



The School Climate Project **Bullying Survey and School Climate Initiatives**

Presentation to Region 9 Board of Education
June 15, 2010

Presentation Components

The School Climate Project in ER9

Components of *The School Climate Project*

ER9 Accomplishments and Challenges

District Project Data

Bystander Intervention Program

Next Steps



The School Climate Project in ER9

- Three-year partnership with *The Surviving Bullies Charity, Inc.* (www.survivingbullies.org)
- Bullying survey administered to students at Joel Barlow High School, John Read Middle School, and Helen Keller Middle School for past two years
- Initiative responds to expectations of State's 2009 anti-bullying legislation and to ER9 efforts to create positive, safe, and respectful learning environments



Components of *The School Climate Project*

- Phase 1: Student “town hall” meeting to discuss meanness, group power dynamics, medical research, and project implementation
- Phase 2: On-line student questionnaire
- Phase 3: Two-part intervention program -
Family support psychologist calling program
VideoBook five-mission empowerment program
- Phase 4: Data reporting and recommendations



ER9 Accomplishments

- Lessons from year one for an improved year two
- Psychologist follow-up calling program (7-8% of families)
- Power and insight from the data analysis and comparisons
- Finding the link between bullying and emotional distress
- Student-generated Bystander Intervention Program
- Expanded use of the VideoBook
- It's working...let's make it better



ER9 Challenges

- Helping students and parents understand the differences between “bullying” and “meanness”
- Individual students’ reluctance to access and utilize the VideoBook resource
- Parents’ knowledge and support of the survey
- Parents’ acceptance of follow-up help and support from independent psychologist (based on individual students’ survey scores)
- Confidentiality and impact on providing support



District Project Data

- School connectedness
- Bullying/Meanness
- Bystanders
- Sleep and sleep deprivation
- Weight bias
- Loneliness



District Data: School Connectedness

- Students in all three schools show high scores for school connectedness (“*feel safe*” at school, “*feel close to people,*” “*happy to be at this school,*” “*feel a part of the school*”)
- While the lowest rating at all schools is for “*teachers treat students fairly at this school,*” the majority of students (60-78%) feel teachers treat them fairly
- Students show more *connectedness* to middle school than to high school, which is age appropriate



District Data: Bullying/Meanness

- Across all three schools, verbal is the most common type of bullying followed by exclusional bullying, relational bullying, physical bullying, and cyber bullying, with sexual bullying being the least common form
- Levels of bullying were similar at the middle schools. Bullying was less common for ninth graders at Joel Barlow but higher than what was reported by last year's ninth grade class

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District Data: Bullying/Meanness

- Between 10-12% of the students in each school were offered the VideoBook, indicating some level of distress from bullying
- Students report that bullying occurs where adults are least present.

Middle schools: on the bus, in the cafeteria, in the halls between classes

High school: in the halls and cafeteria, cyber bullying



District Data: Bystanders

- Between 26-30% of students feel upset when they observe acts of bullying
- Between 6-18% feel angry when they observe bullying
- Between 41-57% of students say that when they observe bullying, they try to intervene in some way (either themselves, by getting an adult, or enlisting other bystanders)
- In a bystander session at Helen Keller Middle School, students clearly conveyed that *they* want to solve the problem rather than having adults intervene; they just need the tools



District Data: Sleep and Sleep Deprivation

- Sleep deprivation increases with age
- Sleep deprivation impairs the ability to learn and the ability to cope well with mean behavior
- Middle Schools: 35-40% report that they have slept well every night for the last two weeks. However, about 20% say they have slept well for only two nights or less in the last two weeks.
- High School reverses the numbers: 14% report that they have slept well every night for the last two weeks while 38% say they have slept well for only two nights or less in the last two weeks



District Data: Weight Bias

- Bullies pick on students who are “different” – weight is an easy target
- Between 11-15% of students at all three schools say they are picked on for being either underweight or overweight



District Data: Loneliness

- Similar results at all three schools
- High correlation between students' loneliness and bullying, and loneliness and “emotional risk”
- Approximately 81% never or rarely “feel left out”
- Approximately 85% never or rarely “feel alone”
- Approximately 90% sometimes or always “feel they have someone they can talk to”
- Approximately 91% sometimes or always “feel they have someone they can turn to”



Bystander Intervention Program Goals

- To reduce the incidence and severity of bullying in schools and to make targets of bullying feel less isolated and lonely
- To teach students why they should, and how they can, successfully intervene in situations where their peers are being mean to other students
- To encourage all students to accept responsibility for the development of their school climate and to help them recognize that a positive school climate is created by active bystanders having the moral courage to ensure that all students are treated with respect

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Bystander Intervention Program Goals

- To develop a program that teaches moral courage and value-based leadership skills to students by encouraging them to be part of the solution to a serious ‘real world’ problem – chronic meanness and bullying in the schools
- To provide an opportunity for Bystander Intervention team members to do anti-bullying and value-based leadership community service that can be documented subsequently



Bystander Intervention: Program Phases

Phase 1: Bullying scenarios presented on DVD by movie, music, and sports figures

Phase 2: Parent and teacher training

Phase 3: Real time interventions applied to “mean” situations led by student team leaders and supported by volunteer bystanders

Phase 4: Evaluation of effectiveness by all participants

Phase 5: Efficacy evaluation, data reports, and recommendations



Next Steps

- Increased focus on school climate and learning environment
- Raise awareness, including cyber bullying
- Strengthen coping skills and self-advocacy skills
- Create small group mentoring opportunities
- Establish role of student governance

continued



Next Steps

- Administer student aspirations survey
- Explore students' perception of teacher "fairness"
- Partner with bus company
- Partner with parents, including ongoing programs
- Link to strategic planning goals
- Expand initiatives to elementary schools



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