to execute?

Kalman: One of the hardest things is to get them to stop responding defensively, and this is at least as true for adults as it is for kids. The response of defending ourselves when we are criticized, insulted, blamed, or hit is so strong and seems so right that it often requires a bit of practice for people to stop habitually responding with defensiveness.

The first couple of days of using my approach are usually the hardest because the bullying usually escalates. I warn my clients, "The problem will get worse before it gets better." If someone has been tormenting you every day for years and all of a sudden you stop getting upset, they will think something went wrong with you. They won't believe that you are not really upset, and they will not like the feeling that they are losing. So in

the beginning they will try even harder to get you upset. Therefore, when you see the bullying getting worse the first couple of days, you shouldn't think, "Oh, no. This advice isn't working! The problem's only getting worse!" It *is* working. It's just that the problem usually gets worse before it gets better.

My approach does not work equally well for everyone. In general, the more neurologically impaired or emotionally disturbed the person is, the harder it is going to be to help them with this technique. But that's true about all techniques. The more impaired the client is, the harder it is to help him.

I would also like to add that this approach is not only about "mild bullying." Many people, even after reading my book, think that I don't deal with "serious bullying," which requires the traditional anti-bullying approaches of getting help from others. It only seems this way because the great majority of incidents that we call "bullying" are verbal: name-calling, rumors, gestures, social isolation. So since this is what kids need to deal with most often, adults think this approach is only effective with these kinds of attacks.

These rules also work with physical attacks, sexual, racial, and religious harassment, and threats of extortion, and I demonstrate it through role-playing. *When might they not work?* When you are facing a psychopath, an insane person, or a criminal who is looking to attack you regardless of what you do. In such cases, you *do* need to run away, get protection, or attack physically if you have no choice. These kinds of attacks do happen, but they are very rare, and they are not "bullying." We just *think* they are because the term "bullying" is being used to cover all aggressive behavior. To get everyone motivated to go on anti-bully campaigns, the anti-bully "experts" are calling things like the Holocaust and slavery "bullying." Genocide and slavery are *not* bullying. They are serious crimes against humanity. All democratic countries have laws against these phenomena, and the government is required to protect us from them.

"The school staff members -- teachers and principals -- are the most important people in the school. When they get in the middle of kids' business, the hostilities escalate because each child and his or her parents want the school on their side."

EW: What feedback have you received about your ideas from other educators?

Kalman: Some people can't accept these ideas no matter how well I demonstrate their effectiveness, but the feedback I get from educators and mental health professionals is overwhelmingly positive.

Many professionals come to my seminars skeptical, but after seeing how these principles work through role-play after role-play -- my seminars are six hours long -- most are thoroughly convinced that teaching people how not to be victims is more effective than trying to rid society of bullies.

EW: How can teachers use *Bullies to Buddies* in the classroom?

Kalman: There are two important components to using this approach. One is to have the kids get rid of their victim mentality. This can be done by having them read *Bullies to Buddies* or listen to my CD program, "How to Stop Being Teased and Bullied without Really Trying." We are currently producing a

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training video that should be ready within a couple of months. I expect this to be the quickest and most effective way to teach the kids without actually having me come to the school to demonstrate the approach.

The second component is to have the school staff read my manual, *A Revolutionary Guide to Reducing Aggression between Children*, which explains what happens when adults make themselves responsible for stopping kids' fights, and teaches a less hysterical and more effective approach to the problem. An earlier version of this manual is available for free on the Web site. A revised edition can be purchased through the Web site.

EW: What, if any, training do you offer to schools about using your anti-bullying approach?

Kalman: I give seminars to mental health professionals and educators throughout the country on anger control and bullying, and provide manuals that guide them in using all these techniques in their schools. Schools can also contract with me directly to present my "Victim-Proof Your School" program that teaches students and staff how to reduce bullying.

EW: Are there any studies evaluating the effectiveness of your approach?

Kalman: I have tons of anecdotal evidence of the effectiveness of this approach. However, in the past year, I conducted my own preliminary studies with several classes with serious bullying problems in different parts of the country. I wanted to keep the conditions very simple and uniform. I provided a copy of the *Bullies to Buddies* book for each child in the class. The students' tasks were to read the book, do the quizzes, and act out the two simple role-plays that are described in the book.

The teachers task was to use the two "magic responses" when kids complained of being bullied. Additionally, the teachers were requested to avoid discussing the book with the students for two reasons: I wanted the teachers to be teaching academics and not wasting time teaching bullying lessons, and I didn't want teacher's own attitudes to influence what I teach in the book. In one class, because the kids couldn't read well, I substituted reading the book with listening to my two-hour CD version of the book. In most cases the improvement was dramatic.

This is what one teacher wrote: "It was amazing to see the students implement the program in class and role play as they learned from Izzy. I also witnessed them using the program to problem solve between each other during hands-on activities, free play, and interaction with other peers at other times during the school day on and off campus. What would have earlier in the year been a big deal for some of my students quickly was ignored and forgotten. Discipline was much less of an issue and active learning became the center focus of our classroom activities. Thanks for allowing us to use this program and learn from this wonderful tool."

Recently, a major university agreed to conduct a rigorous scientific study of my program. I expect this to have an impact on the academic world.