

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**THE TEACHER AND THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY: TEACHERS'
ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARD BULLYING**

A Thesis in

Education Theory and Policy

by

Deborah A. Temkin

© 2009 Deborah A. Temkin

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

August 2009

The thesis of Deborah A. Temkin was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Dana L. Mitra
Assistant Professor of Education
Thesis Adviser

Scott D. Gest
Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies

Gerald LeTendre
Professor of Education and International Affairs
Department Head, Education Policy Studies

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

Abstract

This paper employs mixed-methods to explore teachers' attitudes towards and definitions of bullying in a district with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. Previous research surrounding teacher attitudes towards bullying has shown a significant difference in teachers' interpretation of relationally aggressive behaviors as "bullying" as well a significant difference in how detrimental teachers perceive relationally aggressive behaviors to be, as compared to physical and verbal forms (Baumen & Del Rio, 2006; Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith, 2002; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Unlike previous research, which was either conducted outside the United States or with pre-service, the present study involves current teachers from a large urban district in Pennsylvania that has a district-wide anti-bullying policy containing relational- and cyber-bullying in its definition. Results show that despite the district policy, teachers show significant differences in labeling as bullying and perceptions of seriousness for relational bullying compared to all other forms. Possible reasons why these differences in teachers' definitions exist despite the policy were also explored through follow-up semi-structured interviews.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Bullying.....	3
Relational Aggression and Relational Bullying	5
Direct vs. Indirect Relational Aggression	8
“Rough and Tumble” Relational Play.....	9
Outcomes of Relational Victimization.....	11
Teacher Attitudes and Definitions of Bullying	14
Teachers’ Inclusion of Relational Aggression in Defining Bullying	14
Teachers’ Attitudes and Classroom Norms for Aggression	15
Development of Anti-Bullying Policy.....	16
Zero-Tolerance Policies Before Columbine.....	18
Columbine and The Re-Emphasis on Zero-Tolerance.....	21
Defining Bullying in Policy	24
Potential Benefits and Drawbacks to Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policies	26
Impacts of Anti-Bullying Policies in Schools and Policy Implementation	28
Present Study	30
 Chapter 2: METHODS.....	 32
Research Questions	32
Research Design.....	33
Study Site	34
Participants	35
Procedures	36
Data Analysis Plan	40
Quantitative Analysis.....	40
Qualitative Analysis.....	43
 Chapter 3: RESULTS	 45
Q1: Do teachers in a district with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy include relational aggression in their personal definitions of bullying?.....	45
Q2: Do teachers know about, and can they accurately report, the district’s anti-bullying policy?	46
Q3: Do teachers report significant differences in how they define and view as serious cases of relational aggression vs. other forms of bullying? &.....	48
Q4: Do teachers distinguish cases of sexual harassment in light of a comprehensive bullying policy? ..	48
Labeling as Bullying.....	48
Perceptions of Severity.	50
Q5: What structures and mechanisms have inhibited the successful implementation of the district’s anti-bullying policy?	52
Teacher and Principal Will In Implementing Policy.....	52
Organizational Capacity.....	59
 Chapter 4: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	 63
Discussion and Implications	63
Limitations.....	68
Conclusions and Future Directions	69
 References.....	 71
Appendix A: Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire Revised Vignettes	76
Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol	78

JUST KIDDING



Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Following the string of school shootings that marked the 1990s, schools, districts, and states across the country have focused on reducing the factors that might have led to those events in an effort both to reduce liability and to prevent serious acts of school violence from occurring (Ferrara, 2004). Peer victimization and peer ostracism were the most common risk-factor among most of the school shooters of the 1990s (Leary et al., 2003). While many schools and states developed policies regarding bullying in schools, attention to bullying was often overshadowed by other potential factors (Limber & Small, 2003). These policies have steadily grown in numbers over the past decade, growing from 15 state policies in an analysis conducted by Limber & Small in 2003 to 29 policies in an analysis conducted by Temkin in 2006 and published in 2008. While there exists little research indicating the percentage of schools, or districts, in the United States that have anti-bullying policies specifically, recent data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2007) indicates that over 95% of schools have some form of student code of conduct.

Several questions have been raised, however, concerning both the content of these policies and their effectiveness. At the state level, anti-bullying policies tend to focus on physically and verbally aggressive behaviors, and often do not protect against “cyber-bullying” and other relationally aggressive behaviors (Limber & Small, 2003; Temkin, 2008). According to Olweus (1993), who provides perhaps the most cited definition of “bullying” in the psychological and educational literatures, bullying is not limited to physical and verbal behaviors, but may also involve more subtle actions that create significant emotional hurt for the target. These behaviors, referred to in the literature as

“relational,” “social” or “indirect” aggression or as “emotional” or “relational” bullying, include gossip and rumor-spreading, social exclusion, and negative body language.

Relational aggression can further be divided into two forms: direct relational, where a bully tells a victim face-to-face that they do not wish to be friends anymore or are being excluded, or indirect relational, where bullies use other means, including manipulation of the social network, to exclude and victimize their targets (Underwood, 2003). Cyber-bullying is bullying with the use of technology, such as through cell phones, instant messaging, or through social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook.

Relational aggression has been shown to be as detrimental as the physical and verbal forms, since it, too, is linked to depression, suicide, social anxiety disorder, and reduced academic achievement (Buhs, Ladd & Herald, 2006; La Greca & Lopez, 1998; Ledley et al., 2006). Though the literature has mixed results as to whether girls engage in relational aggression more than boys, it is clear that girls use proportionally more of these behaviors (that is, more relational aggression in their overall repertoire of bullying behaviors) than boys and are more often victims of the actions (Card et al., 2008; Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004). Neglecting to address relational aggression as bullying might leave little recourse for victims of this behavior (Temkin, 2008).

Yet, including relational aggression in anti-bullying policies presents a challenge. As Simmons (2002) describes, many relational aggressors use the behaviors because they are often hidden—whether achieved out of sight of teachers or other adults or masked by behaviors that could be considered pro-social (Chenesy-Lind, Morash & Irwin, 2007). Further, expanding the behaviors included in student codes of conduct has also drawn criticism for detracting attention from potentially more serious behaviors such as sexual

harassment or physical abuse (Stein, 2003). Stein (2003) argues, for instance, that including bullying, and specifically relational aggression, in codes of conduct might allow the inclusion of more overtly offensive behaviors under the less serious rubric of “bullying.”

It is clear, then, that the impact of including relational aggression in anti-bullying policies must be examined, both to determine if, in fact its inclusion helps guide teachers’ definitions of bullying and also to determine if it changes how more serious behaviors, such as sexual harassment, are also defined. Examining teacher attitudes is important as they not only reveal teachers’ potential actions towards bullying in their classrooms but might also reveal students’ tendencies to engage in those behaviors (Chang, 2003; Henry et al., 2000). Several recent studies have shown that teachers’ perceived acceptance or rejection of student behaviors has a significant effect on students’ normative beliefs about those behaviors, as well as the use of social forces within a peer network to reject or promote students who engage in those behaviors, and their own use of those behaviors (Chang, 2003; Henry et al, 2000).

The following sections further detail each of these themes. First, this paper explores the definition of bullying and relational aggression’s place within that definition. Then, teachers’ definitions of bullying are considered as well as the potential influence of those definitions. Following this, the development of anti-bullying policies is detailed, and finally, the impact of anti-bullying policies on bullying definitions is questioned.

Bullying

The image of the “schoolyard bully” is common, emerging from and engrained in mass-media and broader culture. Yet, this image, and the definition of bullying that is

associated with that image, is not always shared. Although bullying has emerged as an issue for schools to address, especially given its association with many incidents of school violence (Leary et al., 2003), identifying and agreeing on the behaviors associated with bullying is no easy task.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Scandinavian countries similarly took up the issue of bullying. Triggered by a series of adolescent suicides, Norway, Sweden and Finland began to explore ways to better protect youth from destructive peer relations. Though there, too, bullying was understood colloquially, there existed little empirical research on the behavior or ways to prevent its occurrence. Olweus pioneered the study of bullying, aiming to both define the behavior and develop a program to help alleviate the issue in schools. Through this research, Olweus developed what is perhaps the most cited definition of bullying throughout the research literature. Broadly, Olweus (1993) states that, “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (pg. 9). This definition notes four aspects of bullying behavior that Olweus believes to be universal across all types of bullying:

- (1) that the behavior is not a one time occurrence, but rather is a succession of actions;
- (2) that bullying can be, and often is, a group action;
- (3) that the bully and victim must interpret the behavior as a “negative action,” and;
- (4) the bully and the victim must have a power differential, whether by size and strength or by social position.

Olweus does not limit the types of behaviors that can be considered bullying, as long as those behaviors fit the above criteria. In fact, Olweus directly includes relational aggression in his definition, stating that:

It is also possible to carry out negative actions without use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person's wishes (pg. 9).

Yet, as will be further explored in the sections that follow, relational aggression has long been disregarded as a form of bullying, despite research establishing it as a hurtful behavior and one that is often used for the same purposes as physical or verbal aggression (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

Relational Aggression and Relational Bullying

The manipulation of social relationships through exclusion, rumors, and body language in order to harm enemies, has gone by several names in the research including indirect aggression (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992), social aggression (Galen & Underwood, 1997), and relational aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Definitions for each of these terms vary both within and between terms making direct comparison amongst studies difficult. For instance, verbal aggression is included within the definition of social aggression, but is separated from both relational and indirect aggressions. Additionally, foci within these terms vary from defining the behavior around the use of social networks for the aggression (e.g. using the social network to deliver the harm so no one aggressor can be necessarily identified) to the destruction of the social network as the mechanism for harm (e.g. directly excluding a victim from the social network). Though the differences between these foci are slight, they change the operational definitions of the behaviors between researchers, thereby rendering results between researchers not directly comparable.

Still, for the purposes of general discussion, each term surrounds the same basic construct (the use and manipulation of social relationships in a deliberate manner to harm another), and as such can be discussed as a single concept for the purposes of this paper. While the differences in definitions certainly need to be explored in the areas addressed below, this is beyond the scope of this thesis. For this paper, the term “relational aggression” will represent the general use of the behaviors covered by these varying terms. Verbal aggression, which is sometimes included within the broad scope of relational aggression, will however remain a distinct entity since it, unlike the other behaviors covered by relational aggression, is consistently referenced as a form of bullying in research and policies alike (Temkin, 2008). “Relational” aggression is used in this paper given trends in how these behaviors have been referenced in the most recent literature and professional conferences.

Initial studies, using peer nomination tools and factor analysis to form the operational definitions for relational aggression, find that relational aggression is a distinct entity from overt or physical aggression, and is a recognized behavior for both boys and girls (Bjorkqvist et. al, 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Galen & Underwood, 1997). This research further establishes that both relational and overt behaviors are used for aggressive means. For instance, in a study of 9 to 12 year-old girls and boys, pre-adolescents consistently cite relationally aggressive behaviors in their reports of behaviors they use when angry at a peer in addition to traditional overtly aggressive behaviors (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996). Further, both boys and girls consider relational aggression as hurtful, with girls perceiving the behavior as more hurtful than boys (Galen & Underwood, 1997). Victims of all forms of aggressive behavior, including

relational aggression, also show comparable responses, with the majority being to ignore the action, followed by reactive aggression (Putallaz, Kupersmidt, Coie, McKnight, & Grimes, 2004). Together, these studies demonstrate that children perceive overt and relational behaviors similarly as aggressive and hurtful. Thus, any discussion of aggression among children must also include relational behaviors.

Although it is clear that relational aggression should be considered along with physical and verbal aggressions, many view the behavior as mostly an issue among girls. Since girls are less frequently found to be disruptive to the school environment (Thorne, 1993) and are have less frequently become the perpetrators of major school violence incidents (Leary et al., 2003), the issue is not addressed as frequently as are other behaviors. Many initial studies of relational aggression label the behavior as the feminine parallel of overt or physical aggression in males, showing that girls use significantly more of this aggression than overt or physical aggression (Bjorkqvist et. al, 1992; Crick and Grotpeter, 1995; Lagerzperz & Bjorkqvist, 1994; Osterman et al., 1998). Others refute this, finding a greater frequency of relational aggression among boys rather than girls (Tomada & Schneider, 1997). Salmivalli and Kaukiainen (2004) attribute this discrepancy in gender-specific frequency to the misinterpretation of the significance of female versus male usage. Their meta-analysis indicates that, though girls use proportionally more relational aggression than boys (e.g. for total acts of aggression for each gender, the proportion of which are relational is higher for girls than boys), boys still have more aggressive acts (both physical and relational) in total. Girls tend to use relational aggression exclusively, while boys tend to use it in tandem with physical aggression. Card et al. (2008) found similar results in their more-recent meta-analysis,

showing no significant differences in boys' and girls' usage of relational aggression. It is therefore clear that relational aggression cannot simply be written off as only an issue among girls.

Further, although relationally aggressive behaviors seem to peak in pre-adolescence (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Crick, Bigbee & Howes, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Underwood, 2003) there is emerging evidence that children as young as 2.5 years utilize these behaviors (Crick, Mosher & Casas, 1997; Crick et al., 2004; Ostrov & Keating, 2004). It is important, then, for relational aggression to be addressed throughout childhood and not just when the behaviors peak. Still, relational aggression seems to be most prevalent, distinguishable, and destructive in middle-childhood (6-11 years) and children's utilization of the behavior grows over this time period, hitting its peak between the ages of 11 and 15 (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Crick, Bigbee & Howes, 1996; Underwood, 2003). As such, policies regarding relational aggression are most important for this age group, and therefore in middle schools.

Direct vs. Indirect Relational Aggression

Although few studies have addressed differing contexts of relational aggression, it¹ can be further broken down into two separate categories: (1) direct relational aggression, or aggression involving attacks on the social world done face-to-face and; (2) indirect relational aggression, or aggression that uses that social network to attack social relationships (Underwood, 2003). Both subcategories can include similar behavior – social manipulation, rumor spreading, and social exclusion. The main distinction is that

¹ Underwood (2003) refers to the behaviors as social aggression, arguing that the term more generally grasps the concept of doing harm to social relationships, however, she also recognizes that this term is limited.

the perpetrator is often hidden or disguised in indirect relational aggression, but is more likely to be known in the direct form. For example, a child can be excluded by either direct or indirect means. Through direct relational aggression, that child is explicitly told they are unwelcome to play with a certain group of peers. Through indirect relational aggression, on the other hand, that child may be excluded by groups moving away from that child, through negative facial expressions from other peers, and through other covert acts meant to send a message.

Separating these constructs might be important in understanding the negative outcomes associated with the behavior. It may be more distressing for a child to be indirectly aggressed upon than be explicitly excluded, or vice-versa (Underwood, 2003). The research surrounding the outcomes of relational aggression, let alone these sub-categories of relational aggression, is, as is discussed below, limited. Still, for the purposes of this paper, it is important to separate these subcategories. Simmons (2002) argues that many teachers overlook relational aggression because they simply do not see it. It may be, then, that indirect relational incidents are less likely to be detected than direct relational incidents.

“Rough and Tumble” Relational Play

A recent development in the literature has been to distinguish the use of relationally-aggressive behaviors (e.g. rumors, gossip, exclusion) as playful normative behavior from when they are used to deliberately hurt others. Luckner, Marks & Crick (2008) observe that threats of relational aggression are often done jokingly and are perceived as pro-social by peers. For instance, one girl referring to another as a “whore” might be done in jest, with little intention to harm. Luckner et al. argue that this serves

two purposes: to establish the boundaries of acceptable behavioral within the bounds of the social group and suggest the consequences of stepping outside those bounds. That is, the same behaviors can be both pro-social and can also be turned around and used for harm. Luckner et al. name this “Rough and Tumble” Relational Play to parallel “rough and tumble” physical play, which is more commonly understood as a distinct entity from physical aggression (Humphreys & Smith, 1987; Pellegrini, 1989). There, researchers make a distinction between rough-housing, wrestling, and other acts of physical play from hitting, punching, pushing, and other physical acts meant to harm the recipient.

Still, rough and tumble play has been shown to have a unique and powerful role in the dominance and hierarchy structures of youth peer groups, specifically those for boys. Pelligrini (1995) demonstrates that adolescent boys who show high levels of rough and tumble play are more likely to achieve dominant status among their peers at later on. He argues that rough and tumble play is a social tool that allows adolescent boys to gain power over their peers and to further be perceived as dominant, tough, and socially influential. Those who did not display high levels of toughness were further more likely to become victims, as nominated by their peers.

Yet, the distinction between bullying and rough and tumble play, even within the work of Pelligrini, becomes a grey area. Pelligrini also finds that peer-nominated victims are often the targets of dominant boys’ rough and tumble play, and explains that dominant boys might pick these weaker boys to demonstrate their toughness. Yet, the power differential between the “tough” boy and the victim combined with the aggressive acts fits well into the Olweus definition of bullying as defined above. Further, Pelligrini even labels the relationship between these dominant boys and peer-nominated victims as

“bullying” despite their use of rough and tumble play – “ [rough and tumble play]’ in early adolescence seems to be a behavioral context in which bully-victim relationships play themselves out” (pg. 90). Thus, even in research surrounding rough and tumble play, the divide between it and bullying is unclear.

It is no surprise then that teachers, too, struggle between distinguishing “play fighting” from “real fighting.” Schafer and Smith (1996) argue that while there exist several distinguishing factors between rough and tumble play and bullying, including reactions of those involved, the events leading up to and after the incident, and evidence of self-handicapping by the more capable actor in the incident, teachers are more likely to view playful fighting as real fighting than are children. Schafer and Smith conducted their research in England, and, as such their finding would likely be even more dramatic if conducted in the United States’ context of zero-tolerance, as will be discussed later.

No comparable study has been conducted looking at how teachers distinguish between acts of relational aggression and relational rough and tumble play. It is likely, however, that because the incidents are not physical in nature, many teachers might only see the pro-social elements of the behaviors, if they see the behaviors at all. As Simmons (2002) points out, relational aggression is often used because it blends into pro-social behaviors and is hidden from outside observation. Still, because there are both pro-social and aggressive intentions for both physical and relational behaviors, developing policy around them becomes an even more tedious task.

Outcomes of Relational Victimization

Although not extensive, research has shown the potential detriment of relational aggression on academic success, mental and physical health, and future social

relationships. Relational aggression has significant and lasting effects on the academic achievement and focus of victims. For instance, students who are chronically rejected and mistreated by peers in kindergarten through fifth grade are more likely to perform poorly in academics, avoid school, and decrease participation in the classroom setting (Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006). Others have shown that victims of relational aggression have marked decreases in academic achievement, which is especially notable as victims tend to be higher achievers on average prior to victimization (Woods & Wolke, 2004).

There is substantial evidence directly linking relational aggression to diagnosis of social anxiety disorder and other forms of internalizing behavior (Craig, 1998; Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Downey, Irwin Ramsay & Ayduk, 2004; La Greca & Lopez, 1998; Storch & Masia-Warner, 2004; Walker, 2000; Walters & Inderbitzen, 1998). While it is unclear whether this connection is bidirectional or unidirectional (e.g. whether social anxiety disorder attracts relational aggression which exacerbates the disorder or whether relational aggression causes social anxiety disorder), it is clear that those who have been relationally bullied are more likely to score higher on social anxiety measures (e.g. SAS-A & SPAI-C), display higher levels of depressive symptoms, and overall withdrawn behaviors. Further, relational aggression has been found to be more predictive of internalizing behavior than physical or verbal victimization (Crick et al., 2001).

Although even less research has considered the link between relational victimization and externalizing behaviors, there is some evidence that this link exists. Walker (2000) demonstrates that relational victimization is associated with both internalizing and externalizing behaviors as measured by the Child Behavior Checklist,

and that relational victimization provides a unique contribution to predicting such behaviors above physical victimization alone.

Perhaps most apparent, there is ample evidence that relational victimization has a definitive and pervasive effect on social relationships, sociometric status, and peer perception (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al. 2001; Cullerton-Sen & Crick, 2006; Ledley et al., 2006; McCabe et al., 2003; Putallaz et al., 2004). Relationally victimized youth are more likely to be rejected by their peers and have trouble forming and maintaining relationships. Again, the directionality of this relationship is questionable, although longitudinal studies have demonstrated that drops in peer acceptance occur after initial victimization (Cullerton-Sen & Crick, 2006). These difficulties further outlast the victimization, with victims showing relationship difficulties well into adulthood (Ledley et al., 2006; McCabe et al., 2003). Ledley et al. show that college students who had been bullied in childhood are more likely to have difficulty in their current interpersonal relationships, show anxious attachment styles in relationships, and have lower self-esteem.

Together, it is clear that relational victimization has lasting negative effects. Although more research is needed to understand the extent of these outcomes, the general conclusion from the available research to date is that relational aggression is a serious behavior that needs to be addressed. Yet, as is explored in the following section, most teachers do not consider relational aggression to be bullying, serious, or in need of intervention.

Teacher Attitudes and Definitions of Bullying

Teachers are expected to monitor and intervene in cases of bullying in schools (Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2008). To do so, teachers must have a working definition of bullying from which to distinguish cases of bullying from other forms of play. As discussed earlier, this is no easy task given the fine distinction between physical aggression and rough-and-tumble-play. Things become even more difficult when relational aggression is also considered a bullying behavior, with its inherent finer distinctions. Without a guiding definition of bullying, provided in the form of an anti-bullying policy, as will be discussed later, teachers must rely on their own underlying definitions of bullying. Understanding these predispositions is important to understand if definitions contained in anti-bullying policies have any substantive influence on teachers' perceptions of bullying.

Teachers' Inclusion of Relational Aggression in Defining Bullying

Although the literature regarding teachers' definitions of bullying is fairly limited, the existing studies consistently find that teachers do not regard relationally aggressive behaviors as bullying and often consider them less serious than other forms of aggression (Baumen & Del Rio, 2006; Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith, 2002; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). There are important limitations to this finding, however. First, the vast majority of research considering teachers' definitions of bullying has been conducted with pre-service (e.g. not classroom) teachers and outside the United States context. Second, focus on relationally-aggressive behaviors typically centered around only one aspect of relational aggression—social exclusion—and as such might not cover the entire spectrum of relational behaviors.

Still, these studies establish a general baseline for teachers' definitions of bullying in settings without defined policies. It can be assumed that for pre-service teachers, there is no common school-level policy they must follow, since they were not yet working in schools at time of study, and, typically little information is given to pre-service teachers about bullying behaviors (Emmer & Stough, 2001). As such, these studies represent the pre-existing baseline definitions teachers hold as they enter the profession. The consistency of findings between contexts further indicates that teachers' disregard for relational aggression as bullying is more-or-less generalizable.

Teachers' Attitudes and Classroom Norms for Aggression

Teachers' attitudes toward and definitions of bullying affect not only their enforcement of anti-bullying policies, but might also have a direct influence on student behavioral norms and the frequency of the behaviors in the classroom. For instance, Henry et al. (2000) find a direct relation between teachers' attitudes towards bullying and aggression and aggregate frequencies of aggression in a classroom. Further, Henry et al. find that teacher norms for aggression are directly linked to aggregated individual student norms in a classroom. These attitudes are translated through both explicit condemnation, but also through implicit means that are not necessarily communicated through discipline. Thus, teachers' attitudes have a direct impact on students' behaviors even beyond fear of "getting into trouble."

Similarly, Chang (2003) finds that teachers' attitudes toward bullying have a direct relation to peer acceptance and rejection of those who display aggressive behaviors. Chang argues that teacher attitudes help form the framework by which peers judge each other's behaviors. In addition, Chang finds that aggressive students with

teachers who have negative attitudes towards aggression actually have higher perceptions of self-worth, theoretically because their behavior draws attention from the teacher. This suggests that the aggressive behaviors are done to attract the attention of the teacher. With relational behaviors, however, the intention often is just the obvious – to avoid detection – as such, it is unlikely that the same would be true for relationally aggressive behaviors.

It is important to mention that in both studies, aggression and bullying are not defined and simply referred to as such. Scales asked teachers their attitudes towards the general construct of bullying or aggression and not to individual components thereof. Given findings indicating that most teachers do not consider relational aggression bullying, this suggests that these findings are only truly applicable to physical and verbal aggressions. Still, the findings do suggest that relationally aggressive behaviors might decrease if a teacher demonstrates negative attitudes toward them, however further exploration would be needed to verify this hypothesis.

Development of Anti-Bullying Policy

Concurrent with the increased academic and popular attention towards relational aggression, bullying as a general concept became a key discussion in issues of school safety and student behavioral control. On April 20, 1999, two so-called loner students at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO opened fire on their classmates and teachers, injuring 21, killing 13, and sending the entire country into a state of panic about safety in the nation's schools. Columbine, the most deadly of the 15 school shooting incidents between 1995 and 2001, sent a chill down the spines of parents; schools were not the safe haven for students that they believed them to be. Leary et al. (2003) report that almost

immediately after each school shooting incident, and particularly after Columbine, media sources made reference to some sort of peer rejection or victimization each shooter experienced. In their analysis of factors influencing the shooters in each case, they found that in 12 of the 15 cases, there was clear evidence of bullying/teasing and peer ostracism.

Media sources were not shy, especially in the case of Columbine, to report and reemphasize the role bullying had in leading up to the massacres. One report that was heavily publicized, filed by the “Columbine Commission” in which researcher Regina Huerter (2000) interviewed students and teachers at Columbine High, finds that bullying was noted by almost every student and teacher interviewed, though to varying degrees. Huerter also writes, however, that she suspected that Columbine’s issue with bullying was probably not significantly more than other schools. The flood of media relating to Columbine, and other school shootings, led both to legislation and to several pop literature “self-help” books suggesting ways parents and schools alike could combat bullying. One of these books made the new need for understanding bullying clear:

Bullying is a life-and-death issue that we ignore at our children’s peril. It can no longer be minimized and trivialized by adults, taken lightly, brushed off, or denied. Thousands of children go to school every day filled with fear and trepidation...some victims whose cries went unheard, whose pain was ignored, whose oppression went unabated and unrelieved, have struck back with vengeance and a rage that have racked our communities with incomprehensible horror and sorrow...we are devastated by the final act of violence but rarely outraged by the events that led to that final act (Coloroso, 2004, xv-xxi).

What “bullying” meant, however, was less clear. As described above, though Olwus’ (1993) definition includes physical, verbal, and relational forms of aggression -- colloquially, the term is often only associated with physical, and less often, verbal forms

of aggression. Even though researchers looking at the Columbine case, as well as other school shooting incidents, found clear evidence of relational-bullying, these behaviors were subsequently overlooked in discussions about combating bullying and ultimately in the statewide anti-bullying policies that followed (Huerter, 2000; Temkin, 2008).

As fear about school shootings reached its peak, and parents looked to schools to once again become safe environments for their children, individual schools as well as districts and states, began implementing new policies aimed at reducing any behavior that was potentially harmful for students or that could lead to the tragic events of the '90s (Cornell, 2003). Though “zero-tolerance” policies, or those policies with that enforce a “one-strike and you’re out” disciplinary protocol, were in existence prior to Columbine, and ironically were in place at Columbine prior to the shootings there, they became the highlight of many schools’ efforts to promote safety (Dohrn, 2001; Pedersen, 2004; Reyes, 2006).

Zero-Tolerance Policies Before Columbine

Zero-tolerance typically refers to an institution’s refusal to accept any excuse for a violation of rules and regulations set out by that institution (Ayers et al., 2001; Reyes, 2006). At first, these offenses were typically those for which there would be no ignorance of the behavior – using illegal drugs, carrying a gun, etc. One cannot simply say they were unaware that they were breaking rules or that they thought their behavior was appropriate in the context; each of these original offenses qualify as those that would never be acceptable, regardless of situation within that institution. In addition, zero-tolerance policies usually, but not always, carry the consequence of removal from the

institution on discovery of the first violation, whether temporarily or permanently. The violator receives no chance to redeem himself.

In many ways, “zero-tolerance” seems a direct contradiction to the due process protections contained within the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution. According to Pedersen (2004), however, the Courts have upheld these policies given that the institution has a “reasonable justification for its policy” (pg. 51) and that there is no ambiguity as to what was or was not restricted under the policy and the participant was aware of his violating behavior (i.e. if a student did not know he had a weapon in his bag, he was not knowingly violating the policy). This further requires the institution to make the policy explicit to the violator prior to the offense taking place and that the violator be made aware of his offense and the evidence of his engagement in it. In essence, then, as long as an institution publishes a zero-tolerance policy, such as in a student code of conduct, and makes clear the consequences for a given action, the Supreme Court has found no violation of individual’s rights when faced with punishment from one of these policies. While these clarifications are straight-forward when behaviors are tangible – a student either knowingly brought a weapon to school or not – it becomes less clear how these regulations apply more subjective behaviors such as bullying, where a teacher must make a judgment call on whether the behavior fits the policy and where a student might not even perceive his behavior as against the rule.

The idea of “zero-tolerance” originated not in the context of schools and student behavior, but rather within the expectedly strict confines of military service. According to Reyes (2006), zero-tolerance in the context of the military aimed to decrease, but not necessarily eliminate, incidents of drug use, sexual and racial harassment, and spousal

abuse. Indeed, Reyes cites that though zero-tolerance on drug use among military officials had been in place for over twenty years, close to 30 percent of officials tested positive for drug use, though this, she reports, was a decrease from previous levels. Regardless, stemming from military tradition has in many ways labeled this form of discipline when used in school, as the “militarization” of youth (Grioux, 2001), where students lose their individuality and autonomy.

Zero-tolerance first moved into the school context through the “War on Drugs” in the 1980s (Reyes, 2006). Combined with the notion that the best way to prevent drug abuse among youth was to prevent any experimentation with drugs (e.g the DARE “Just Say No” program), the zero-tolerance program associated with the War on Drugs aimed to send the message that no amount of drugs in possession was acceptable under the law. Though programs such as DARE continued, the “War on Drugs” moved out of the political discourse by 1990, and so too did the emphasis on zero-tolerance for drug use, showing little tangible results from the policy. Yet, in 1994 Congress passed the “Gun Free School Act” which required schools receiving federal funding to adopt a one-year expulsion policy for any student carrying a firearm on school property (Pedersen, 2004). Just one year later, every state had complied with this requirement for zero-tolerance on guns, and, by 1998, nine out of ten schools in the United States had individual zero-tolerance policies for firearms, and similar numbers had zero-tolerance for drugs, alcohol, violence, swearing, and tobacco (Pedersen, 2004; Skiba, 2000).

The effectiveness of zero-tolerance policies continues to be questioned, even as more schools adopt such policies for additional student behaviors, punishing students for everything from swearing to using butter knives to cut food for lunch (Skiba, 2000).

While the research, at least when examined by Skiba in 2000, is lacking, none of these strategies have statistical support in reducing actual school violence rates. Gordon et al. (2001) also show that rates of student victimization have not significantly changed between 1976 and 1996, despite the rise in zero-tolerance policies, even as school expulsions have risen exponentially. Further, Skiba argues that there is little evidence that using suspension/expulsion zero-tolerance policies has any effect on the overall climate of school safety. In fact, he argues, in many cases having such policies has increased fear on school campuses.

Despite the evidence showing zero-tolerance policies were having little effect on overall rates of violence and were in many ways disenfranchising students from schools, schools continued to expand behaviors covered under such policies. According to Sciraldi and Ziedenberg (2001), perception of school violence during this time continued to rise, as media presented a disproportional picture of incidents in schools. This is especially true when two gunmen entered Columbine High School, and students fled, with their hands above their heads, as the nation watched.

Columbine and The Re-Emphasis on Zero-Tolerance

Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, like most schools at the time, abided by the 1995 Gun-Free Schools Act and had a zero-tolerance policy for weapons at school. This did not stop Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris from entering their school with several assault rifles and other firearms, ready to kill their peers, teachers, and ultimately themselves. The fear of being expelled or suspended for bringing in such weapons was no deterrent; they knew they planned on killing themselves after their rampage, and as such had no reason to fear not being allowed to come back to school.

Regardless of Columbine's established zero-tolerance policy, cries from the media and the public demanded that schools crack down on anything that might threaten students (Cornell, 2003). Schools were increasingly criticized for the lack of security, and, in watching the aftermath of Columbine, became increasingly concerned with their liability for student actions in the school halls (Ferrara, 2004). Schools and states alike began establishing requirements for student conduct, many of which centered on zero-tolerance agendas. Though the expansion of zero-tolerance began before Columbine, as detailed above, Columbine triggered many schools and states to include behaviors never before thought of as in need for detailing in student codes (Ferrara, 2004). Suddenly, schools began detailing every student behavior that could come under such policies, and, like other zero-tolerance policies, these behaviors fell under the unconditional requirement—that regardless of situation, displaying or conducting such behaviors was a violation of the code.

In a review of Philadelphia student codes of conduct, Irby (2008) found that from immediately following Columbine through the 2006-2007 school year, both the behaviors detailed in the code and the punishments for those behaviors continued to expand in scope and breadth. Pre-Columbine codes of conducts would assume common-sense applications but more-recent codes regulate almost any behavior that might cause harm to any member of the school community. Further, the punishments for these behaviors, before to the discretion at the faculty based on circumstances, history, etc. are now more detailed, and more strict—warranting suspensions and expulsions for minor, one-time infractions. Irby argues that the “net” for catching problem students has therefore become both wider and deeper; more and more problem students are now being removed from

schools, which, some suggest is to protect those schools from liability from large-scale events such as Columbine (Ferrara, 2004).

The expansion of zero-tolerance to include such behaviors as dress code violations, student arguments, use of over-the-counter drugs during school hours, and other minor infractions, has arguably, distracted teachers from the larger problems in schools—those that are not as easy to detect as a shirt being un-tucked (Reyes, 2006). Students are no longer given the opportunity to resolve issues without removal from the school environment. These students are not often allowed to repair their relationships within the school community or learn from their mistakes thereby limiting their growth and potential future success (Morrison, 2002). Proponents of alternatives to zero-tolerance, such as the “restorative justice” movement, argue that the policy does little to address issues in school (Morrison, 2002). Zero-tolerance results in the removal of the most serious offenders and the overlooking of less-serious offenses as “alternative” schools—where offenders are often sent—become full. Without a system that differentiates punishments for minor versus serious offenses, zero-tolerance might also have the unintentional consequence of ignoring harmful behaviors if only because they are not serious enough to warrant removal from school. In essence, without consequence, these “minor” behaviors are condoned and accepted in the school culture.

Using zero-tolerance policies to address issues such as bullying, then, becomes problematic. First, an adequate and specific definition must be presented in order for there to be a complete understanding by both the teachers who enforce the policies and the students who must abide by them. It is unclear how, without a clear and consistent policy, individual rights can be maintained given previous judicial framing of the legality

of zero-tolerance policies. Yet, as addressed earlier, a common definition of bullying has not been well established. Further, severity of different forms of bullying behaviors and specific bullying incidents vary, and, as such, a one-size-fits-all policy might ignore cases of bullying if only because the prescribed punishment does not seem to fit the offense. Despite these concerns, states, districts, and schools, alike have enacted anti-bullying policies. Variations within these policies only demonstrate the difficulty in applying the zero-tolerance framework to bullying.

Defining Bullying in Policy

Though there has been no formal analysis of the inclusion of bullying in United States school-level codes of conduct, a simple *Google* search of “bullying” and “school code of conduct” reveals thousands of school codes of conducts that contain at least one mention of bullying. Irby (2008) further notes that bullying was among the behaviors that increasingly fell within the zero-tolerance net of the Philadelphia codes of conduct. As a recent NCES (2007) report reveals, over 95% of schools have some form of student code of conduct. From this, it can be posited that the vast majority of schools have bullying in their codes of conduct, and that likely, bullying falls under the zero-tolerance umbrella.

Though research is lacking in terms of school-level anti-bullying policies, research has looked at the state-level anti-bullying policies that have developed since Columbine. It is reasonable to look at these state-level policies as examples of school-level policies, since policy at higher levels is often prompted and influenced by policies at lower levels (Nelson, 1984) and additional school and district level policies are then shaped by the content of state level policies (Limber & Small, 2003). The growth and

content of state policies concerning bullying therefore gives insight into the development of anti-bullying policies at all levels of the system.

The spread of anti-bullying policies at the state-level, and well as the variation in definitions contained therein, is evident when comparing a 2003 analysis by Limber and Small to one conducted in 2006 and published in 2008 by Temkin. In 2003, fifteen states were identified as having some form of anti-bullying policy, with nine of those policies containing a definition of bullying. By 2006, this number had grown to 29, with 20 having a concrete definition of bullying. Yet, the definitions contained within these policies varies dramatically, with three states limiting bullying to physical aggression, four states limiting bullying to physical and verbal aggressions, and the others varying in the degree they considered other acts including cyber-bullying, written communication, and gestures. None of the state codes analyzed Temkin analyzed are comprehensive; they did not include direct reference to behaviors that fit under relational aggression. While some states' definitions are open-ended or include phrases such as "emotional harm," none make explicit reference to rumor spreading, negative body language, or social exclusion. The lack of comprehensive anti-bullying policies is notable, given the research, as presented above, establishing relational aggression as a behavior that is considered similarly hurtful and aggressive as the more traditional bullying behaviors covered under non-comprehensive policies.

Although the number of state-level anti-bullying policies continues to grow, there is little research examining how these policies are implemented and what effect they are having on bullying in schools. Further, little is known about how policies with differing definitions are viewed or implemented. It is unclear how these policies affect what

behavior is disciplined and how behavior is labeled and if their presence has any direct effect at drawing attention to the issue of bullying. Some have pushed for broader, more comprehensive policies in order to give a voice to victims of relationally-aggressive behaviors (Simmons, 2002; Temkin, 2008). Yet, expanding definitions of bullying and broadening anti-bullying policies has received great criticism.

Potential Benefits and Drawbacks to Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policies

Little is known about the consequences of enacting a comprehensive bullying policy. Many have speculated as to the potential benefits and drawbacks of such policies, however. For instance, Simmons (2002) argues that without considering relational aggression within the context of bullying, many victims are left without recourse and without even a language to discuss their experience. Schools, administrators, and teachers are granted permission through the omission of such behaviors from codes of conduct to ignore and overlook potentially harmful behaviors, allowing them to consider such behaviors as normative and “kids just being kids.” Additionally, because the issue is not directly addressed in schools either through discipline or prevention programs, victims feel alone in their experiences, unaware that others might also be relationally aggressed. Policies, if nothing else, Simmons argues, establish relational aggression as a serious issue and draw attention to the problem. In earlier work, the author agreed with Simmons (2002), further arguing that, at least in the case of state-level policies, anti-bullying codes that contain relational aggression establish a precedent by which victims can seek recourse and advocates can demand attention (Temkin, 2008).

Restricting definitions of bullying also has the potential to not only ignore relational aggression, but actually increase its prevalence. In a study of school-level anti-

bullying policies in the United Kingdom, Woods and Wolke (2003) find that those schools that have strict, but non-comprehensive policies addressing only physical and verbal aggressions, show increased levels of relational aggression. Although Woods and Wolke caution interpreting causality from their analyses – it could be that those schools had higher levels of all aggression to begin with and the policies reduced some forms more than others – it is still clear that omitting relational aggression could have the potential of making the problem worse.

Regulating relational aggression poses many obstacles, however. As described before, some behaviors associated with relational aggression can be, and often are, used for prosocial non-aggressive means (Luckner et al., 2008). As such banning such behaviors as gossip simply because they could be hurtful is impractical. Further, it is often impossible to identify the perpetrators of relational aggression, especially in its indirect form. Some argue that by including relational aggression in definitions of bullying is a slippery slope to over-regulating kids and placing them in a so-called “police state” (Chesney-Lind, Morash, & Irwin, 2007; Stein, 2003). Many are especially critical, especially given suggestions that it is predominately a girls’ behavior, that regulating relational aggression is merely a guise for restricting free expression among girls (Chesney-Lind, Morash, & Irwin, 2007). From this feminist perspective, adding relational aggression to anti-bullying policies is not a means to protecting girls who might otherwise be ignored, but rather regulating the behaviors that allow girls to actively engage with their social worlds.

Further criticism emerges when considering the relative severity of behaviors included in anti-bullying policies. Referring back to the discussion relating to zero-

tolerance policies, behaviors included in any given policy will be subject to the same consequences, even if they vary in severity and impact. As such, widening the spectrum of behaviors included in an anti-bullying policy can lessen the perceived seriousness of other behaviors. Stein (2003), for instance, argues that broadening the definition of bullying to include more and more behaviors lessens the consideration of more serious behaviors such as sexual harassment (Gruber & Fineran, 2008). Although many separate policies exist for sexual harassment, as bullying enters the discourse, teachers may be less likely to distinguish sexual harassment from bullying. Though not empirically tested, Stein posits, based on outcomes of related court cases where sexual harassment was regarded and treated as the less-serious bullying, that the broad net cast by comprehensive policies is actually a disservice to students as more serious behaviors fail to be distinguished from more common behaviors. Stein further argues that zero-tolerance anti-bullying policies send students the message that gossip is equivalent to sexual harassment, which might cause even more problems into adulthood.

Both the potential benefits and drawbacks of comprehensive anti-bullying policies are speculative, however. No study has explored how comprehensive anti-bullying policies actually operate in the school context.

Impacts of Anti-Bullying Policies in Schools and Policy Implementation

Policies are often not implemented as they might have been intended. Structures and attitudes within a given school or district can determine both the fidelity of implementation as well as the commitment given to the policy's goals. Although policies attempt to control outcomes, they cannot control the will of the actors in a given school to enforce the policy or the capacity available to support the policy. Without either will or

capacity, the intentions of a policy might not be realized to the extent expected or desired by policy-makers. The frames of will and capacity are essential in understanding how policies are implemented, and what structures help or detract from success. These themes will be returned to later on when understanding the findings of the present qualitative analysis.

There has been some previous research into the implementation and effectiveness of anti-bullying policies, but only in contexts outside the United States and without focus on comprehensive policies. These studies find that anti-bullying policies can be effective, but only if combined with other efforts or if established from within the school context (Eslea & Smith, 1998; Glover, Cartwright, Gough, & Johnson, 1998; Souter & McKenzie, 2000). For instance, Glover et al. argue that teachers must take ownership of anti-bullying policies in order to fully enforce them. Only when the policy emerges from teachers' recognition of the issue and motivation to establish an agenda whereby to combat it, will a policy achieve efficacy. Further, Glover et al. posit that policies cannot exist in isolation; instead they must permeate every aspect of school from instruction to recess games. If not actively promoted, explained, and implemented, policies have little chance for success. Finally, Glover et al. find that teachers must have a unified and consistent definition of bullying, which, they argue cannot often occur. Even with great training on the issue, changes in attitudes and definitions are unlikely. This is true, too for student and parental interpretation of the issue – if a student does not consider his behavior to be bullying it takes great effort to explain why they are in trouble. Yet, Glover et al. speculate that schools in which policy is grown from within, where all actors

contribute to a common definition and a common understanding of bullying have better chances of following such policies.

This can also be successfully achieved through implementation of prevention programming in conjunction with policy formation. For instance, in the Sheffield Project, a nationally sponsored anti-bullying project in the United Kingdom, schools that combine policy with prevention programming have greater reductions in overall bullying behavior than either prevention or policy alone (Eslea & Smith, 1998). Similarly, investigations into anti-bullying efforts in Australia conclude that only when there is whole school involvement, enforcement, and education regarding bullying can policies be effective.

These studies suggest that policy alone cannot fundamentally change bullying behaviors in schools. Instead, policies must be coupled with education and must be established and owned by the members of a school community. Still, it is unclear whether or not comprehensive policies would be adopted or successful under this system. Further investigation of the impact of comprehensive policies, especially within the United States context of zero-tolerance policies, is therefore warranted and needed.

Present Study

This literature review demonstrates that although there has been an increase in the establishing of zero-tolerance policies surrounding bullying, little is known about their impacts. Further, this literature review establishes that although relational aggression is a serious and harmful behavior, it is significantly less likely to be considered bullying by teachers. The present study considers these two observations, and explores teachers' attitudes towards and definitions of bullying in a district with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. Although this investigation is a case-study, and provides no comparison

to other districts or to pre-existing definitions before implementation of the policy, it utilizes mixed methods to understand how teachers view the policy in addition to how and why they think the policy has impacted how their schools view bullying. Research questions and methodology are explained in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: METHODS

Research Questions

The purpose of this investigation has two components. First, this project explores whether teachers in a large urban school district with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy label relational aggression and cyber-bullying behaviors as bullying and of similar seriousness to physical and verbal aggressions. Second, the project investigates how teachers view the district's policy and what factors contribute to either the successful implementation of the policy or the failure to do so. This project consists of five research questions surrounding teachers' knowledge and perceptions of their district's comprehensive anti-bullying policy. As described below, this comprehensive policy includes reference to relational and cyber forms of bullying in addition to the more traditional verbal and physical forms. Specifically, this research asks:

Q1: Do teachers in a district with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy include relational aggression in their personal definitions of bullying?

Q2: Do teachers know about, and can they accurately report, the district's anti-bullying policy?

Q3: Do these teachers report significant differences in how they define and view as serious in cases of relational aggression vs. other forms of bullying

Q4: Do teachers distinguish cases of sexual harassment in light of a comprehensive bullying policy?

Q5: Why do teachers think the policy is having the effect it does?

This final question was amended following results of the quantitative study and initial findings from qualitative analysis to

What structures and mechanisms have inhibited the successful implementation of the district's anti-bullying policy?

These research questions were explored through a mixed-methods design, as described below.

Research Design

The two goals of this study warrant the use of a mixed-methods design. This study follows an explanatory design, consisting of a quantitative analysis, followed up by a qualitative component that is designed to explain the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Mixed methods designs provides several benefits beyond using quantitative or qualitative analyses alone. Within the quantitative analysis, significant differences not associated by chance can be easily collected and analyzed under controlled conditions. Yet, the quantitative analysis does not and cannot answer why those differences exist. The qualitative component, on the other hand, answers the why question, but cannot reliably detect initial differences in a meaningful way. Combined, the mixed-methods design allows for both meaningful statistical analysis as well as interpretation from the sample itself.

For this project, the mixed-methods design allows for a deeper evaluation of the anti-bullying policy within the district's teacher population. The teachers can, collectively, provide a better explanation of any differences in their attitudes towards differing bullying behaviors as compared to any interpretations from the researcher. As such, although the quantitative analysis is more central to the main research question – how do teachers define bullying in light of a comprehensive policy – the qualitative component helps provide the broader context around why those differences are or are not apparent (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Further, since this research was conducted only after the policy had already been established and without a control group, causal

inferences between the policy and the attitudes of teachers are impossible. With the addition of the qualitative analysis, however, the teachers' views of causality – that is whether they think the policy has had any effect in the schools – can be explored.

Study Site

The Study Site selected for this study is a large urban district in Pennsylvania. In June 2007, the district's school board approved a district-wide code of student conduct that all students in the district are expected to abide by and all teachers and administrators are expected to enforce. Bullying is defined within this code as including behaviors consistent with relational aggression and cyber-bullying. Specifically this definition states, "Bullying may include physical contact, name calling and taunting, where there is intent to harm by one student or group of students against another. *Bullying may also include indirect means, such as spreading rumors or engaging in cyber bullying.*" (Study Site, 2007, pg. 9). The policy is a three-strike zero tolerance policy, labeling bullying as a level 2 offense. This policy calls for an array of disciplinary procedures depending on incident number and severity, ranging from exclusion from extracurricular activities to expulsion.

The Study Site was selected because of the large n of middle school teachers covered by this exact policy as well as the absence of several confounding factors present at other sites with similar policies (e.g. a district emphasis on bullying prevention including websites and a parental anti-bullying hotline). The selected site does not currently have a public anti-bullying campaign². As such, findings are more attributable

² At the time of online-survey data collection the district had not had any district-wide efforts regarding bullying. Between survey data collection and the beginning of interview data collection, an incident occurred at the study-site that prompted the district to send an

to the presence of the comprehensive policy. Further, Pennsylvania does not currently have a statewide anti-bullying policy (Temkin, 2008).

All procedures and measures were approved by both Pennsylvania State University's IRB as well as the Study Site's IRB before data collection.

Participants

Participants were teachers from five middle schools located in the Study Site, as described above. Middle school teachers were selected as the target population for this study based on the finding that relationally aggressive behaviors seem to peak during this age-range (Bjorkvist et al., 1992; Underwood, 2003). After securing approval from the district, emails were sent to all teachers in these middle schools, through their principals, inviting their participation in an online survey and an opportunity to volunteer in a follow-up in-person interview with the investigator. Participants on the online survey were comprised of 35 female and 4 male teachers (mean age= 42.6 SD=10.2), representing 25.7% of teachers from these schools. Forty-two percent (n=16) of the sample taught English, communications or language arts, 28.2% (n=11) taught mathematics or science, 18% (n=7) taught elective courses, and 10% (n=4) taught in special classrooms (ELL or Special Education). Years teaching varied from 1 to 42 years, with the majority (n=20) having more than 14 years of teaching experience. Participants in the interview component were eight female teachers who volunteered at the conclusion of the online survey.

informational packet to all teachers in the district, which stressed the importance of understanding the various forms of bullying and intervening in them.

Procedures

Each participant was given a link to an online survey hosted by the *PsychData* website. After confirming implied consent, the participants were asked to provide basic demographic information and then were presented with a revised version of the *Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire* (Craig, Henderson & Murphy, 2000) as described below.

Participants were then asked to provide their own definition of bullying, to decide whether or not their district had an anti-bullying policy, and to describe the contents of that policy. Finally, participants were asked to provide contact information if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview with the investigator. Volunteers were subsequently contacted by the investigator to arrange for a 25-30 minute semi-structured interview surrounding their understanding of bullying and the district's involvement in student bullying.

The Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire (Craig, Henderson & Murphy, 2000) was previously designed to assess teachers' perceptions of the differences between physical aggression, verbal aggression, and social exclusion as forms of bullying, seriousness, and willingness to intervene. The original survey contains eighteen vignettes, with each aggression type having six vignettes, three each for witnessed or not-witnessed. Three additional control vignettes were also included in the original questionnaire. Each vignette was followed by the following questions: (1) Is this bullying (yes/no); (2) How serious is this event (1-5, not very serious – very serious); (3) How likely would you be to intervene in this event (1-5, not very likely – very likely). Cronbach's Alphas for the two scales on the original questionnaire were fairly high, ranging from .69-.85. The original *Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire* has been used in several previous studies and has

consistently shown a significant difference between teacher ratings of social exclusion and both verbal and physical aggression (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Nicolaides, Toda & Smith, 2002; Yoon & Kerber, 2003;).

The original questionnaire focuses on only one component of relational aggression—social exclusion—and as such did not fully satisfy the needs of the research questions at hand. To make the questionnaire more applicable to the given research questions, new vignettes were added based on examples from previous research to create specific categories for relational aggression (two versions: indirect & direct, based on Underwood, 2003), cyber-bullying, and sexual harassment in addition to physical and verbal aggression (Pronk & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2008; Simmons, 2002;). In adding these additional vignettes, vignettes for the other scales (physical and verbal aggression, witnessed and not witnessed) were reduced to two per category. Additionally, one original vignette (“You witness an boy pull the brastrap of a girl”) was a priori reclassified from physical aggression to sexual harassment, based on consultation with colleagues. One additional question was added to each vignette to allow participants to identify behaviors that they do not believe are bullying – “If this is not bullying, how would you describe this behavior?” The revised questionnaire contains 25 vignettes, with two vignettes forming each of the following scales: verbal (witnessed & not witnessed), physical (witnessed & not witnessed), direct relational (witnessed & not witnessed), and indirect relational (witnessed & not witnessed) and three in the categories of cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, and control. All vignettes used for the revised Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire are listed in Appendix A.

Although the original questionnaire focuses on two dimensions of bullying attitudes –perception of seriousness and likelihood of intervention, these components are highly correlated ($r = .72 - .87$) for the current sample. Given the small number of participants for this study, and therefore the low statistical power to detect unique associations for both these scales, the two questions were combined to form a single perceptions of severity scale, containing four items for the physical, verbal, direct relational, and indirect relational scales and six items for the cyber-bullying and sexual harassment scales. Cronbach’s Alphas for each of the revised attitudes scales are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Internal consistency for perceptions of severity by aggressor type

<i>Aggression Type</i>	<i>Cronbach's α</i>
Witnessed	
Physical Aggression	0.872
Verbal Aggression	0.825
Direct Relational Aggression	0.874
Indirect Relational Aggression	0.838
Sexual Harassment	0.802
Not Witnessed	
Physical Aggression	0.803
Verbal Aggression	0.803
Direct Relational Aggression	0.827
Indirect Relational Aggression	0.881
Cyber-bullying	0.899

Semi-Structured Interview.

Framework questions for the semi-structured interview were developed before all data collection in lines with submission to the Internal Review Board. Between the completion of the online survey collection and the semi-structured interviews, basic quantitative analyses were conducted following the advice of Creswell & Plano-Clark

(2004) to get a basic sense of whether differences in perceptions of the different forms of aggression exist for this sample. Using this information, the questions on the semi-structured interview were adjusted slightly to focus on why differences were observed. Additionally, between quantitative and qualitative data collection, an incident³ occurred that prompted the district to send, via email through principals, an informational pamphlet on bullying to teachers in the district. This pamphlet, which was subsequently forwarded to the author by one of the interview participants, contained a more detailed definition of bullying than the one contained in the student code of conduct, further detailing the district's commitment to including relational aggression. After learning about the incident and the district's response, an additional question regarding this information was added to the protocol. The semi-structured protocol is included in detail in Appendix B.

Participants met with the primary investigator at their convenience at a local coffee shop for a 25-30 minute interview. After signing consent forms, participants were first asked to restate their definitions of bullying and asked to describe how their district and school handles bullying. Following this discussion, participants were read the following definition of relational aggression and asked to consider whether they considered this to be bullying and how teachers approach this behavior:

³ The incident in question involved a third grade boy bringing a knife to his school to reportedly threaten his classmates who had been bullying him for months before. This summary is based on information from the interview participants and no official comment from the district could be obtained and no newspaper articles reporting on the incident could be found. However, most interview participants had heard about the incident and were able to comment on it.

Social Aggression, also called “Indirect” or “Relational” Aggression is defined as behavior with the intent to harm a victim that uses indirect means such as social exclusion, rumors or gossip, or negative body language.

Participants were allowed to and encouraged to move beyond the set questions in order to gain a bigger picture of the bullying issue in their district. Additionally, the investigator used member checks, or rephrasing of the participants’ answers, to ensure validity of the investigator’s interpretations.

Data Analysis Plan

Following the explanatory mixed-methods research design as described by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), the quantitative component was analyzed first in order to inform the follow-up interviews. Although the semi-structured protocol was not dramatically altered after the quantitative component, and qualitative interviewees could not be matched based on their responses because of low volunteer rates, the quantitative results served as a frame from which to guide exploration within the interviews.

Quantitative Analysis

Free-response answers within the quantitative survey were first coded by the author and informed by the responses; codes were not a priori determined. The author then explained the coding system to a colleague who then recoded the responses. Inter-rater reliability was 96.2%. Three responses were coded differently between the author and the second rater. These codes were resolved through conferencing between the first and the second raters.

Analyses of differences between labeling of bullying and perceptions of severity were conducted following the methods of previous work involving the Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith, 2002;

Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Repeated Measures ANOVA allows for within-person comparisons of multi-dimensional factors (Howell, 2007). For my purposes, this test allows me to assume that the same latent definition of bullying was being applied to each type of aggression (physical, verbal, direct relational, indirect relational, cyber-bullying, and sexual harassment) and under each condition (witnessed vs. unwitnessed) within each participant's responses, thereby reducing the error associated with these responses. This method thus allows the partitioning of variance based on differing types of aggression from variance existing between participants. For these analyses, because my research questions focused on whether differences exist between types of aggression and not what personal characteristics contribute to perceiving such differences, this method is appropriate.

Even though the sample size for this analysis was small ($n=39$), repeated measures provides similar power as a between group analysis. Although the between-subjects degrees of freedom here was 38, as it would be in a between group analysis, within-subject degrees of freedom, in our main model of 4 factors and 2 conditions, was $39 * (4*2 - 1) = 273$. Thus, even with a small sample this analysis procedure provides enough power to detect significance for within-subject results; it did not, however, provide enough power to detect between-person effects – such as effects by gender or other characteristics – and as such was not used for this project (Howell, 2007).

An important consideration for repeated measures ANOVA is the assumption of homogeneity of variance, or sphericity. In cases where either or both covariances along the diagonal (i.e. between the same level of a factor) and off the diagonal (i.e. between different levels of a factor) are not consistent, the sphericity assumption is violated, and

thus findings from traditional repeated measures ANOVA may not be valid. To use repeated measures ANOVA when sphericity is not met, degrees of freedom for both error and effect terms must be altered to reflect these inconsistencies. These corrections lead to more conservative tests, through which finding significance is more difficult. Two corrections are available, depending on how far the data are from the sphericity assumption: the Greenhouse-Geisser, a more conservative adjustment, and the Huynh-Feldt, a less conservative test. These adjustments are only relevant for factors with three or more levels (Howell, 2007).

Mauhcly's test of sphericity for the current data was significant at $p < .001$ representing a departure from the sphericity assumption. As such, all reported results in the following chapter were based on repeated measures ANOVA with Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment.

When the within-subjects effect is significant for a given factor, this indicates that at least some levels of the factor are significantly different from each other. To determine which levels are significantly different, univariate comparisons between levels are conducted. The probability of Type I error, or falsely finding significant results, increases when multiple comparisons are made with the same data. This probability, also called the family wise error rate, can be used to adjust the standard for significance, α , such that each of the multiple comparisons can be considered as a group at as stringent a test if only one test was made. A Bonferroni Correction thus sets threshold of significance to α/n , where n indicates the number of pairwise comparisons. For the current data, α for the pairwise comparisons between aggression levels was set to .01 (Howell, 2007).

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative interviews were coded based on a grounded-theory approach, following the methodology presented by Corbin and Strauss (2008). Grounded theory refers to constructing theory from themes and constructs contained within qualitative data. Although much of grounded theory depends on interpretation and multiple stories can be found in a single dataset, the purpose of analysis is to build theory related to the questions at hand. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) point out, questioning is the key to finding answers. As such, analysis of this data followed closely with the final question presented above. Since this qualitative research is part of an explanatory mixed-methods project, the validity of the theory can be compared to the broader quantitative analysis; does the theory developed explain the broader results found in the quantitative study? (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006).

After all eight interviews were transcribed, two interviews were selected for initial code development. Both interviews were hand-coded using in-vivo techniques, or using direct wordings from the interviews as codes. As these codes grew, broader researcher-defined categories were developed. Further, as themes emerged from these two interviews, they were noted and memoed. These initial themes made frequent reference to the various actors in the schools system and their role in enforcing anti-bullying policies, including administration, teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, themes regarding the necessity and appropriateness of the policy emerged paralleled with themes regarding the lack of penetration and adoption of the policy. Both categories of themes align with pre-established theoretical frameworks. Corbin and Strauss (2008) indicate that it is appropriate to use theoretical frameworks with grounded-theory analyses when those frameworks “complement, extend, and verify the findings” (pg. 39). By matching the

themes found in this data to broad theoretical frameworks, the current findings become more generalizable and valid (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The remaining six interviews were coded using these framework of implementation theory, as presented by McLaughlin (1987), and as discussed in the introduction. The process of constant comparison was used to compare the accounts of each participant to confirm consistency in the theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Chapter 3: RESULTS

Results from this mixed-methods analysis will be presented following the order of research questions as presented in the previous chapter. The first four questions refer to results from the online-survey. The final question draws upon the findings from the follow-up interviews.

Q1: Do teachers in a district with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy include relational aggression in their personal definitions of bullying?

All participants on the online survey provided at least some definition of bullying. The vast majority of definitions (95%) did not include reference to relational aggression, and varied in terms of complexity and detail. Presented in terms of increasing complexity, thirty-one percent of personal definitions (n=12) indicated that bullying was behavior that was intended to hurt, but did not further describe the behaviors involved (ex. “When something is said or done that is intentionally hurtful to another”). Thirteen percent (n=5) of the definitions went beyond the definitions in the first category, for instance by including reference to a power differential between bullies and victims, but did not indicate that bullying can also use emotional means or cause emotional harm (ex. “Someone who decides that they are going to constantly pick on someone who is smaller than them in stature or in power. By power I mean someone who is stronger or in a higher position than the other person”). Forty-nine percent (n=19) provided definitions that made at least some reference to emotional means or emotional harm. The final 5% (n=2) provided more-or-less complete definitions that included direct reference to relationally-aggressive or indirect behaviors (ex. “...Unfortunately, I think kids are quite saavy [sic] about hiding their bullying”). These findings are illustrated in Figure 1.

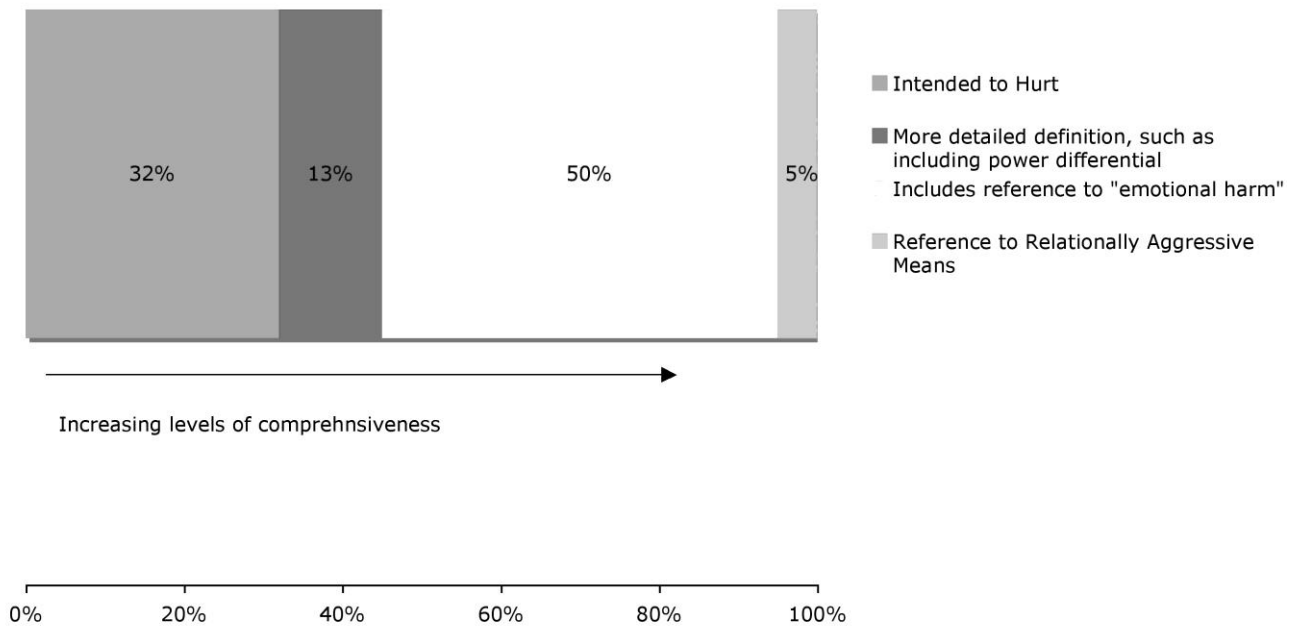


Figure 1. Teachers' personal definitions of bullying as function of increasing comprehensiveness

O2: Do teachers know about, and can they accurately report, the district's anti-bullying policy?

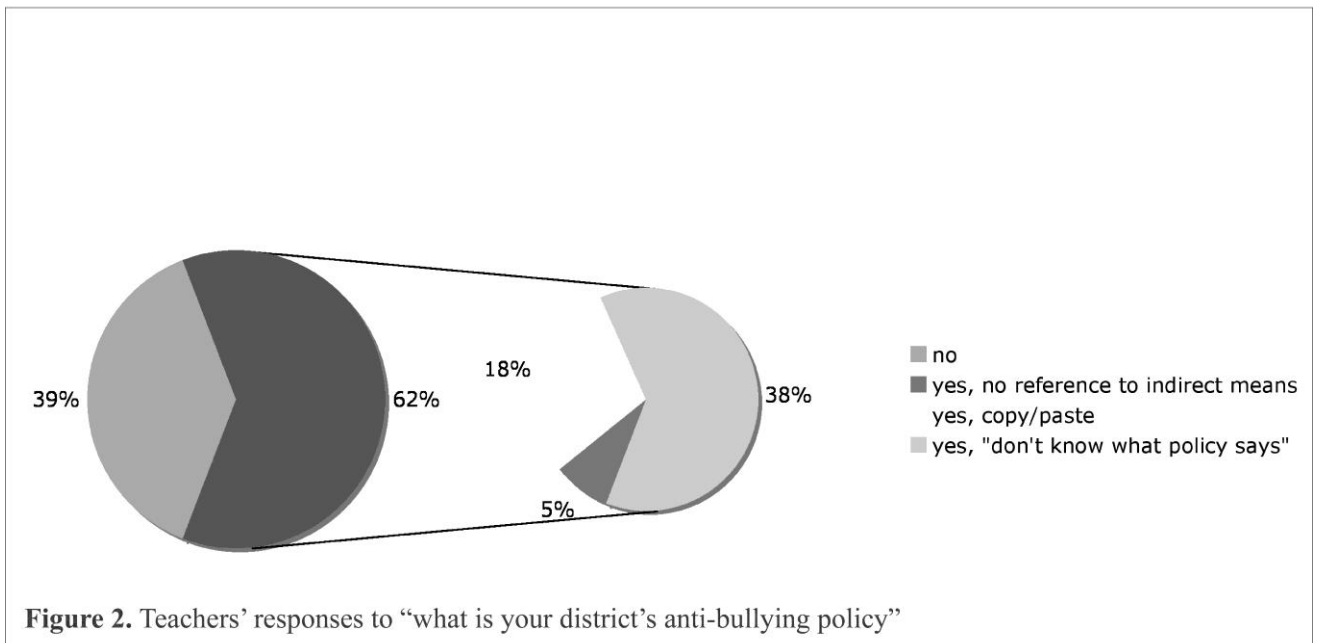
As presented in the previous chapter, teachers were asked if their district had an anti-bullying policy, and, if yes, what that policy said. As a point of reference, again the district's policy reads as following:

Bullying may include physical contact, name calling and taunting, where there is intent to harm by one student or group of students against another. *Bullying may also include indirect means, such as spreading rumors or engaging in cyber bullying.*" (Study Site, 2007, pg. 9).

None of the 39 teachers accurately reported the district policy in their own words.

Although 62% of participants thought their district had an anti-bullying policy, five

percent (n=2) gave a definition but did not include indirect or cyber-bullying in their definition (ex. “Bullying - intentionally, deliberately harming a child either physically or verbally”), eighteen percent (n=7) copy and pasted the definition directly from the student handbook, and the final 38% (n=15) reported that they did not know what the policy says and would need to look it up (ex. “Not exactly sure what the policy is, but it is unacceptable and it is listed on the district website”). Although the question was did not explicitly specify the expectation of personal interpretation, the lack of any accurate definitions that were not directly copied-and-pasted suggests that none of these teachers have internalized the definition to the point of free-recall. These findings are represented in Figure 2.



Q3: Do teachers report significant differences in how they define and view as serious cases of relational aggression vs. other forms of bullying? &

Q4: Do teachers distinguish cases of sexual harassment in light of a comprehensive bullying policy?

In order to examine whether significant differences emerge in how teachers understand the various forms of aggression examined, a 2 (witness/not witness) x 4 (physical/verbal/direct relational/indirect relational) repeated measure ANOVA was performed for both labeling as bullying and perceptions of severity. Because the cyber-bullying items were exclusively non-witnessed and sexual harassment items were exclusively witnessed, additional models were run using only the witnessed items for comparison with sexual harassment and using only non-witnessed items for comparison with cyber-bullying.

Labeling as Bullying.

Means and SD for labeling of bullying are presented in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 3. In the first model, there was not a significant interaction between witness and aggression type. Main effects were found for both witness, $F(1, 38) = 12.776$ $p=.001$, and aggression type, $F(2.01, 76.48) = 43.021$ $p<.001$. Post hoc comparisons with Bonferroni correction at $\alpha=.01$ reveal significant differences (all $p<.005$) between all forms of aggression except between physical and verbal aggression ($p=ns$). Indirect relational aggression is less likely to be labeled as bullying than all other forms of aggression, and direct relational aggression is less likely to be labeled as bullying than verbal and physical aggressions. All forms of aggression are more likely to be labeled as bullying than the control items.

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for labelling as bullying (0=no, 1=yes), and perceptions of severity (1=not serious - 5= very serious)

<i>Aggression Type</i>	Labelling as Bullying		Perceptions of Severity	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Witnessed				
Physical Aggression	1.000	0.000	4.66	0.600
Verbal Aggression	0.949	0.154	4.53	0.585
Direct Relational Aggression	0.680	0.389	3.86	0.871
Indirect Relational Aggression	0.487	0.437	3.17	1.02
Sexual Harassment	0.709	0.376	4.68	0.423
Not Witnessed				
Physical Aggression	0.872	0.221	4.41	0.627
Verbal Aggression	0.795	0.297	4.18	0.666
Direct Relational Aggression	0.603	0.366	3.82	0.817
Indirect Relational Aggression	0.346	0.400	3.36	0.949
Cyber-bullying	0.752	0.250	3.88	0.887
Control	0.094	0.202	2.41	0.98

The second model, with non-witnessed behaviors and cyber-bullying, also shows a significant main effect for aggression type $F(3.03, 115.04) = 23.377 p < .001$. Post hoc comparisons show that cyber-bullying is significantly more likely to be labeled as bullying than both indirect and direct relational aggression (both $p < .001$) but not significantly different from the labeling of verbal and physical aggression.

The final model, with witnessed behaviors and the inclusion of sexual harassment also revealed a similar main effect for aggression type, $F(2.94, 111.68) = 25.047 p < .001$. Post hoc comparisons with Bonferroni correction reveal that sexual harassment is significantly less likely to be labeled as bullying than physical aggression ($p < .001$) and verbal aggression ($p = .001$), significantly more likely to be labeled bullying than indirect relational aggression ($p < .01$), and not significantly different from direct relational aggression ($p = ns$).

Exploring the labels participants indicated if items were selected as not bullying, two of the three sexual harassment items were always labeled as sexual harassment by all participants who indicated they were not bullying (n=15 for SH1 and n=11 for SH3). The other sexual harassment item (SH2), which involved overhearing students commenting on another student’s perceived homosexuality, had the fewest teachers not labeling as bullying (n=8). The labels associated with this item included sexual harassment (n=3), discrimination (n=3), and gossip (n=2).

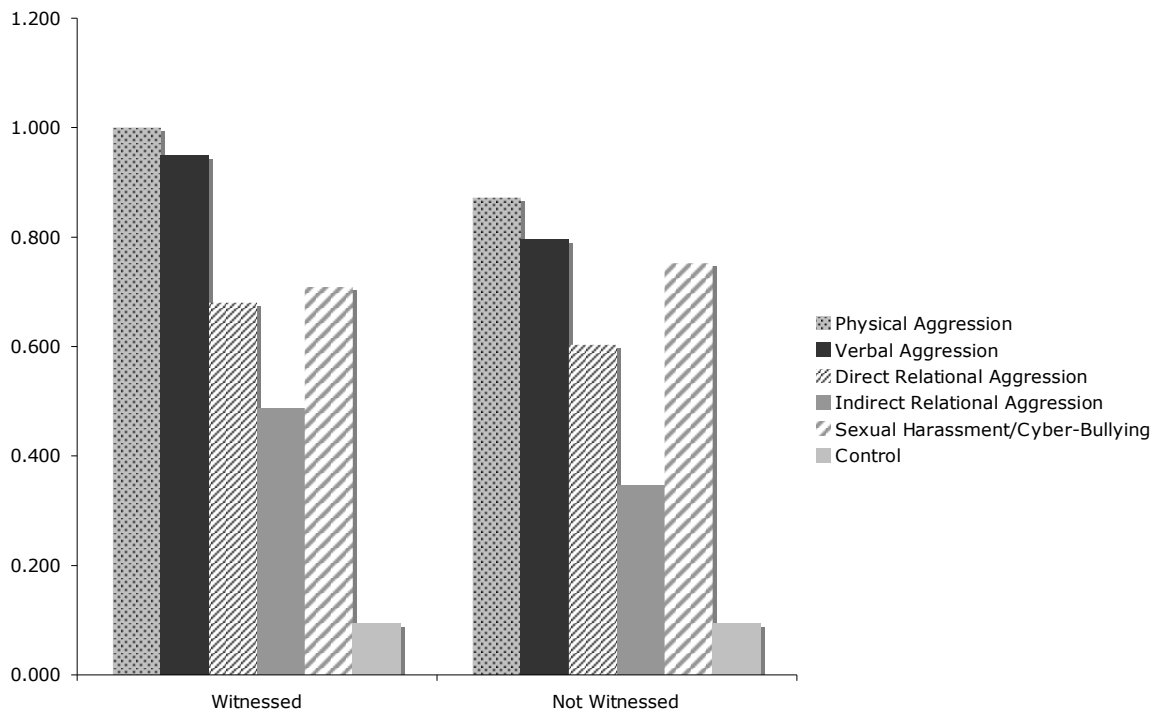


Figure 3. Labelling as bullying by aggression and witness type

Perceptions of Severity.

Means and SD for perceptions of severity are presented in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 4. Both main effects for aggression type ($F(1.82, 69.12)=100.94, p<.001$) and witness ($F(1, 38) = 6.622 p<.05$) as well as the interaction between aggression type and witness ($F(2.21, 84.1)= 7.504, p<.01$) were significant. Post-hoc comparisons with

Bonferroni correction revealed significant differences between all aggression types ($p < .005$) in a linear pattern: physical > verbal > direct relational > indirect relational.

Witnessing the event yields marginally higher perceived severity for physical ($F(1, 38) = 7.16$ $p < .05$) and significantly higher perceived severity for verbal ($F(1,38) = 18.72$, $p = .001$) aggressions, but did not significantly impact perceived severity of direct or indirect relational aggression.

The second model, comparing only non-witnessed aggressions to cyber-bullying revealed that cyber-bullying is perceived as significantly more severe than indirect relational aggression ($p < .005$) and significantly less severe than physical ($p < .001$) and verbal aggressions ($p < .005$). Cyber-bullying is not perceived as any more or less severe than direct relational aggression. The final model, comparing sexual harassment to witnessed events of aggression found that sexual harassment is perceived as more severe than both direct and indirect relational aggressions ($p < .001$) but not significantly different from perception of severity for physical and verbal aggressions.

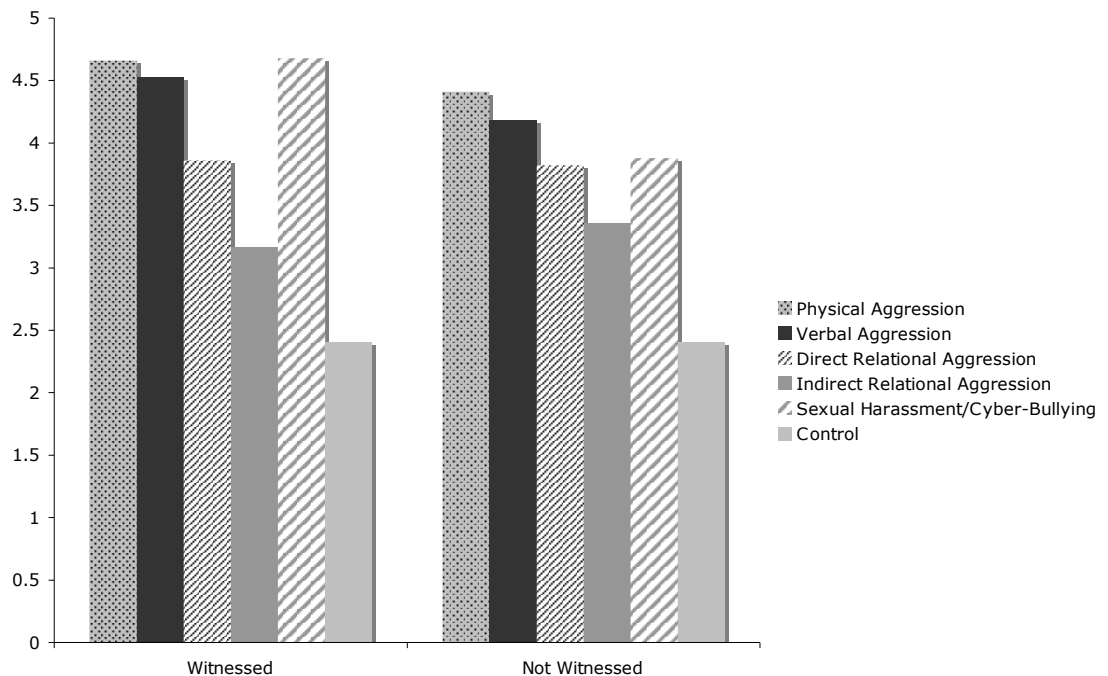


Figure 4. Perceptions of severity by aggression and witness type

Q5: What structures and mechanisms have inhibited the successful implementation of the district's anti-bullying policy?

It is clear from the results of the previous questions that teachers' generally do not have a clear sense of the district's anti-bullying policy and do not implement it to the policy's stated guidelines based on their responses to bullying-related vignettes. Both forms of relational aggression, although identified as bullying and as more severe than control items, did not illicit the same response from teachers as the more commonly accepted forms of bullying—verbal and physical aggression. In order to better understand these findings, as described in the previous chapter, eight follow-up interviews were conducted and analyzed within the framework of implementation theory, specifically of will and capacity (McLaughlin, 1987). Through this frame, a broad picture emerges regarding the complexities of implementing an anti-bullying policy with little procedural regulation. Teachers, as well as the other actors in the school system, are afforded the autonomy to implement the policy, yet lack the resources and information to do so adequately.

Teacher and Principal Will In Implementing Policy

The overarching theme that emerged from these interviews was that while the policy is perceived as “progressive” and necessary, the various actors in the school system are autonomous to implement and support the policy. Each actor has differing levels of commitment, or will, and different external pressures influencing that commitment. Additionally, each actor's actions towards the policy has a direct effect on the other actors' ability to engage with the policy. Although each actor chooses how to

engage with the policy, because all actors are nested within a single school, the institutional will often drives individuals' implementation. For instance, if principals don't support teachers' enforcement of the policy, teachers are unlikely to have success in following through with the policy's intentions. In contrast, principals who require attention and action towards a policy might influence the beliefs and motivations of teachers surrounding that policy (McLaughlin, 1987).

Seven of the eight interview participants made reference to the necessity of support from administration. Sandra⁴, a teacher with over twenty years of teaching experience in the study district made this assessment:

As far as bullying and any issue goes, school is only as strong or is influenced as its principal. If the administration puts those things into play and sticks with them, then they're going to work. If the administration is weak and does not, then they're not going to work. And I've been in enough buildings in the district to see where weak administration causes for a breakdown in social norms, and bullying is one of those things.

If the principal stressed the importance of both understanding and intervening in bullying, teachers were more likely to share this sentiment.

Many of the interviewed teachers felt frustrated that administrators fail to recognize bullying as a stepping-stone to more serious behavior. Many made the observation that altercations between students receive little more than a warning unless they develop into physical fights. Teachers felt like the burden of disciplining bullying incidents fell on them and that they were actively discouraged from sending such events through administrative disciplinary procedures as would be prescribed by the policy.

Felicia, an English as a Second Language teacher made this observation:

⁴ All names have been changed to protect anonymity

[Bullying is] dealt with after there are fights that are caused by bullying. In other words, in my experience it's seldom that the bullying itself gets taken care of—its mostly in my experience that I feel that I as a teacher have to deal with it. Whether its calling a parent or something rather than it getting to the administration.

Wanda had similar frustrations, stating that:

[Bullying] really doesn't get dealt with until its serious. So, like the minor incidents of bullying are swept under the rug until something more significant happens.

When bullying incidents did make their way to the administration, the teachers found that perpetrators would receive no consequences for their actions, often only being required to have a conference with the principal, victims, and parents, but losing no privileges or having no note made in their disciplinary records contrary to policy guidelines. Without support for the policy from the administration, teachers felt that students do not see bullying as having serious consequences, and thus, bullying persists. Wanda thought this was a huge problem for handling bullying, and, later, more serious incidents, in schools:

I think the message then becomes "don't get caught again." Because it's the same kids. The same kids who bully on a minor level are the same kids who further that along as they go through school and intensify their bullying. They don't stop just because you say "that's not nice."

In general, the teachers felt that the administration's attitudes towards bullying trickled down to the teachers and students in the schools. Without the principal's support, teachers felt inadequate in preventing, and intervening in, bullying. Further, teachers felt undermined by the lack of commitment shown by administrators, and thus lost motivation to follow through with the policy. Teachers' ability to engage with the anti-bullying policy, then, was a direct result of the principal's commitment to enforcing the policy. Because bullying was not a priority for the principals, it could not be a priority for

teachers. Additionally, because the administration did not view bullying as deserving serious consequences, neither did students.

Both internal support and external pressure are often needed in order to facilitate implementation (McLaughlin, 1987). Yet, teachers felt that there was little external motivation that required them and their fellow teachers to engage with the policy.

Christina, an English teacher, for instance, expressed a desire for more accountability:

You know what I think it just comes down to, there's no form. That sounds simple, but you know when someone's involved in a bullying incident there's no piece of paper that says "this is what you do and this is how you follow up." So unfortunately I think it's just that simple, that there is no paper trail to keep for bullying.

Felicia further joked that it would be "great" if a system such as No Child Left Behind could be established around bullying since accountability, in her view, seems the only way for all actors in the school system to become engaged with a policy.

But realistically, I don't see it happening, but if it could be that would be great. I think the lack of accountability for bullying is a huge problem. Some teachers just don't care unless their job is on the line.

The teachers felt that without such a framework, many overlook incidents that would necessitate action under the policy. As McLaughlin (1987) points out, without such structure "opportunities for cooptation, symbolic response, or non-compliance are multiple" (pg. 173).

The district, at least before the onset of this study, had few serious consequences from bullying in its schools. Without such consequences, compliance with the policy seems less pertinent. A shift in these consequences, however, might trigger more institutional motivation to address bullying as an issue. In the current case, this is quite

clearly the case. Between the online survey and the interviews, a third grade boy brought a knife to school in order to take some stand on the bullies who had been long torturing him without intervention of the school or teacher. The district subsequently sent a district wide emailed packet to all the teachers in schools with information about bullying and its potential consequences. The interviewed teachers, who had received the packet, made it clear that this was a novel move by the district and only done as a response to the knife incident. As the interviews were conducted soon after this incident, and the quantitative data was collected before the incident, it is impossible to know what the impact of the districts' actions had on teachers' motivation towards preventing bullying. Still, the incident provides further evidence that little action was being taken before the incident.

Further, normative beliefs about bullying may not be able to change by policy alone. Although the district's policy includes relational aggression, the policy provides no pressure to change definitions of bullying, and thus little incentive to influence the will to change (McLaughlin, 1987). All interviewed teachers reported that other teachers and their principals often felt that many bullying behaviors, specifically relationally aggressive behaviors, were normative and thus did not see them as an issue worthy of attention despite the policy's mandate. For instance, Wanda, made this observation:

[F]rom administrator to administrator you'll get the "boys will be boys," "kids will be kids," or "that's not nice, don't say that," with little actual concern for the behavior.

Sandra added:

It's on the teacher. Some teachers are very in your face and very forward with "that's not acceptable in my classroom" and they won't...they'll stop it in the halls, they'll stop it on the street. Other teachers don't want to deal with it because if it's not directly connected to what they're doing.

Felicia, had similar sentiments:

My personal feeling is that unless [bullying] somehow strikes a chord with you personally, that because of the way discipline is handled, many teachers don't really see that as something they need to share with the administrators.

All three teachers here express the view that how bullying is handled is based on personal convictions and personal thresholds. Despite the policy's broad inclusion of several different forms of aggression, the policy is only realized if the teachers or administrators take an active interest in the policy.

Even for those who thought they were following the policy, many adjusted the mandates of the policy to fit their personal beliefs. In essence, they adjusted the policy to better fit with their observations of what was necessary for their own classrooms. It is that, as McLaughlin (1987) writes, "failure to implement [policy] as planners hoped may signal [teachers'] assessment that new practices are not as good as the ones they replace or [teachers'] uncertainty about outcomes for children" (pg. 174). For instance, many interviewed teachers spoke to a commitment to reducing bullying, including relational aggression, but, when asked about how they would approach relational incidents, implied they would take fundamentally different steps in their intervention as opposed to physical or verbal incidents. Teachers' felt that the policy did not acknowledge the fundamental differences between rumor-spreading and physical fights. Sandra, who reported that she knew of the district's policy towards bullying and the set of consequences outlined in that policy, indicated that she takes a very different disciplinary approach towards relational aggression, if simply because she does not see those forms of aggression as having the same hurt potential:

[A]lthough verbal and social aggression are serious, there's not that immediate danger that's there with the physical aggression and I've seen some kids get really hurt with physical fights.

Teachers implied that they have made a strong commitment to reducing bullying and support the policy, and yet, report differentiated view on forms of bullying, despite the equity implied by the policy. Teachers instead use their prior beliefs about bullying to inform the choices they are making with regards to the policy.

Interestingly, every teacher mentioned wanting less autonomy in determining when to intervene and what actions are appropriate. The teachers expressed desire for more detail in the policy and greater differentiation between incidents within the policy itself. Most indicated that they did not think incidents of rumor spreading or verbal teasing should be treated the same as physical altercations. Because the policy did not provide different consequences for varying forms of bullying, the interviewed teachers felt that other teachers might just choose to ignore the policy based on their personal beliefs and understanding of the relative seriousness of the various bullying behaviors. Creating a clearer and better-specified policy, then, might ensure greater implementation (McLaughlin, 1987). Michelle, an English teacher, described it this way:

You know, bullying is one of those gray areas where how you decide how to handle it as an administrator, as a teacher, is up to you. There's nothing real specific about. We do have a student code of conduct that has level 1, level 2 infractions. And bullying fits in there, I think it's an infraction that's a level 2 infraction. But because bullying is so broad, I think it actually needs to be defined like there is level 1 bullying, there is level 2 bullying, there is level 3 bullying. I think it just needs to be defined better.

Still, all participants recognized the policy as an important first step at creating such a system. The policy represents the first step in the change process, and with certain key

considerations, could be successful in the future. Kathleen, a math teacher, made this comment about the policy:

[It is] perhaps the most proactive thing the district has done with regards to bullying is that they have a definition. I always call that proactive and an important first step.

Wanda shared similar thoughts:

[The policy] has given [teachers] more to think about. In my generation of growing up, we just considered bullying where someone was just picking on someone else. Now with the Internet and the indirect forms of aggression that we're seeing have some serious consequences, its important to have some guidance in understanding what is bullying.

With the right structures and knowledge bases, the policy could influence overall institutional change.

Organizational Capacity

Although individual and institutional will and motivation is important for policy implementation, if a school does not have the capacity in which to realize the policy, it has little chance of fruition. Capacity encompasses the structural supports by which to motivate change processes, including both financial and symbolic resources. Perhaps simpler to enact and provide than individual and institutional will (McLaughlin, 1987), the interviewed teachers suggested that the Study Site did not have the resources to encourage the implementation of their anti-bullying policy.

At the broadest level, the teachers implied that the Study Site simply did not have the funding to sustain any meaningful educational or supporting programs through which to inform the anti-bullying policy's agenda. Few outside organizations were engaging with schools and none of the programs reported by teachers were evidence based or

giving any meaningful information to students or teachers. Many of the limited programs were also reported to have been cut due to financial limitations. Wanda, for instance, mentioned a program that ran out of funding after four months and the devastating impact it had on the kids:

We're trying to make the kids realize the funding ran out, but to them its just another incident of someone who said they were going to be there, they start opening up and boom, they're gone. So it's hard to address something unless its on-going.

Further, while some teachers reported participating in professional development focused on the issue of bullying, they alone were expected to inform their schools about the information they learned, limiting the interpretations from these programs to the interpretations of that single teacher. Felicia described a professional development course she took part in:

One teacher from each school from [the district] went...and then we reported on the course to our schools

Wanda also mentioned participating in professional development surrounding bullying, but added the caveat that:

But that was YEARS ago. We haven't had, as far as my knowledge goes, we haven't had anything probably within the last five years.

The lack of information flowing to the school about bullying prevention, then, limits the ability of the school to even consider how best to approach bullying as an issue. Further the lack of consistency in emphasizing bullying is of issue, too. Michele posited that:

I think [messages about bullying] have to be consistent. Sure we've done things about bullying before. You know little programs will come in and the is gone. I think it has to be a consistent piece and I think that's part of the problem with a

lot of things we bring into the schools—it's not consistent. It's not there all the time.

The lack of information about bullying limits the ability for any individual to develop the will of motivation to implement the policy. As such, without such capacity, implementation is unlikely.

Teachers also felt that the structure of relationships in the schools and the level of comfort between students and teachers impeded full implementation of the policy. A consistent theme among teachers was that students must feel comfortable enough to inform teachers about the issues going on, and teachers must be open and willing to respond. Without such a flow of information, the problem becomes invisible. For instance, Kathleen made clear that she thought relational aggression was a serious issue, but had little way of knowing about it:

Something overt has to happen to cause us to investigate. We just don't know what is going on with these more subtle forms of bullying. Thinking about being able to find out without them telling us, I don't see any other way; there has to be some initiative by the student to let us know. We wouldn't know without them telling us.

Other teachers spoke to student knowledge as a problem in implementing the policy.

Teachers felt that many students were unaware that relationally aggressive behaviors were included within the district policy, and related to this, were unaware of the serious consequences of those behaviors. Sandra made this observation:

[W]hat's important is making the kids aware that what they are doing is really bullying, a lot of them don't think it is. They think, "oh I'm just joshing, I'm just kidding, I'm just fooling around." And when you tell them, "you're hurting somebody else's feelings, you're hurting that student" you're making that student more aware of what they're doing. Because a lot of them don't comprehend that a lot of what they're doing can permanently hurt or scar a child.

The interview teachers implied, however, that the burden for making the student aware of their behavior still lies with the teacher. There needs to be open communication with the students about bullying in order to make students both comfortable enough to report bullying in their classrooms and aware of what is considered bullying and its potential harm. This is not yet evident in the Study Site, at least according to the teachers.

Under McLaughlin's (1987) construction of implementation theory, the Study Site shows little readiness to fully commit to the resources necessary to fulfill the goals of the policy. It is clear why, then, substantial differences were found in the quantitative analysis – many teachers are completely unaware of the policy or have little regard for it. The lack of institutional support therefore renders the policy as merely symbolic in nature, with little-to-no institutional backing. However, if the district engages in building both capacity and will, it is possible that the organization can change and thereby influence the attitudes and beliefs of teachers toward bullying.

Chapter 4: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Discussion and Implications

The push for increased and expanded anti-bullying legislation and school policies has little empirical evidence demonstrating the success of such actions. Results from the present survey reveal that, despite the existence of a comprehensive policy, teachers show significant differences in how they understand relational aggression as compared to other forms of aggressive behaviors. Teachers are significantly less likely to describe relational aggressive behaviors as bullying or perceive them as serious. Though the design of this study was not longitudinal, and therefore cannot demonstrate what effect the policy has actually had on teachers' definitions and beliefs, it is clear that, at this point, the policy has not yet been fully successful in guiding teachers to view relationally aggressive behaviors, in addition to verbal and physical behaviors, as bullying.

Cyber-bullying, on the other hand, seems to be considered bullying more regularly than relational bullying. This might be because of increased exposure to the behavior by way of media and other reports and by the nature of the evidence. Unlike relational aggression, cyber-bullying often has a paper-trail in the form of a webpage, IM transcripts, or cell phone text messages that can readily be used as proof of the incident. Rumors, on the other hand, are harder to prove, and they are often the product of hearsay. Perhaps, then, the differences in perceptions of relational aggression and other forms of aggression reflect simply being unable to fully decipher and prove the situation. This can also clearly be seen in looking at the difference between direct and indirect forms of relational aggression. Though both are significantly different than verbal and physical

forms of aggression, indirect is more so, indicating that it is even more difficult to evaluate those situations.

Results additionally show that nearly 39% of the sample rejected the default selection of “bullying” for at least the most overt sexual harassment vignette (a boy snapping a girl’s bra strap) and free labeled it accurately. This suggests that some teachers do understand and maintain the distinction between bullying and sexual harassment. This does not and cannot dismiss the concern that broadening definitions of bullying might reduce the distinction between bullying and sexual harassment (Stein, 2003). It does show that, at the current state of implementation in the Study Site, this is less of a general effect than might be predicted, at least for overt incidents of sexual harassment. Only eight percent of participants accurately labeled the less direct form of sexual harassment (rumors about homosexuality), however, indicating that perhaps for incidents that are less definitively sexual harassment, the broadening of the bullying definition might be a concern if the distinctions between bullying and sexual harassment are not made explicit.

Perhaps the most surprising finding from the quantitative survey involved the realization that none of the sample provided an adequate non-copy-pasted rendition of the district policy. This could be the result of two possibilities. First, the question did not explicitly ask for a definition in the participant’s own words and as such the participants might have thought it necessary to provide the exact definition. However, and more likely, most teachers responding to the survey had not internalized the definition to the point where they could simply report it back without looking it up. This is further evident by the 38% who reported that they would need to look the definition up because they did

not know it off hand. This is striking, considering teachers likely will not have the definition handy if and when an incident occurs. Without an internalization of the definition, it is then not a surprise that differences between relational aggression and other forms of aggression emerge in this sample.

This also provides good evidence that the district lacks the overall structure and support to implement the policy. These findings are mirrored in the follow-up interviews with the teachers, which indicate that because of the nature of loosely coupled systems, which provides little accountability for following the policy, as well as the lack of absorptive capacity and ownership, to inform and support the policy's implementation, the policy's goals has not yet been realized. While teachers viewed the policy, and the definition contained therein, as an important starting point, they suggested that there were individual differences in how supported the policy was once it reached the school and classroom levels. The policy itself contains little specific guidance for how to handle incidents of bullying, and, because it does not differentiate intended consequences between physical incidents and other forms of aggression, teachers felt like the procedural guidelines in the policy were inadequate for school's day-to-day realities. Further, because the policy contains no accountability for teachers or principals to actually enforce the policy, those without a personal commitment to reducing bullying behavior may not be influenced to do so. Finally, teachers perceive the district as lacking the resources and drive to provide the institutional support needed to fully engage with the policy.

Together, these results suggest that an anti-bullying policy cannot be fully successful without administrative and teacher buy-in as well as directive procedural

guidelines and accountability. These ideas are by no means novel. Several texts directed at schools and districts specifically outline these suggestions for those developing anti-bullying policies (Glover et al., 1998; Lee, 2004; Rigby, 2008; Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2008). In order to become more active and successful, policies must not only provide a comprehensive definition as was present in the Study Site, but must also provide specific examples of each behavior as well as specific and differentiated consequences for each. This would help prevent confusion between sexual harassment and bullying as well as help teachers understand and intervene in relational aggression and other indirect forms of bullying. Further, the policy should include information about reporting incidents to the district and specific and standardized paper work that must be filed. This would make teachers and principals more accountable to following the policy.

An anti-bullying policy alone cannot be the only form of bullying prevention and intervention in schools, however. The Study Site case seemed to rely solely on the existence of the policy to illustrate its commitment to bullying prevention. It is impossible to tell, without detailed study of multiple sites across the United States, if this is the norm. Still, the number of state-level policies that contain no procedural guidelines or model policies (Limber & Small, 2003; Swearer, Espelage & Napolitano, 2008; Temkin, 2008), might indicate that these anti-bullying policies cannot be fully implemented. Clear guidelines are an important first step in ensuring implementation of the underlying goals of policy (McLaughlin, 1987).

Returning to general considerations about zero-tolerance policies in general, it would seem that it is perhaps a violation of individual rights to implement anti-bullying policies without some form of educational component to inform students about their

behaviors. As Pedersen (2004) mentions, zero-tolerance policies can only be enforced when a student knowingly engages in the questionable behavior. Many teachers made reference to students not comprehending their actions as bullying. How can those students be held accountable for bullying when they are unaware they are engaging in those behaviors? Though no challenge to such statutes has been made, it is an important question to consider. Only when students are aware of all forms of bullying and their potential harm can the policies stand up to this important legal consideration.

As such, schools and districts must couple anti-bullying policies with direct action in schools. In addition to protecting the legality of such policies, these educational components can build the absorptive capacity necessary to attain desired shifts in values and norms and ownership of the policies. These actions could take the form of school-wide professional development for teachers, prevention and intervention programs for students, or some combination thereof. Further research is needed to determine what types of programs, and their necessary dosage, are needed in order to support the stated goals of an anti-bullying policy. Still, it would seem from the interviews with teachers that these elements are highly desired and supported in the Study Site context.

It is also clear, however, that any anti-bullying policy, whether used in conjunction with prevention programs and professional development or not, should not approach the bullying dynamic with a one-size-fits-all approach. These policies only remove students from the situation, doing nothing to mend the harm done to both the bullies and their victims. Approaches such as restorative justice require no evidence in order to address situations; instead restorative justice aims to repair the relational bonds between students involved in a bullying incident. The incident therefore becomes a

learning experience for all students instead of a simple removal of the offender (Morrison, 2002). Approaches such as this also remove the ambiguity of teachers having to define bullying, particularly in cases of relational aggression. In such cases, a judgment call need not be made – a complaint is treated as all other complaints and solutions are found from within. This is not to say however that extreme incidents – including physical fights and sexual harassment – should rely on this system, nor should prolonged and continued bullying through other forms. Instead, a system which staggers intervention would seem most appropriate, with removal used only for the most destructive offenses or as a last resort.

Still, as it stands now, the Study Site only employs the single zero-tolerance anti-bullying policy to address the issue. With more states, districts, and schools implementing anti-bullying policies, it is important to understand what impact those policies actually have. This study provides some insight into anti-bullying policies, but further research is necessary to gain a bigger picture of policies at work in schools and how to structure policy to better achieve the goal of reducing bullying.

Limitations

There are several limitations in the present study that should be addressed in future research. First, because this study is neither longitudinal with pre-testing of teachers before policy implementation, nor cross-sectional with comparison to a matched district without the policy, these results are not directly attributable to the policy. While these results parallel results to those found in previous research with either pre-service teachers or teachers in schools outside the US with its current push towards anti-bullying

policies, this analysis is unable to quantify the relative difference between having the policy and not.

Second, although this investigation found significant differences in perceptions of different forms of aggression, the sample size was small and not necessarily representative of the general population of teachers in the Study Site. Time and resource considerations prevented seeking a larger sample. Still, those who did participate were, theoretically, a self-selected group who felt a connection to the topic of bullying, and as such, finding significant differences within this group is, perhaps, even more meaningful. Because of the small sample size, it was not possible to test for differences based on school, school type, gender, or primary subject.

Finally, several variables emerged from the follow-up interviews that would have been informative to ask in the quantitative survey including involvement in professional development surrounding bullying and how many incidents of bullying each teacher addressed in the previous school year.

Conclusions and Future Directions

This investigation has demonstrated the importance of investigating the impacts of comprehensive anti-bullying policies and has found that simply establishing a comprehensive anti-bullying policy does not guarantee shifts in teachers' normative definitions of bullying. It is clear that anti-bullying policies alone cannot be expected to fully combat bullying in schools or draw attention to the often forgotten issue of relational aggression. Further research is needed, however, to explore these issues further.

First, it will be important in future research to conduct a study in which causality can better be inferred. By either having a controlled matched district or by following a

district from before implementation through the implementation process, the impact of the policy on teacher's definitions can be better understood. Second, future studies should attempt to recruit a larger, more representative sample and should test for characteristic differences in who is more likely to regard relational aggression as bullying. Finally, research concerning the impact of intervention and professional development programs in conjunction with policy should be explored.

References

- Ayers, W., Ayers, R., & Dohrn, B. (2001). Resisting zero tolerance. In: W. Ayers, B. Dohrn, & R. Ayers (Eds.). *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment in Our Schools*. NY: The New Press, xi-xvi.
- Baumen, S. & Del Rio, A. (2006). Preservice teachers' responses to bullying scenarios: Comparing physical, verbal, and relational bullying. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1), 219-231.
- Bjorkqvist, K., Lagerspetz, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1992). Do girls manipulate and boys fight?: Developmental trends in regard to direct and indirect Aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, 18, 117-127.
- Bogdsn, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. New York: Pearson.
- Boyce, M. (2003). Organizational learning is essential to achieving and sustaining change in higher education. *Innovative Higher Education*, 28(2), 119-136.
- Buhs, E., Ladd, G., & Herald, S. (2006). Peer exclusion and victimization: Processes that mediate the relation between peer group rejection and children's classroom engagement and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1), 1-13.
- Card, N.A., Stucky, B.D., Sawalani, G.M., & Little, T.D. (2008). Direct and indirect aggression during childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic review of gender differences, intercorrelations, and relations to maladjustment. *Child Development*, 79(5), 1185-1229.
- Chang, L. (2003). Variable effects of children's aggression, social withdrawal, and procial leadership as a function of teacher beliefs and behaviors. *Child Development*, 74(2), 535-548.
- Chesney-Lind, M., Morash, M., & Irwin, K. (2007). Policing girlhood? Relational aggression and violence prevention. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 5(3), 328-345.
- Cohen, D. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 12(3), 311-329.
- Coloroso, B. (2004). *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander: From pre-school to high school, how parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Corbin, J. & Stauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research, 3e*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Cornell, D. W. (2003). Guidelines for responding to student threats of violence. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41(6), 705-719.
- Craig, W. M. (1998). The relationship among bullying, victimization, depression, anxiety, and aggression in elementary school children. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 24(1), 123-130.
- Craig, W., Henderson, K. & Murphy, J. (2000). Prospective teachers' attitudes toward bullying and victimization. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 5-21.
- Creswell, J.W. & Plano-Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crick, N. (1996). The Role of Overt Aggression, Relational Aggression, and Prosocial Behavior in the Prediction of Children's Future Social Adjustment.

- Child Development*, 67(5), 2317-2327.
- Crick, N. & Bigbee, M. (1998). Relational and overt forms of peer victimization: A multiinformant approach. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66(2), 337-347.
- Crick, N., Bigbee, M. & Howes, C. (1996). Gender differences in children's normative beliefs about aggression: How do I hurt thee? Let me count the ways. *Child Development*, 67, 1004-1014.
- Crick, N. & Grotpeter, J. (1995). Relational aggression, gender and social-psychological adjustment. *Child Development*, 66, 710-722.
- Crick, N., Mosher, M. & Casas, J. (1997). Relational and overt aggression in preschool. *Developmental Psychology*, 33(4), 579-588.
- Crick, N. Nelson, D., Morales, J., Cullerton-Sen, C., Casas, J. & Hickman, S. (2001). Relational victimization in childhood and adolescence: I hurt you through the grapevine. In: J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Eds.). *Peer Harassment in School*. New York: The Guilford Press, 196-214.
- Crick, N., Ostrov, J., Appleyard, K., Jansen, E., & Casas, J. (2004). Relational aggression in early childhood. As printed in: Putallaz, M. & Bierman, K. (2004). *Aggression, antisocial behavior, and violence among girls*. New York: Guilford Press, 71-89
- Crick, N. & Werner, N. (1998). Response decision processes in relational and overt aggression. *Child Development*, 69(6), 1630-1639.
- Cullerton-Sen, C. & Crick, N. (2006). Understanding the effects of physical and relational victimization: The utility of multiple perspectives in predicting social-emotional adjustment. *School Psychology Review*, 34(2), 147-160.
- Dohrn, B. (2001). Look out kid/It's something you did. In: W. Ayers, B. Dohrn, & R. Ayers (Eds.). *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment in Our Schools*. NY: The New Press, 89-113.
- Downey, G., Irwin, L., Ramsay, M., & Aryduk, O. (2004). Rejection sensitivity and girls' aggression. In: M. Morretti, C. Odgers, & M. Jackson. *Girls and Aggression*. New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 7-26.
- Emmer, E. & Sough, L. (2001). Classroom management: A critical part of educational psychology, with implications for teacher education. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(2), 103-112
- Erickson, W.H. (2001). *The Report of Governor Bill Owens' Columbine Review Commission*.
- Eslea, M. & Smith, P. (1998). The long-term effectiveness of anti-bullying work in primary schools. *Educational Research*, 40(2), 203-218.
- Ferrara, B. (2004). The comprehensive state response to school violence: The New York Safe Schools Against Violence Act. In: J.C. Hanks (Ed). *School Violence: From Discipline to Due Process*. Chicago: American Bar Association.
- Francis, G., Last, C.G., & Strauss, C.C. (1992). Avoidant disorder and social phobia in children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 33, 45-55.
- Galen, B. & Underwood, M. (1997). A developmental investigation of social aggression among children. *Developmental Psychology*, 33(4), 589-600.
- Giroux, H.A. (2001). Mis/Education and Zero-Tolerance: Disposable youth and the

- politics of domestic militarization. *boundary 2*, 28(3), 61-94.
- Glover, D., Cartwright, N. Gough, G., & Johnson, M. (1998). The introduction of anti-bullying policies: Do policies help in the management of change? *School Leadership and Management*, 18(1), 89-105.
- Gruber, J. & Fineran S. (2008). Comparing the impact of bullying and sexual harassment victimization on the mental and physical health of adolescents. *Sex Roles*, 59, 1-13.
- Heurter, R. (2000). *The Culture of Columbine*, Columbine Commission Interviews.
- Henry, D., Guerra, N., Huesmann, R., Tolan, P., Van Acker, R., & Eron, L. (2000). Normative influences on aggression in urban elementary school classrooms. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28(1), 59-81.
- Howell, D. (2007). *Statistical methods for psychology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.
- Humphreys, A. & Smith, P. (1987). Rough and tumble, friendship, and dominance in schoolchildren: Evidence for continuity and change with age. *Child Development*, 58, 201-212.
- Irby, D. (2008, April). Understanding the zero tolerance discipline net: A content analysis of codes of student conduct. *Paper Presented at the 2008 American Educational Research Association Meeting*.
- La Greca, A.M. & Lopez, N. (1998). Social anxiety among adolescents: Linkages with peer relations and friendships. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 26(2), 83-94.
- Lagerspetz, K. & Bjorkqvist, K. (1994). Indirect aggression in girls and boys. As printed in: Huesman, R. (1994). *Aggressive Behavior, Current Perspectives*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Leary, M.R., Kowalski, R.M., Smith, L., & Phillips, S. (2003). Teasing, rejection, and violence: Case studies of the school shootings. *Aggressive Behavior*, 29, 202-214.
- Ledley, D.R., Storch, E.A, Coles, M.E., Heimberg, R.G., Moser, J., & Bravata, E.A. (2006). The relationship between childhood teasing and later interpersonal functioning. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 28(1), 33-40.
- Lee, C. (2004). *Preventing bullying in schools: A guide for teachers and other professionals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Limber, S. & Small, M. (2003). State laws and policies to address bullying in schools. *School Psychology Review*, 32(3), 445-455.
- Luckner, A., Marks, P., & Crick, N. (2008, April). Relational aggression and “rough and tumble” social interactions: differential relations with emotional adjustment. *Paper presented at the Biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Adolescence*.
- McCabe, R.E., Antony, M.M, Summerfedlt, L.J., Liss, A., & Swinson, R.P. (2003). Preliminary examination of the relationship between anxiety disorders in adults and self reported history of teasing or bullying experiences. *Cognitive Behavior Therapy*, 32(4), 187-193.
- McLaughlin, M.W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 171-178.

- Morrison, B. (2002). Bullying and victimisation in schools: A resortative justice approach. *Australian Institute of Criminology: Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice*, No. 219.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (2007). Indicators of school crime and safety 2006. Accessed February 5, 2007: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/index.asp>
- Nelson, B. J. (1984). *Making an Issue of Child Abuse*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nicolaides, S., Toda, Y., & Smith, P.K. (2002). Knowledge and attitudes about school bullying in trainee teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 105-118.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at schools: What we know and what we can do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.
- Osterman, K., Bjorkqvist, K., Lagerspetz, K., Kaukiainen, A., Huesmann, L., & Fraczek, A. (1994). Peer and Self-Estimated Aggression and Victimization in 8-Year-Old Children From Five Ethnic Groups. *Aggressive Behavior*, 20, 411-428.
- Osterman, K. Bjorkqvist, K. Lagerspetz, K. Kaukiainen, A., Landau, S. Fraczek, A. & Caprara, G. (1998). Cross-cultural evidence of female indirect aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, 24, 1-8.
- Ostrov, J. & Keating, C. (2004). Gender differences in preschool aggression during free play and structured interactions: An observational study. *Social Development*, 13, 255-277.
- Pederen, D.M. (2004). Zero Tolerance Policies. In: J.C. Hanks (Ed). *School Violence: From Discipline to Due Process*. Chicago: American Bar Association.
- Pellegrini, A. (1995). A longitudinal study of boys' rough-and-tumble play and dominance during early adolescence. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 16, 77-93.
- Pronk, R.E. & Zimmer-Gembeck, M.J. (2008). Early adolescents' views on relational aggression: Experience, motivation, interpretation and gender. Paper Presented at the 12th Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence.
- Putallaz, M., Kupersmidt, J., Coie, J., McKnight, K. & Grimes, C. (2004). A behavioral analysis of girls' aggression and victimization. As printed in: Putallaz, M. & Bierman, K. (2004). *Aggression, antisocial behavior, and violence among girls*. New York: Guilford Press. 110-134.
- Reyes, A. (2006). *Discipline, Achievement, & Race: Is Zero Tolerance the Answer?* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Rigby, K. (2008). *Children and bullying: How parents and educators can reduce bullying at school*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Salmivalli, C. & Kaukiainen, A. (2004). "Female aggression" revisited: Variable- and person-centered approaches to studying gender differences in different types of aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, 30, 158-163.
- Scahfer, M. & Smith, P. (1996). Teachers' perceptions of play fighting and real fighting in primary school. *Educational Research*, 38(2), 173-181.
- Simmons, R. (2002). *Odd girl out*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Books.
- Schirladi, V. & Ziedenberg, J. (2001). How distorted coverage of juvenile crime

affects public policy. In: W. Ayers, B. Dohrn, & R. Ayers (Eds.). *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment in Our Schools*. NY: The New Press, 114-125.

- Skiba, R. (2000). Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An analysis of school disciplinary practice. *Indiana Education Policy Center*.
- Souter, A. & McKenzie, A. (2000). The use and effects of anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies in Australian schools. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 96-105.
- Stein, N. (2003). Bullying or sexual harassment? The missing discourse of rights in an era of zero tolerance. *Arizona Law Review*, 43, 783-799.
- Storch, E.A. & Ledley, D.R. (2005). Peer victimization and psychosocial adjustment in children: Current knowledge and future directions. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 44(1), 29-38.
- Storch, E.A., Masia-Warner, C., Crisp, H., & Klein, R.G. (2005). Peer victimization and social anxiety in adolescence: A prospective study. *Aggressive Behavior*, 31, 437-452.
- Swearer, S.M., Espelage, D.L., & Napolitano, S.A. (2008). *Bullying prevention and intervention: Realistic strategies for schools*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Temkin, D. (2008). Addressing social aggression in state anti-bullying policies. *Penn GSE Perspectives in Urban Education*, 5(2). Available: http://www.urbanedjournal.org/Vol.%206%20Order%20in%20Schools/Articles/Article_3_Social%20Aggression.html.
- Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play*. United Kingdom: Open University Press.
- Tomada, G. & Schneider, B. (1997). Relational aggression, gender, and peer acceptance: Invariance across culture, stability over time, and concordance among informants. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 601-609.
- Underwood, M. (2003). *Social aggression among girls*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Walker, K. (2000, April). Relational and physical victimization and adjustment in adolescent females. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Adolescence, Chicago, IL.
- Walters, K.S. & Inderbitzen, H.M. (1998). Social anxiety and peer relations among adolescents: Testing a psychobiological model. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 12(3), 183-198.
- Woods, S. & Wolke, D. (2003). Does the Content of Anti-Bullying Policies Inform us about the Prevalence of Direct and Relational Bullying Behaviour in Primary Schools? *Educational Psychology*, 23(4), 381-401.
- Woods, S. & Wolke, D. (2004). Direct and relational bullying among primary school children and academic achievement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 42(2), 135-155.
- Yoon, J. & Kerber, K. (2003). Bullying: Elementary teachers' attitudes and intervention strategies. *Research in Education*, 69, 27-35.
- Young, E., Boye, A., & Nelson, D. (2006). Relational aggression: Understanding, identifying, and responding in schools. *Psychology in Schools*, 43(3), 297-312.

Appendix A: Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire Revised Vignettes

Type	Vignette
CO1	You see two students of about the same size and social position having an argument about what to do after school.
CO2	A child reports that two students who are known to be "best friends" slapped each other during the lunch period. You did not see this incident and the two students are laughing together when you see them next.
CO3	You overhear a group of friends talking about their weekend. When one girl tells the others that she kissed a boy another girl says, while smiling, "you whore!"
PW1	You witness a bigger child push a smaller child with enough force that the smaller child falls to the ground. The push was clearly intentional. The child who was pushed yells "leave me alone – you're always pushing me around."
PW2	You see a group of students surrounding a smaller child and kicking dirt and dust at that smaller child while laughing. The child is crying.
PN1	You are approached by a child who claims they have been kicked by a bigger student without provocation. You did <u>not</u> witness the event, although bruising is evident. The bigger child has bothered the smaller child before.
PN2	A parent comes to you and tells you that their child reported that a bigger kid hit them, and that they did nothing to deserve it. The parent is concerned that their child is always getting picked-on." You did <u>not</u> witness the event.
VW1	You witness a group of students chant to another child: "Teacher's pet, brown-noser, suck-up, kiss-ass." The so-called "Teacher's pet" tries to ignore the remarks but sulks in a corner. You saw the same thing happen the other day.
VW2	You witness a student saying, "Hey fat kid...hey fat kid.. hey ugly...come here." Tears stream down the so-called "fat kid's" face. A teacher forwarned you that the "fat kid" has been a target for name-calling lately.
VN1	A student comes over to you, crying, saying they were called "stupid" and "retarded" by another child. The student has been complaining about the other child quite a bit lately. You did not witness the event.
VN2	A parent tells you that their child is complaining that another student has been teasing them. You have not witnessed this interaction between these students.
DRW1	You witness a child approach a group they typically play with during recess. One of the students in the group tells the approaching child that they cannot play with them. This is the third time you've seen this happen to this child.

DRW2	You witness a child who says to another: "Only cool kids get to play on this part of the playground – we've been telling you all week – when are you going to learn?." The rejected child walks away with watery eyes.
DRN1	A student, who is crying, says to you: "No one will let me eat lunch with them. They said that they aren't allowed to be friends with me." You did <u>not</u> witness the event.
DRN2	A student turns in a group project by themselves and tells you that the group they were supposed to work with wouldn't let them participate and told them that they were "too stupid" and would cause them to get a bad grade.
IRW1	You see one student passing a note to another student. After intercepting the note you see that the note says that one student is having a party and the intended recipient of the note is not invited. You are unsure who sent the note, but a group of students were giggling when the note was passed.
IRW2	In the lunchroom, you see a child approach an empty chair at a table with a group of students. One of the students moves a backpack on top of the chair and the child walks away, sinking their head.
IRN1	You overhear a student telling another student a story about a third student, not present. The story sounds potentially hurtful, and the two students make disgusted looks at each other. You do not know where the story started.
IRN2	A parent reports to you that all of their child's friends have suddenly stopped talking to the child and have stopped inviting them to parties and other gatherings after school. You have <u>not</u> noticed anything particular between that child and their friends, but don't know if they have been leaving the child out.
CB1	A parent sends you copies of an Instant Messaging conversation between their child and another student in your class where the student called the parent's child various names and told them that no one liked them.
CB2	You see a group of students looking at a digital photo on a cell phone of a student, not present, in an embarrassing situation. The group is laughing and whispering to each other.
CB3	A student, upset, shows you a video posted on MySpace showing that student in an embarrassing situation at your school. The page is attached to another student's webpage.
SH1	You witness a male student pull the brastrap of a female student. A group of other boys laugh and snicker. The girl, upset, screams at the boy, saying "STOP."
SH2	You overhear two students talking about another student, not present. You hear that they are insinuating that the targeted student is homosexual and has experimented with other students of their own gender.
SH3	You see a student make a sexually suggestive gesture and then point towards another student in the classroom. That student puts their head in their hands and starts to turn red. The rest of the students start laughing.

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Qualitative Interview Protocol. These questions will serve as a guide for the conversation, and other questions may be added based on the content of participants' responses.

Phase 1:

1. What Grade and Subject do you teach and how long have you been teaching in Study Site?
2. How do you define bullying?
3. Do you think bullying is an issue in the Study Site schools?
4. How does the district address bullying in schools?

Phase 2:

1. Social Aggression, also called "Indirect" or "Relational" Aggression is defined as behavior with the intent to harm a victim that uses indirect means such as social exclusion, rumors or gossip, or negative body language. Do you think social aggression is an issue in Study Site schools?
2. The Study Site Public Schools Code of Student Conduct defines bullying as including "indirect means" or social aggression. How do you think this definition has affected how you or other teachers in your school view these behaviors?
 - a. Are teachers aware of this definition of bullying?
 - b. In your opinion, do you think other teachers view social aggression as bullying?
 - c. Do teachers react the same way to incidents of social aggression as they would incidents of bullying using physical or verbal behaviors?
 - c. How could the district improve this definition of bullying?
 - d. Should social aggression be included in this definition?

Additions following news of knife incident:

3. Can you tell me about any recent developments regarding bullying in the last two months?
 - a. Has the district made reference to incidents of bullying?