An Examination of Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying in an Urban Elementary School

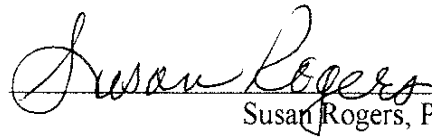Patricia Ann Hayes
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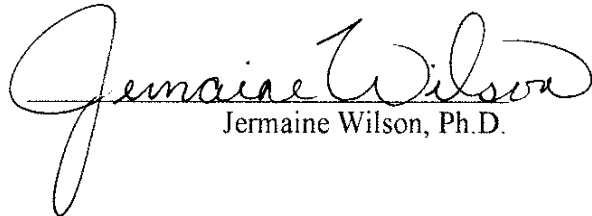Ed.Sp., University of Central Missouri, 2004

Submitted to the Graduate Department and Faculty of the School of Education of
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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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Abstract

Several researchers have investigated the impact teachers have on bullying in their schools (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005; Wright, 2004; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). However, only a minimal number of studies have been conducted using qualitative methods to examine teachers' perceptions of bullying within their schools (Bauman & Hurley, 2005; Besag, 2006). The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the changes in student-to-student bullying behaviors that occurred in the past seven years. The second purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time. Finally, the impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention was examined. Utilized in this study was a 15-question interview protocol with ten educators who had taught in the same district for the past seven years.

Findings included all participating teachers agreed that student-to-student bullying within the school had changed within the seven-year period being discussed. Seven out of ten teachers who participated in the study identified verbal and written bullying as the most common type of bullying currently taking place in their school. The participating teachers identified social media and the increased availability of technology as the primary reason that bullying has transformed within elementary schools. The overall findings from the study showed that teachers believe student-to-student bullying had occurred in their elementary school. The primary method of bullying mentioned by the teachers consisted of verbal bullying at all grade levels and cyberbullying from students in the fifth and sixth grade levels. Further findings showed bullying as

changing in the past seven years in urban elementary schools because of social media and the influx of technology used within elementary school classrooms and students' homes. The final finding from the study showed district professional development as inadequate in preparing teachers to handle all types of bullying occurrences.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband George, as well as my mom and dad (who passed away midway through my doctoral program), and my children George Jr., Katrina, Jessica, and Mikiesha. Achieving this goal would not have been possible without their continuous love and support. All of them encouraged me relentlessly throughout the process.

Acknowledgements

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" Philippians 4:13.

I give honor, reverence, and praise to God for giving me the strength, patience, and tenacity to complete my doctoral program. The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the continuous support of family, colleagues, and my Baker University advisor, Dr. Verneda Edwards, who provided continuous support throughout this process. While writing my dissertation, my precious father passed away, and I stopped writing. Dr. Edwards continuously encouraged me to start writing again and to keep writing. Without her advice and continuous prompting, I would not have finished my program. Thank You.

In addition to my advisor, I want to thank the entire team of Baker University faculty who taught me in Cohort 9 doctoral program. I appreciated the guidance I received from Dr. Gary George and Dr. Elizabeth Sanders. I would also like to thank the remaining members of my committee, Dr. Susan Rogers, University Member, Dr. Li Chen-Bouck, Research Analyst, Dr. Jermaine Wilson, External Member, and Dr. Janiece Hampton, who encouraged me daily.

I especially want to thank my husband George, who has never known what it is like to spend time with me when I was not working on my education. During the past two years, his encouragement and love have made it possible for me to work many weekends, evenings, and during the summer to achieve the tremendous goal of completing my dissertation.

I would also like to thank my mom, Beverly Watson. My mom has been my number one supporter for everything I do in life. As a child, my mom always showed

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me, through her actions, what could happen if you worked hard and believed in the goals you set for yourself. From her example, she helped me to believe I could accomplish all my dreams. Whenever I needed encouragement throughout this process, I called my mom for never-ending support and encouragement.

Last, but not least, I send special thanks to the Kansas City Public School district and Dr. Boni Tolson, the elementary school counselor who interviewed all the teachers in the study, and all the teachers who participated in the study during their summer break. Thank you.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Olweus (1993) initially described bullying as the growing number of students who push and hit other students in school hallways. In the same study Olweus showed that one out of seven children had been involved in bullying either as the bully or the victim. Olweus continued to conduct extensive research on bullying in elementary and middle schools throughout the 1990s. Olweus (1995) listed the primary complaints regarding bullying within schools as teasing, name-calling, and shoving others within classrooms and school hallways. More recently, Limber and Small (2003) found that 30% of the elementary students in their study had been victimized by other schoolchildren at least once per semester. Of the 30% of children involved, 17% reported being victims of bullying, and 19% were bullying other school children (Limber & Small, 2003).

Teacher intervention is important to prevent further bullying from occurring and to maintain the learning environment within the classroom (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004). Researchers have determined that maintaining positive student-to-student relationships within the classroom may enhance the learning environment. Therefore, the teacher's perception of bullying in the classroom may play a valuable role in our educational system (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). This perception may derive from childhood experiences, individual sensitivity, or bullying prevention training received through the years (Espelage & Swearer, 2004).

Background

Bullying exists in many schools. Li (2006) defined bullying as a hostile and hurtful act which is commonly portrayed through words or actions, and may include both destructive behaviors as well as destructive responses. In a report by the National School Safety Center (Ferrell-Smith, 2008), bullying is referred to as a continuing and overlooked problem in American classrooms and new state laws are mandating schools to address the problem through anti-bullying professional development for teachers.

The increase of bullying in elementary schools has brought a significant amount of attention toward the responsibilities of teachers to teach students regardless of student behavior according to district and state policies (Storch & Ledley, 2005). To address the effectiveness of school policy on bullying, individual schools must first ascertain the perceptions of their teachers concerning bullying. By examining teacher perception, researchers could then strengthen their teachers' responses to bullying and improve each school's climate (Bauman & Hurley, 2005). Other researchers suggest that teachers are the primary staff within schools who are responsible for providing a safe learning environment, which contributes to the success or failure of elementary students and often determines whether they have a positive or negative experience during the school year (Bauman & Hurley, 2005). According to Mishna et al. (2006), elementary school teachers must spend a large portion of their day influencing the academic and social experiences of children in their classrooms.

Although many school districts have established firm policies on bullying, other districts have a long way to go to make schools safe and comfortable places for all students (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, McKelvey, & Gargus, 2009).

Common misconceptions once existed among many teachers and school staff, which portrayed bullying as simply a part of growing up and teachers would warn students of snitching on other students for what they perceived as minor actions (Dowell, Burgess, & Cavanaugh, 2009). In addition, some of the behaviors that students perceived as bullying were often missed by both teachers and administrators (Mustacchi, 2009).

According to recent research, bullying does not just occur in classrooms, on playgrounds, or the bus ride home (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). A new type of bullying has emerged in schools that continuously occurs through the increasing amount of technology that enters students' homes (Mustacchi, 2009). Ten years ago, at the end of each day, students could escape from the hurtful words spewed from classmates. Once students reached the safety of their homes, they were free from physical and verbal insults (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Poland (2010) reported that some students were experiencing bullying at school only to continue to experience bullying after they had arrived home and began utilizing the Internet. Cyberbullying can occur through any type of electronic text and includes all social websites in addition to text messages (Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2011). These online bullies often make threats that students fear may be carried out at school (Jackson, 2011).

Davis and Nixon (2011) began the Youth Voice Project where they surveyed more than 13,000 students. This survey was administered to students from the fifth through the twelfth grades during the 2009-2010 school year. The study was initiated to examine the impact of bullying in middle and high school grades. The data from the study showed more than 2,500 of the students surveyed were hit, threatened, hurt emotionally, or experienced relational bullying at least twice in the month prior to the

survey (Davis & Nixon, 2011). While elementary students often reported specific occurrences such as "he's kicking me" older students reported more overt verbal and physical actions as well as bullying through social media (Strauss, 2012, p. 59). A study of cyberbullying was conducted with 400 students in a Midwest middle school. The results of the study showed that 45% are on Facebook and 11.5% have been the target of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

Missouri is among the 44 states that have enacted anti-bullying laws, which include cyberbullying. The Missouri law requires that schools track all instances of bullying (Missouri Revised Statute, 2013). Based on the number of bullying incidents reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education from the district in the study, bullying incidents decreased over the last five years. In 2009, a total of 56 bullying incidents were reported by the elementary schools in the district. This number dropped in 2011 to 42 incidents. In both years, the number of male bullies was double that of female bullies (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015).

The current study was conducted in an urban public elementary (K-6) school located within a Midwestern School district. During the 2016-2017 school year, the district consisted of 15,000 students with six high schools, four middle schools, thirteen elementary schools (K-6) and two alternative schools. Each school has a feeder school for the next level within its boundaries. Only one elementary school was used for the study although some of the teachers within the study had taught at several elementary schools within the district. At the time of the study, the school consisted of 395 students with 210 boys and 185 girls. Of the students, 85% were Black, 3% were White, 7% were Hispanic, and 5% were of mixed heritages. Thirty-two students were considered

homeless. One-hundred percent of the students received free or reduced lunch. The

school within the study is similar to the other thirteen elementary schools in the district

with comparable demographics. The elementary school in the study employed 19 female

teachers and three male teachers. All the teachers were elementary-school certified with

an average of 15 years of experience in education. Ten of the teachers had earned a

master's degree in addition to a bachelor degree in elementary education. All the

teachers had attended "Safe Schools" anti-bullying training.

Statement of the Problem

For an educator to successfully educate a child, it is essential for the student to

feel physically and emotionally safe in school (Wright, 2004). For teachers to be trained

effectively on bullying prevention, schools must first ascertain the faculty's assessment of

bullying within their school (Rose & Gallup, 2006). The National Educational

Association (NEA), who represents millions of teachers across America, were concerned

about teachers' perceptions of bullying within the classrooms and the lack of training

concerning bullying (NEA, 2012). A survey was sent to the NEA's 3.2 million teachers

regarding teachers' perceptions of bullying within schools. Of the 5,000 teachers who

responded, 98% felt that bullying prevention was a part of their job duties. Yet, 46% felt

unclear about district bullying policies. A majority of the teachers (61%) felt they needed

more training on when and how to intervene in all types of bullying situations; the

percentage increased to 74% concerning newer types of bullying using technology (NEA,

2012).

Minimal research has been conducted that focused on teachers' perceptions of

how bullying has changed over a period of years and whether they have received

adequate training relevant to the changes (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014). Examining their perceptions may enable teachers to gain insight into the changes that have taken place in student-to-student bullying tactics. This insight may also aid teachers in handling future bullying incidents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions regarding the extent that bullying had taken place in their school. A second purpose of the study was to examine the changes in student-to-student bullying behaviors occurring over the last seven years. Additionally, the impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention was also examined. This study was conducted using fifteen initial interview questions to learn about the perceptions of bullying through the lens of selected teachers in one elementary school.

Significance of the Study

The results from this study could contribute to the body of research that has previously been conducted regarding student-to-student bullying and teacher intervention based upon teacher perception of bullying. The results from the study could also show the teachers' overall perceptions of whether district professional development on anti-bullying has been an effective deterrent to reducing bullying, specifically at the elementary level. This study also adds to the relatively small amount of research on bullying which is based solely on teacher perception. Finally, the elementary school in the study may be able to use the results to enhance their anti-bullying professional development for teachers.

Delimitations

Delimitations are "self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). The delimitations identified by this researcher were:

- Teachers interviewed were from one elementary school with seven or more years of teaching experience within one urban school district.

- Teachers in the study have only taught at the elementary level in an urban setting.

Assumptions

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined assumptions as "the postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research" (p. 135). The following assumptions were made in this study:

1. The teachers who participated in the interview responded accurately and freely to the questions asked by the interviewer.

2. The teachers could accurately recall the events which occurred throughout the past seven years.

3. The teachers understood the questions and vocabulary related to the questions they were asked in the interview.

4. The interpretation of the interviews accurately reflected the perceptions of the teachers.

5. Teachers in the study have all been exposed to the districts' code of conduct concerning bullying.

Research Questions

According to Creswell (2009) research questions (RQs) "shape and specifically focus the purpose of the study" (p. 132). The following questions guided the research:

RQ1. How did elementary teachers perceive student-to-student bullying within the school as changing during the past seven years?

RQ2. How did elementary teachers perceive their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time?

RQ3. How had the district's professional development impact student-to-student bullying over time?

Definition of Terms

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), the definitions are significant terms key to this study. The following definitions were used in this study:

Bully. A bully is a person who uses an imbalance of power to inflict emotional or physical pain with the intention of hurting another person (Coloroso, 2000).

Bullying. Bullying is defined as a real or perceived imbalance of power of one person against another which is used repeatedly to inflict harm (Pace, 2001).

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes hurtful messages online through text or picture images using the Internet, text messaging systems or any other electronic technology (Willard, 2007).

Snap-Chat. A form of communication similar to texting, and used to send messages by using pictures instead of words (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

Social Media. Websites and other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and to develop social and professional contacts (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Social Networking. Online services that bring together people by organizing them around a common interest and providing an interactive environment of photos, blogs and messaging systems (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Texting. Typing and sending short alphanumeric communications between cell phones or other hand-held devices. (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. The first chapter began with an introduction and background of the study. Additionally, this chapter offered a statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the delimitations and assumptions made by the researcher, the research questions, and the definitions of terms. The literature specific to the study is reviewed in chapter two. Described in chapter three are the research design, the rationale for the chosen method, how the participants were selected, further information needed to organize and conduct the study, and the methodology of the study. Chapter four includes the results of the interviews and summarizes the findings and includes an analysis of the study's results. Chapter five offers a study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

The purpose of chapter two is to provide background information regarding the definition of bullying, a review of bullying, bullying laws and statutes in Missouri, the different types of bullying behaviors that occur in schools, and various topics that arise concerning bullying in schools. Research in chapter two also covers cyberbullying in schools, types of student-to-student bullying, and the impact of bullying on student performance and health. The teacher's perception of bullying in elementary schools is also touched upon in this chapter in addition to the teacher's role in bully prevention. This chapter also takes a closer look at bullying as it relates to effective anti-bullying professional development available to teachers.

A Review of Bullying

In 1897, Burk published the first article concerning bullying behaviors in schools. In this article, Burk (1897) spoke of the power, persistence, pain, and pre-meditation that often exist in bullying situations. The first major study concerning bullying occurred in the early 1970s by Olweus, a Norwegian research professor of psychology. The results of his study were published first in Sweden in 1973 and later in the United States (Olweus, 1978). From this study, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) was established to reduce bullying in elementary and middle schools (Olweus, 1978). The OBPP was initially evaluated in Norway with approximately 2,500 students (grades 5 through 8) over the course of two and a half years in the early 1980s. By 1981, Dr. Olweus had proposed enacting a law concerning bullying within schools (Olweus, 1991).

By 1993, Olweus had expanded his research and published his findings, which expanded bullying research in the United States.

Olweus' bullying prevention program opened up a clear realization that the problem of bullying existed among most students, and American researchers began to use the implementation of Olweus' bullying prevention program for various studies. Black and Jackson (2007) conducted a study using Olweus' bullying incident density chart to evaluate the OBPP. The study involved six public elementary and middle schools in an urban area. All students from those schools were administered Olweus' assessment on bullying within their schools. As a result of implementing the program, the number of bullying incidents observed during lunch and recess decreased by 45% over the four years that the program was implemented.

Bauer, Lozano, and Rivera (2007) also conducted a study in several Seattle, Washington middle schools as part of a system-wide focus on high-risk youth. The study involved seven schools that implemented the OBPP. Three other schools were used as control schools and used less formal methods to prevent bullying. The seven schools in the study that implemented OBPP provided student responses on climate surveys. Results of this study indicated that there was no overall difference in reported rates of victimization (either physical or relational) between the control schools and intervention schools within two years post. In addition, no difference was found between control schools and comparison schools in the willingness of other students to intervene in bullying incidents. Only the sixth-grade participants in the intervention schools were more likely to intervene in a bullying incident than the other students.

One of the largest evaluations of bullying using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) involved over 70,000 students in 214 schools (Olweus et al., 2007). This study was conducted in two parts. The school-based program included components from both the community and the classroom. The first part of the study included all 70,000 students and examined the program's effects over a two-year period. The second part of the study consisted of a small cohort from two of the schools, and included a year-by-year detailed analysis of the program effects and added an additional year to the original two-year period. The goal of the study was to examine the extent of bullying experienced by schoolchildren. The results of the study were based on participants completing the Olweus assessment of bullying at baseline and then yearly to allow for changes to be examined. The results showed positive effects of OBPP based on students' reports of being bullied and bullying others. These findings also showed a decrease in the number of bullying incidents from the students who had reported being bullied 2-3 times per month (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

Further research showed that bullying begins as early as preschool and adults play an important role in prevention and intervention of bullying behavior before children enter kindergarten (Barker & Watson, 2008). After students enter elementary school, teachers become the frontline defenders against bullying. Therefore, teachers need to be well educated on the definition of bullying, what it looks like in school hallways and classrooms, and how it can be stopped (Barker & Watson, 2008). According to Smith, Pepler, and Rigby (2004), when schools provide bullying prevention programs, teachers feel more capable of handling all aspects of bullying situations, including the bully, the bullied, and the parents. To that end, schools need to adopt an anti-bullying policy and

then ensure that teachers consistently and effectively implement the policy. Failure at any level to properly intervene could perpetuate the problem and possibly cause those who are victims of bullying to continually feel unsafe at their schools (Fried & Sosland, 2009).

Bullying Laws and Statutes

The way American school districts view the seriousness of bullying began in 1999 when a major incident occurred in Columbine, Colorado. The school tragedy, which stemmed from two boys who had experienced bullying, sparked wide-spread attention to bullying in many schools across America (Adelman & Taylor, 2000). The resulting awareness of student-to-student bullying inspired further development of anti-bullying programs (Coloroso, 2000). The number of national and international studies of bullying incidents in schools has grown steadily since the Columbine incident (Good & Nichols, 2001).

In a 1998 national study, researchers from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) surveyed 15,686 students from public, parochial, and other private schools throughout the U.S. regarding bullying behavior within their schools. Of the total respondents, 29% reported being a bully or the target of bullying, or both. Of those children, 13% of students said they had bullied other students but had not been bullied themselves. An additional 10.6% had been bullied by others at some point but had not bullied others. Of the students who had bullied other students, 8.8% bullied others daily. Another 6% said that they had been bullied themselves and had also bullied other children. An additional result of the study showed that bullying often began in elementary grades, occurred most frequently in sixth through eighth grade, and surfaced

in some capacity in all grades (NICHD, 2001). On the other hand, results from the study showed that little variation existed among the amount of bullying occurring in urban, suburban, town, and rural areas and that males were more likely to bully than females (NICHD, 2001). In addition, the primary bullying actions most frequently mentioned were inflicting pain, name-calling, and emotional actions such as exclusion or demanding money or other items from their victims (NICHD, 2001).

One of the primary challenges for administrators in providing a safe place for students is having teachers who understand when to intervene in student-to-student bullying (Good & Nichols, 2001). According to some, it is not always clear whether the youth are refusing to seek help or whether the teachers are failing to understand the extent of the problem (Astor & Meyer, 2001). One researcher suggested when teachers are directly involved in bully-prevention discussions they should use the same definition of bullying and the same language. This way the whole school can collaborate effectively to recognize bullying as it occurs (Holt, Keyes, & Koenig, 2011).

In 2006, Megan Meier, a 13-year-old from Missouri, committed suicide by hanging herself after being cyberbullied. Soon after, Meier's mom began advocating for anti-bullying laws in Missouri (Moreno, 2006). In 2007, Missouri revised its statutes in Chapter 160, Section 160.775.1, mandating every Missouri school district to adopt an anti-bullying policy by September 7, 2007. The mandate included physical bullying and cyberbullying. In response to Megan's suicide, Missouri Representative Sue Allen, began to sponsor House Bill 1583 and called bullying a major problem in Missouri Schools. According to House Bill 1583, schools must offer and provide information to

students regarding bullying, and school counselors and psychologists must teach victims

of bullying on self-esteem and assertiveness (Missouri Revised Statute, 2007).

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the

Missouri Legislature recognized the act of bullying as a problem in schools and states.

DESE defined bullying incidents as occurring "when a student communicates with

another by any means including telephone, writing, or via electronic communications,

with the intention to intimidate or inflict physical, emotional, or mental harm without

legitimate purpose" (DESE, 2007, p. 8).

In 2009, the United States Department of Health and Human Services funded the

World Health Organization's (WHO) collaborative international survey titled Health

Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC). Over 300 schools participated in the study.

The revised Olweus Bully/Victim questionnaire was answered by a representative sample

of 9,227 US students after it had been sent out nationally. Of these students, 22% were

African American, 5% were Hispanic, and 51% were females. Data from the HBSC's

2005 national survey showed the types of bullying experienced within a two-month

period was 20.8 % physical, 53.6%, verbal, 12% social aggression, and 13.6% occurred

on social media. The most common categories of bullying reported by elementary school

boys and girls were verbal and physical bullying (WHO, 2012).

For years, the NEA has provided various types of training for its members on how

to combat bullying. In 2011, the National Educational Association (NEA) reported that

schools must find methods to teach acceptable social behavior in and out of the classroom

and hold students accountable for their roles in bullying and cyber-bullying regardless of

who is involved. Yet, bullying continues to grow as students turn to hiding behind the

anonymity of the Internet (NEA, 2011). In schools, where teachers have been trained to listen and watch for bullying behavior, bullies still hide in areas with the least amount of teacher supervision (NEA, 2012). According to Strauss (2012), when parents send their children to an elementary or middle school, they should be able to assume that action will be taken by the teacher if their child is bullied inside the classroom.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recommends that on the first offense of proven bullying cases, a student will receive up to five days of out-of-school suspension; second offense, five to thirty days out-of-school suspension; third offense, thirty to eighty days out-of-school suspension; and fourth offense, one hundred eighty days out-of-school suspension up to expulsion (DESE, 2015). Bullying has become increasingly more difficult to detect as technology grows within the schools and the methods of bullying evolve (Strauss, 2012). Two researchers concluded that over the past ten years adolescent bullying has escalated as the various methods students use to bully has grown (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014).

Direct vs. Indirect Bullying

Olweus and Limber (1999) indicated that there are two modes of bullying: direct and indirect. Direct bullying includes physical contact (hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, pushing, and choking) and verbal communication (name-calling, threatening, teasing, yelling, cursing and, spreading rumors that are hurtful about another person). Direct and indirect bullying tend to occur concurrently (Bohn & Hickey, 2010). Initially, direct bullying was the most common form of bullying witnessed in schools (Olweus, 1978). All bullying involves some aggression on the part of the bully. All bullying does not include direct violence (Besag, 1989). Indirect bullying is more psychological than

direct bullying (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Girls more often practice this type of bullying than do boys. Indirect bullying includes subtle types of aggression such as back-stabbing, ostracizing, exclusion, and intimidation (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Indirect bullying may also include relational bullying which consists of gossip, social sabotage, spreading rumors, exclusion of others and any behavior that negatively affects interpersonal relationships (Simmons, 2002).

Types of Student-to-Student Bullying

Various types of bullying exist in American schools (NEA, 2003). Each type of bullying is defined by whether it is a verbal or physical action as well as if the bullying is a direct action of the bully or an indirect action such as encouraging others to exclude the victim. According to Seals and Young (2006), elementary school bullies use a variety of methods to intimidate their peers. These methods include physical harm, emotional bullying, verbal threats, teasing and relational bullying (where one student prevents another from being part of a group or friendship).

Physical bullying. Physical bullying is described as any repeated unwelcomed contact between two people where one person continuously harms another. These actions may consist of pushing, shoving, throwing objects, kicking, beating someone up, spitting, stabbing, tripping, choking, poking, or punching (Olweus, 1978). Physical bullying was exposed in many schools beginning in the 1970s. In some cases, students reported head-butting, nipple twisting, jabbing, or holding someone down. While boys are more likely to punch, kick, hold down and beat up their victims, girls will often pull hair, slap, pinch or scratch another student (Gurian, 1998). Generally, girls take advantage of anything they have in their possession to hit another girl or use their

fingernails to scratch their victim. According to Fried and Sosland (2009), physical

bullying consists of any touchable act of one student toward another that is harmful or

hurts them in some manner, and the other does not fight back. Garbarino (2006) defined

physical bullying as any ongoing bodily harm.

Verbal Bullying. Nishina, Juvonen, and Witkow (2005) compared the relative

frequencies of different bullying behavior experienced by students and concluded verbal

aggression occurs more frequently than physical or indirect aggression. Many children

are exposed to a significant amount of disparity exhibited by the adults around them.

Children sometimes experience insults at school or other public places that would not

have been uttered around them twenty years ago (Mysilk, 2008). Some children will

repeat inappropriate language while others will direct the same putdowns toward other

children in a repetitive manner. This type of communication is how verbal bullying

begins.

Verbal bullying consists of ridiculing, humiliating, spreading rumors, making up

stories about others, swearing, screaming, whispering, or mimicking (Mysilk, 2008).

Any repetitive use of language meant to hurt someone else would qualify as verbal

bullying. Over the years, it has become a common practice for students to put down

other students or their mothers as a form of verbal abuse. Many students report the pain

of verbal putdowns as often being as hurtful as physical abuse (U.S. Department of

Health, 2009).

Emotional Bullying. When students want to hurt each other, they sometimes use

a non-verbal, non-physical type of psychological action referred to as emotional bullying.

This type of bullying may come in the form of rejection, exclusion, isolation, writing bad

notes or pictures, or causing others to unfriend students (Nansel et al, 2001). Although this type of bullying is not exclusive to girls, it is more common for girls than for boys. This non-verbal form of bullying can be heartbreaking to a young boy or girl who is already trying to determine where they fit in with other children. Unfortunately, emotional bullies do not always understand why they treat other students badly, and their victims are often caught off guard not understanding why previous friends turned on them (Simmons, 2002).

Sexual Bullying. Boys and girls as young as elementary age have been known to touch each other inappropriately. This type of bullying is also known as sexual harassment. Any type of sexual harassment that continues becomes sexual bullying. Examples of this type of bullying may include touching, groping, lifting a girl's dress, pulling down a boy's pants, using sexual language, drawing and showing inappropriate pictures, or sometimes bumping into other students inappropriately (Limber, 2002). Any behavior that causes someone to feel uncomfortable in a sexual way and is ongoing could constitute sexual bullying (Strauss, 2012). This behavior could also include pinching, grabbing, hugging, or kissing another student. Sexual bullying has been reported by students as young as kindergarten and is often the most difficult for a school administrator to discuss with parents (Strauss, 2012).

Cyberbullying. One of the most far-reaching and cruelest forms of bullying in the 21st century is cyberbullying. Because of the anonymity of this form of bullying, the cruelty sometimes gets out of control (Bauman, 2009). Cyberbullying is a type of written bullying that signifies verbal messages. This type of bullying occurs through emails, texts, instant messages, tweets, or during any online communication (Kowalski, Limber,

& Agatston, 2008). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) define cyberbullying as intentional and

repeated as well as hurtful and dangerous. In addition to posting hurtful messages on

social networking sites, cyberbullies also use numerous text messages and even emails to

hurt others.

How Cyberbullying Affects Elementary School Students

Cyberbullying is a method of bullying which occurs as someone uses technology

to harass an individual. This behavior is displayed by students in various forms of online

text (Thompson & Cohen, 2005). Sometimes, when an excessive amount of time is spent

using technology, children lose contact with social niceties (Nie & Erbring, 2000).

Thompson and Cohen (2005) further suggest that written and verbal attacks have become

more acceptable for students and may result in hurting the feelings of others in front of

other adolescents.

Cyberbullying originated from the ageless practice of teasing others about their

appearance or their actions in front of an audience (Rigby, 2008). Once social media

became popular, students began using their written messages to tease and taunt others

outside of school. The term cyberbullying encompasses any electronic-communication

technology and is used to attack others across social media. Cyberbullying is a method of

putting down other students through social media (Ybarra, 2004). For many school-age

children, putdowns have become part of the everyday culture within their school as well

as online. Nevertheless, as children are repeatedly called names or witness others issuing

putdowns either in person or online, they will most likely continue to repeat this behavior

at some point (Mills, Guerin, Lynch, Daly, & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Emotionally charged

online communication may lead children to bully or to become victims of online bullies,

which was coined cyberbullying in 2004 (Gross, 2004). Anonymous messages allow students to change roles and turn from a victim to a person who feels comfortable bullying others (Beran & Li, 2005).

Adelman and Taylor (2002) advised school districts to address all student struggles with bullying to create a unified system that addresses all barriers to learning. Nevertheless, students are living during a time when public insults have become acceptable dialog on television, in theaters, in computer language, and on music CDs. This type of dialog has also become part of many students' everyday conversation (Renk, 2005). Willard (2007) recommended including cyberbullying in all anti-bullying school policies and defines cyberbullying as hurtful messages placed online or through text messages or picture images. This written type of bullying appears through blogs, Twitter, Instagram, and many other forms of social media communication and may lead back to physical altercations within the schools (Mason, 2008). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) define cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (p. 5). Furthermore, students have become so comfortable participating in negative online conversations that cyberbullying easily reverberates from the schoolyard to the home and back to the school again (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Although abusive language is nothing new, the avenue for using this language has become more prevalent in society (Fried & Sosland, 2009). Even so, the biggest problem with putdowns is the hostility the putdowns provoke, which causes the attacks to be abusive. Fried, the founder of BullySafeUSA, spent 18 years working with and studying the behavior of over 85,000 students and educators in 36 states. During that time, she

conducted student empowerment sessions in rural, urban, and suburban schools. She

then co-authored a book with Sosland that reviewed her findings (Fried & Sosland,

2009).

Fried and Sosland (2009) found that the only way school districts could

effectively combat cyberbullying was to utilize the entire staff including the support

teachers. Teachers should also incorporate some manner of character education within

their weekly lessons. Library media specialists could promote books that teach students

tolerance and cruelty prevention and computer teachers could teach students how to

correctly utilize the Internet and the improper use of the Internet (Fried & Sosland, 2009).

Although rules on cyberbullying within schools have not yet been mandated at the

federal level, the safety of students regarding cyberbullying has become a major focus of

state legislation. Between 2008 and 2010, several states added cyberbullying policies

that prohibit using any electronic communication device to bully others. These policies

include prohibiting private devices while at school, such as mobile phones, or utilizing

the school's computers for blogs, email, Facebook, or Twitter to bully others in any

format. Results from a study conducted by Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2010)

involving 800 students between the ages of 12 and 17, showed that 94% of the students

surveyed routinely use the Internet. Of those students, 64% used the Internet daily.

Other results from Lenhart et al. (2010) study showed 4% of the surveyed students, some

as young as 12, have used social media to re-send hurtful sexually explicit pictures or

messages that have been sent to them. In addition, 15% of the students who answered the

survey also reported having received sexually explicit pictures degrading another student.

Although the original messages often occur within the students' homes, it does not take long for the conflict to infiltrate the school in the succeeding days (Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012). Some studies show that bullying and cyberbullying have become so closely related that students who experience bullying at school are often also bullied online and those who bully others at school often continue the bullying online (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008).

Impact of Bullying on Student Performance and Health

According to Olweus (1991), bullying plays a major role in the lack of education some students receive. Olweus explained that when students are overly concerned about their personal safety, their ability to learn as well as their self-efficacy is directly affected. Olweus further suggested that some students may eventually begin portraying their violent behaviors or even may become suicidal if they are consistently harassed at a young age (Olweus, 1993). Some researchers claim that the number of boys and girls being victimized by bullies is about the same while others have found that more boys are bullied (Rigby & Slee, 1993). Bullies will often choose their victims based on their opportunity to have access to the person as well as by their perception of someone who will not defend themselves. The bully will then consistently bother their victim for an extended period until they no longer have access to the person. Often, the bullied student has lost countless hours of education before the bully loses access to them (Hanish, Martin, Fabes, Leonard & Herzog, 2005).

Hazler, Carney, and Granger (2006) examined the severity of bullying by viewing 100 random bullying incidents. Of these incidents 73% involved boys and only 27% involved girls. The methods of bullying included social/emotional, physical, and verbal.

The results from the study showed girls were more likely to participate in social/emotional and verbal bullying where boys were more likely to participate in physical bullying.

Other research shows that bullying among boys and girls began to rise steadily from the early 1980s until the early 2000s (NEA, 2003). Kaiser & Rasminsky (2003) suggested bullies use all methods of bullying as a way of obtaining control of another human being. The teasing and name-calling could be in person or through social media. The American Medical Association stressed that bullying affects psychological functioning as well as the everyday functioning of children (Pace, 2001). According to the NEA, bullied students are often afraid from the initial onset of the day as they step on the bus until the end of the day when they leave the school building (NEA, 2003).

Both boys and girls equally demonstrate a link between bullying and lower concentration on academics in addition to the loss of self-esteem (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Story, 2003). Often, the loss of self-esteem occurs when students are humiliated by students by continuous put-downs or made the center of a school joke while other students join in with the teasing (Chappell et al., 2004). In addition, all young victims of bullying will eventually experience loneliness as they begin to shy away from making friends, or display difficulties in their social and emotional well-being as discussed by Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor, and Chauhan (2004).

Victims of constant childhood bullying will either turn against themselves as they mature and minimize their worth to society, or never learn to control their own emotions productively (Due, Holstein, Lynch, Diderichsen, Gabhain, & Scheidt, 2005). Consistent bullying may lead to depression, anxiety, and loneliness due to ostracism (Glew, Fan,

Katon, Rivera & Kernic, 2005). Unfortunately, self-identified victims are likely to blame themselves for their victimization and to "suffer in silence" (Graham, Bellmore, & Juvonen, 2006, p. 117). Other research shows boys and girls react differently to bullying and often disproportionately in various types of bullying. Boys tend to engage more in physical bullying while girls participate more in verbal bullying (Seals & Young, 2006). Boys and girls equally experience long-term effects of bullying which include both verbal and physical confrontations in and out of school. Therefore, it is imperative for adults to react immediately to the passivity of most bullied students to find the appropriate intervention for them (Holt, Keyes, & Koenig, 2011).

The primary impact of bullying on elementary school girls. Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, and Patton (2001) conducted a cohort study of 2,680 students. The students were surveyed during their middle school years. The researchers were looking for the possible relationship of recurrent peer victimization and onset of self-reported anxiety or depression. They found that the prevalence of victimization was high and relatively stable in this cohort. They also found that the effects of physical bullying were more emotionally damaging for females than for males (Bond et al., 2001). Nevertheless, although girls often bully as much as boys, girls more often bully by using methods to hurt feelings such as: spreading rumors, leaving other girls out of a group, encouraging others to be mean, creating mean messages, or sharing someone's private thoughts (Simmons, 2002).

Simmons (2002) researched and theorized that one of the main reasons that girls bully each other is due to jealousy. Often problems arise between girls because some have a difficult time acknowledging their insecurities or communicating their feelings to

other girls for fear of being ridiculed. These difficulties are often revealed through terseness and sarcastic remarks and sometimes end in a rage of written or verbal feelings toward another unsuspecting girl (Long & Pellegrina, 2003).

Long and Pellegrini (2003) conducted a longitudinal study of elementary school and middle school girls and found that physical aggression among girls diminished as relational aggression increased. Relational aggression includes the exclusion of one or more girls from a popular group which allows girls to add distance between themselves and others (Selekman & Vessey, 2004). Selekman and Vessey (2004) compared face-to-face bullying by gender and determined that girls were far more likely to display relational bullying and exclusion than were boys. Additional research showed that by the age of 11 school girls were also less likely than boys to be involved in face-to-face bullying and more likely to be involved with cyberbullying (Li, 2006; Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007). Dowell, Burgess, and Cavanaugh (2009) conducted a study of 404 adolescents and found that girls spent a much greater amount of time writing blogs and instant messages which often lead to cyberbullying.

In addition, elementary school girls reported higher incidences of bullying that involve harming someone's relationship or ability to have friends. The results of the survey also indicated that girls with the highest number of friends were more likely to be involved in some verbal bullying or ostracizing while students most supported by both parents rarely participated in any bullying behaviors. The data also showed elementary girls were the least likely to cyberbully, and that girls of all ages outnumbered boys as victims of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Additional research showed that girls were more likely to participate in cyberbullying (Strauss, 2012). Because of the increase of online conversations among students, several school districts have found it necessary to implement new electronic communication policies within their code of conduct manuals that include cyberbullying and sexting (Strauss, 2012). Recent reports show that bullying problems within most school districts usually involve cyberbullying that may begin online at home but often lead students back to verbal and physical bullying at school the next day (Strauss, 2012).

The primary impact of bullying on elementary school boys. According to Gurian (1998), elementary and middle schools are dealing with young boys experiencing post-traumatic stress from incidents which had occurred at an even younger age. These young boys react with deep-seated anger toward others because of abuse or other problems within their own families (Gurian, 1998). Boys tend to be less willing to express their feelings when they are the targets of teasing and taunting and often suffer in silence until they explode in anger. Gurian (1998) advises adults to watch boys for warning signs of inner pain and to immediately report suspicious changes in their daily or weekly habits. Where girls tend to be more openly vocal, boys will often rage secretly. Because of this, there is no substitute for personal relationships between school-age boys and adults (Bosacki, Marini, & Dane, 2006).

On the other hand, a child who has experienced previous bullying may also internalize feelings and become the target of other bullies (Behre, Astor, & Meyer, 2001). Misplaced anger often results from unresolved pain in boys. Often male bullies lash out against one student with small acts of either verbal or physical abuse to determine the initial response they will receive from the other student. Sometimes they also do this to

test the other person without the knowledge or understanding that the targeted child is now viewed as easy prey for other aggressive or sadistic students (Bonilla, 2000).

The primary difference between genders concerning bullying is the way boys and girls bully (Limber & Small, 2003). Although the amount of bullying tends to be equal by both genders, boys often display more hostile physical contact where girls are more verbal in their bullying tactics (Baldry & Ferrington, 2005). Unfortunately, adolescent boys, who were bullied as young children, tend to hurt others later in life as they reach high school age and beyond. Some bullies have experienced continuous taunting at a very young age and were first labeled as victims by others (Nelson & Dishion, 2004). A sign that a young man may be harboring hostile feelings toward himself is reflected in consistent negative responses to questions. Also, if a young male is very defensive when asked about his behavior, it may be a sign that he is not fully in control of his emotions (Nelson & Dishion, 2004).

Society often places young boys in the position of power over others, but if these boys have witnessed an abuse of power by their predecessors, they may try to mimic the abusive behavior. In addition, bullies result from a continuation of negative behavior that has often become the normal behavior in their view (Roberts, 2008). Often, children are only reprimanded by adults for their bullying behavior, but intervention is not always viewed as immediately necessary. Although not all children who witness bullying by older siblings or adults become bullies themselves, this is a common reaction of many boys. This aggressive behavior may lie somewhere deep within waiting to erupt after several years (Nelson & Dishion, 2004).

Because boys are taught to manage their emotions and internalize pain, they express hurt indirectly and then either lash out at others daily or keep the pain bottled up on the inside (Druck & Kaplowitz, 2005). This pain may be one reason bullying has become one of the most common factors of violence and suicide among youth. Some researchers feel that many adolescent males could be positively influenced by attending weekly anger management classes within their school (Druck & Kaplowitz, 2005). Additionally, researchers have concluded that physical aggression displayed by hitting is often the major bullying problem with adolescent boys (Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006).

Although many males will immediately sympathize with victims after they witness bullying, other confused students become enamored with the power of being the proprietor and become bullies themselves (Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006). According to Ferrel-Smith (2008), it is important to watch all boys for signs of gloom, low self-esteem, and loss of interest in normal activities. She further stated that catching boys at an early age may prevent them from mercilessly teasing others later.

Ferrel-Smith (2008) calls bullying a continuing and overlooked problem in American schools and suggested that bullied males are more likely than other males to break the law by the age of 30. It is important for teachers and other staff to intervene early if they witnessed seemingly harmless taunting during school hours. A closer examination of taunts may reveal a continuous pattern of bullying and victims may begin acting out in other ways. Unfortunately for the school districts, a growing number of frustrated males respond to bullying practices by missing much-needed days of schools. (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009).

Teachers Perception of Bullying

Teachers are usually the primary witnesses when any student-to-student bullying occurs in the hallways and the classrooms of elementary schools. Teachers also view some types of bullying as less harmful than others and may react differently (Yoon & Kerber, 2003). In a study conducted by Dake, Price, Telljohann, and Funk (2004), researchers studied a national random sampling of 359 teachers. The perceptions and actions of these teachers concerning school bullying and the prevention of bullying were examined. Results of the survey completed by teachers showed a high percentage (86.3%) chose to first react by having serious discussions with the bully and the victim when verbal bullying incidents occurred. The teachers in this study also felt more anti-bullying training was needed concerning all types of bullying outside the classroom. In addition, almost all the teachers felt they needed more strategies to combat bullying in the classroom (Dake et al., 2004).

The way a teacher perceives the gravity of a bullying incident will determine how and when the teacher will intervene (Craig et al., 2000). For example, teachers may not recognize relational bullying, or they may perceive physical bullying as more important than verbal attacks (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). Some teachers believe that bullying is part of the normal developmental process, and they expect victims to handle it on their own (Dake et al., 2004).

Nishina et al., (2005) conducted a study of more than 2,000 sixth grade students from a Los Angeles public middle school. In this study, the students and their teachers were asked to list the students who were the bullies in the school and the students who were their victims. Neither the students nor the teachers knew whom the others identified

as bullies or victims. The second part of the survey required the students and the teachers to list the most popular students in the school. The results showed that the students and their teachers identified the popular students as also being the most likely to bully others. The researchers concluded that teachers must find a way to create a feeling of a classroom community where everyone is accepted. In addition, teachers could also aid socially awkward students in befriending at least one other child in the classroom.

Action research by Jasdeep (2013) was conducted to determine the relationship between middle school teachers' perception of their empathy and their likelihood of intervening in a bullying situation. The two instruments used were the Empathy Assessment Index (EAI) (Gerdes, Lietz, & Segal, 2011) and a modified version of the Bullying Attitude Questionnaire (BAQ) (Craig et al., 2000). The results of the study showed a significant correlation between the teachers who reported having empathy and the reports of their likelihood to intervene in a bullying situation (Jasdeep, 2013).

Teachers Role Concerning Bullying

Craig et al., (2000) found that most parents did not feel that teachers react often enough to bullying or always know how to react appropriately in bullying situations. To counteract those claims, Craig et al. (2000) advised schools to provide character education lessons that focused on kindness as well as addressed misbehavior. These researchers further suggested either involving the parents or letting them know that the school was making an effort to show empathy by addressing bullying in a structured and organized fashion (Craig et al. 2000).

Orpinas and Frankowski (2001) conducted a study in an elementary school to gather information on bullying. The study consisted of a survey being administered to

teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, school counselors, and principals. The purpose of the survey was to determine the needs of their students concerning bullying. The results of the survey showed a need to decrease verbal bullying among the students. To address the problem, the teachers decided to teach students conflict resolution skills, participate in a 20-hour training program on bullying, and include anti-bullying in their curriculum. The results of the training program showed a slight increase in the number of students who reported bullying incidents, but little change in student knowledge of bullying.

Espelage and Swearer (2004), maintain that one of the primary roles in preventing bullying in the classroom is teacher training. Wright (2004) suggested school staff must begin their understanding of bullying by first knowing the difference between horseplay and aggressive bullying behavior. According to Mishna et al. (2005), teachers' responses to bullying behavior is based upon their professional training as well as on their perception of the effectiveness of the school's training and school policies. Thus, a teacher's initial response to bullying behavior may positively or negatively influence student's future behavior.

By reacting in a manner that prevents additional bullying, teachers could increase their schools' ability to educate all students (Mishna et al., 2005). According to Rose & Gallup (2006), the biggest problems affecting local public schools include ineffective discipline rules and teachers' lack of control within their classroom. Of the parents polled by the Rose and Gallup (2012) poll, 11% believed that bullying occurred because of the overall lack of control and discipline within the school district. Those same parents believed teachers should understand bullying and schools should always discipline children for bullying. Only 5% of the teachers believed the same.

Crothers, Kolbert, and Barker (2006) conducted a study on the perception of bullying intervention by elementary school teachers. This study involved a 15-item questionnaire known as the Bullying Intervention Survey. The results of the survey showed that students preferred bullying interventions that were designed and implemented by their teacher rather than interventions from outsiders coming into their schools to put on programs for them.

Some authors suggest bullying occurs at some point among most 3rd to 6th grade students, and the lack of interference by their teachers is the primary cause of increased levels of bullying at this age (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Meyer, Astor, & Behre, 2002). Yet, some students have become accustomed to and actually thrive on manipulating other students (Fried & Sosland, 2009). This behavior becomes the way of life for these students, and in some instances the behavior is not connected to low self-esteem, abuse, or other disappointments within the child's life that may cause them to act out.

Nevertheless, many adolescent bullies react from a continuation of a negative behavior that eventually becomes the bully's normal behavior (Fried & Sosland, 2009). Teachers have a daily consistent relationship with the students in their classrooms, and this interaction should influence not only academic growth but also character growth (Yoon, Bauman, Choi, & Hutchinson, 2011).

In 2012, the Gallup poll reported three out of four Americans believed bullying prevention should be a regular part of a school's curriculum. An additional 58% believed schools should investigate bullying incidents and discipline students when they believe bullying has occurred either inside or outside of school over the Internet (Rose & Gallup,

2012). Nevertheless, some teachers still report bullying as being a type of a rite of passage for elementary students (Kennedy, Kevorkian, & Russom, 2012).

Strauss (2012) charted the various fair expectations parents should be able to have regarding bullying within the school. Strauss' first fair expectation is "not all bullying behavior can be stopped or prevented" (p. 62). Another of Strauss' fair expectations is "once bullying has been reported, the parent has the right to expect the administrators to indicate concern" and "to investigate the concern immediately" (p. 63). Strauss (2012) strongly suggests in her final expectation that "appropriate intervention will take place if the concerns are validated" (p. 64).

Robers, Zhang & Truman (2012) reported that during the 2009-2010 school year, 23% of public schools had listed bullying as part of their daily student discipline problems. Other discipline incidents showed that 9% of the students who participated in the survey disrespected their teachers daily. In addition, one of every three students reported being the target of some type of bullying.

Anti-bullying Professional Development for Teachers

Two researchers suggested policy-makers and school administrators provide a framework for teachers to develop daily support for students who struggle with social issues (Adelman & Taylor, 2000). The teacher should be the first line of defense for bullying students before their behavior continues to a point where they are reprimanded by the principal by being put out for a short period of time. After identifying the bullies, teachers should first try to intervene and immediately handle the situation. Then, if necessary, the teacher should refer the student to a school counselor or psychologist so they can obtain the help they need to discontinue the process of creating more victims.

Teachers also are the first line of defense for the victims of bullies when bullying occurs inside the classroom. (Thompson, Cohen, & O'Neil, 2001).

An elementary school principal conducted a study in Bursa, Colorado to determine the need for professional development for teachers concerning bullying (Stockdale, Hangaduambo, & Duys, 2002). The survey was administered to 355 fourth and fifth grade students, 18 teachers, and 150 parents. Participants were asked about their views of the frequency of bullying events and the types of bullying incidents within the Colorado elementary school. The results of the Colorado study showed teachers were reporting more instances of bullying within their classrooms than the students were reporting. Additional results from the study showed that the teachers' perceptions of how often they intervened in bullying were different from the perceptions of their students and from the perceptions of the parents (Stockdale et al., 2002).

In many districts, superintendents realized a need to create a culture of academic achievement by offering beginning-of-the-year bullying-awareness professional development to all teachers (Wright, 2004). Some teachers were reporting tremendous concern over the increase of bullying within their schools and expressed conflicting views of their role in creating an atmosphere which will curb bullying (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004).

To effectively aid teachers in the fight against bullying, school administrators must change the social and the moral climate within their building. Many researchers suggested that to maintain an effective social and cultural atmosphere within the entire school body can be an effective tool against bullying (Bosacki et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). According to Benbenishty and Astor (2005), professional training for

teachers on how to prevent student violence is imperative to providing a safe school for all children. Others feel that teachers who discuss bullying with their students and consistently intervene when it does happen are the most effective in combatting the problem. These discussions are usually focused on the roles of parents, teachers, and school personnel (Mishna et al., 2006). Bradshaw, Sawyer, and O'Brennan (2007) revealed that when teachers participated in the district-wide professional development designed to eliminate bullying, the behavior is significantly reduced.

Vreeman and Carroll (2007) conducted a study to examine anti-bullying professional development where classroom management techniques and conflict resolution were the primary topics for teachers. These researchers found that a school-wide approach to changing the climate within the school brought more respect to the contribution of the teachers within the classroom. The results of Vreeman and Carroll's (2007) study showed teacher training as the most important tool in combatting bullying and that any anti-bullying training must involve either the entire school or the entire district.

Most school staff experience similar obstacles to student safety outside of the classroom which included minimum supervision within some areas of the school as well as an inadequate number of staff members available for student transitions. These obstacles, combined with an often lack of parental support, leave a gap in the amount of time taken among all relevant stakeholders to address how to support troubled students (Dowell, Burgess, & Cavanaugh, 2009). Statewide approaches to the No Child Left Behind Act has caused many schools to address various methods to eliminate barriers to student achievement. One study found that bullying could have accounted for a decrease

of up to an average 1.5 letter grade in an academic subject across the middle school years (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). Bradshaw, Evian, Wassdorp, O'Brennan, and Gulemetova (2011) conducted a study that showed a link between the school's overall bullying climate and the school's overall standardized test scores. According to the results of the study, 98% of teachers felt it was their duty to react to bullying within their schools. Nevertheless, many of these same teachers did not feel they had enough training to be as effective as they should have been in combatting bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2011).

The results of Klein, Cornell, & Konold (2012) study showed the differences in how parents, teachers, and staff perceived the effectiveness of their bully-prevention program. The research involved students and parents from one kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school. The questions on the surveys focused on the effectiveness of teacher supervision of students in classrooms and hallways. The surveys were based upon a modified version of OBPP. The participants in the study comprised of teachers and support staff, as well as from parents of students in grades 3-6. Only 218 of the 371 parents who were sent the survey (or 59%) responded and 48 of the 56 teachers (or 89%) who were sent the survey responded. One result of the study showed students reported a higher number of bullying incidents than did teachers (Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012). Previous literature on bullying suggests increasing preparation of teachers also increase the percentage of teachers who intervened in bullying situations (Holt, Keyes, & Koenig, 2011).

Summary

The research reviewed in this chapter implies that student-to-student bullying is detrimental to a school's culture and climate. All types of bullying that occur on and off school grounds posed a problem for schools. The need for additional studies that include the perceptions of teachers as it relates to student-to-student bullying is also evident based on current research. A further need exists for more research on the best approaches to combat the new methods students use to bully. The impact that bullying has on student health, emotional well-being and academics were also addressed. Chapter three includes an explanation of the methods used to address the research questions. Also included in chapter three are the instrument used to organize the teachers' answers to the questions and how data will be collected and organized.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the changes in student-to-student bullying behaviors that occurred in the past seven years. The second purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time. Finally, the impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention was examined. Described in this chapter is the methodology used in this study. Chapter three also includes the research design, the selection of the participants, the measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, the researcher's role, and the limitations.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was selected for this study using an interview protocol. An in-depth interview process was the primary means by which data collection was used to complete this study. Seidman (1991) asserted that viewing experiences through the lens of individuals who live those experiences within their daily lives is the best way to understand social abstractions. Creswell (2007) suggested following three steps while conducting the interviews. The researcher sent an email inviting elementary teachers who fit the criteria for the study to participate, formatted open-ended interview questions, and scheduled the time and place for the interviews. The interviews for this study were completed during one school year at one elementary school utilizing teachers who taught at the school. The interview procedure consisted of interviewing the selected teachers separately. The interview was audio-taped by the school counselor and transcribed by the researcher. The interview consisted of fifteen open-ended questions

which were analyzed and interpreted. According to Anderson (2011), "qualitative research involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that are not easily reduced to numbers" (p. 5).

Selection of Participants

The purpose of this section is to "describe (a) who participated in the study including their characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity), (b) sampling procedures, and (c) the number of participants" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 167). Creswell (2007) suggested purposefully selecting participants who would best identify with the research questions. The criteria for the selection of participants for this study included participants who were elementary teachers and have taught within the same school district for at least seven years.

A span of seven or more years of teaching experience at the same school was dictated by the opportunity it provided to learn the teachers' perceptions of whether the amount or method of bullying or the possibility of bullying within their school had changed over time. This span of time was also chosen because it allowed the teachers an opportunity to examine whether the change in bullying occurred because of effective professional development, offered by the district, regarding anti-bullying practices. The participants were selected by the researcher based on their availability and the number years they had taught within the elementary school in the study. The participants in the study included three male elementary teachers and seven female elementary teachers. Their range of teaching years was between seven years and twenty-eight years. All teachers had taught at least two different grade levels and spent a minimum of seven years in the school within the study.

Measurement

Fifteen interview questions were assembled from the school's discipline reports, information based on a review of existing literature, personal experiences from working within the field of education, and from previous teacher discussions regarding bullying. Five elementary school principals within the same school district as the study reviewed the questions individually and provided feedback regarding the relevance and the validity of the questions. The questions were revised based on the reviewers' feedback and pretested through mock interviews with two elementary school principals who were not in the study. This process resulted in a semi-structured interview protocol including 15 questions and 17 possible probing questions, which may result from the 15 original questions. Each respondent was asked the fifteen interview questions individually in a one-hour interview session. The interview questions corresponded to the research questions as follows:

RQ1. How did elementary teachers perceive student-to-student bullying within an elementary school community as changing during the past seven years? This research question was addressed in interview questions 1-5 (e.g., Tell me about student-to-student bullying practices in your school in general. To what extent, if any, do you think that the school climate has been affected by bullying practices?).

RQ2. How did elementary teachers perceive their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time? This research question addressed interview questions 6-11 (e.g., Generally speaking as a teacher, what are your responsibilities concerning student safety? How has this changed over the past seven years?).

RQ3. How had the district's professional development impact student-to-student bullying over time? This research question was addressed in interview questions 12-15 (e.g., Describe, in general, professional development that should be available for teachers concerning student bullying practices? How has this type of professional development occurred in your district?).

To determine the validity of the interview questions used, five elementary principals were asked to review the interview questions and the additional probing questions. The principals all worked in the same school district and have all taught elementary school in the district before working as a principal. Three principals were female, and two were male.

Each principal was asked to review the interview questions based on the three research questions used to guide the study. The five principals were sent a copy of the research questions as well as the interview questions. They were offered the opportunity to make suggestions or revisions. The principals were contacted through email and all agreed that the interview questions matched the research questions and the probing questions which might be asked based on the answers each teacher provided for each interview question.

Data Collection Peocedures

The researcher used the ethnographic qualitative methodology for gathering the data needed for this study. The request to begin collecting data for this study was made of the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and granted, as noted in Appendix A. Once approval was obtained from Baker University and the school district in the study (see Appendix B), an email was sent to all potential teachers asking them to

participate in the study. The email outlined the study and explained that the researcher was soliciting certified teachers in the elementary school who had taught in the school for no less than seven years.

The email further stated that teachers would be participating in a face-to-face interview consisting of fifteen open-ended questions with possible additional questions prompted by the original question. The email also stated that the participants would be assigned a code to keep their identity from being disclosed. The teachers were asked to send a return email if they were interested in participating in the study. Participants were selected based upon the number of years the teachers had taught within the school in the study.

Informed Consent Forms (see Appendix C) were then offered to each possible participant. The informed consent form included an 'opt-out' clause, meaning that, in addition to the study being entirely voluntary, participants could also have withdrawn their participation at any time of their choosing as the study progressed. No interviews were conducted before each participant had read and signed two copies of the consent form.

One of the consent forms was given back to the participant, and one was for the researcher to keep. Each participant was then assigned their code name for identity protection purposes and to allow for their anonymity throughout the study, especially during the reporting phase. Next, each of the candidates was contacted, either by phone or by e-mail, and formally invited to participate in the study. Each teacher who volunteered to participate in the study was given the time, date, and location for the interview.

On the day of the interview, teachers were informed of their right to pull out of the interview at any point. Teachers were then asked if they had any questions. After all questions were answered, the disclosure statement was signed by the participants using the code name that the school counselor gave them. After obtaining the signed forms, the participants were informed that the recorder was on and the first question was asked.

The interviewer and each participant sat at a table with chairs that were alike and in a room, that offered little to no distractions. The participants in the interview session had been asked if their responses could be recorded. The counselor took notes to further assist in the accuracy and order of the interview and to identify speakers. The counselor also focused on the participants and their answers to the interview questions and continued to ask probing questions as they related to the original interview question.

Analysis and Synthesis of Data

The researcher chose to use the grounded theory qualitative approach for analysis (Creswell 2009). This type of data analysis allowed the researcher to examine the concept of student-to-student bullying from the perspectives of the selected elementary school teachers. Creswell (2013) suggests using the grounded theory approach in qualitative research to search for patterns in a group who share the same culture. Using the interview process for one group of teachers who work in the same setting allowed the participants an opportunity to relate their experiences on bullying. As each participant answered the interview questions, the interviewer probed deeper with additional questions. As each interview was transcribed by the researcher, shared experiences became apparent as common themes emerged.

The next step for the researcher was to gather data to write a detailed description of the experiences of the participants. According to Creswell (2013), this writing is also known as a textual description. Since the phenomenon has been researched and found to be common in elementary schools, the teachers may have similar stories to relate. Creswell (2013) refers to this as "…the essential invariant structures" (p. 82). After the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the interviews and analyzed them using the constant comparative method. The researcher used the holistic account. Creswell (2009) describes this as a method of creating a picture of the issue at hand.

As each interview was completed, the audio recording was transcribed by the researcher. During the transcription process, all language used during the interviews were captured, including transition words, such as and, um, etc. After the interviews had been transcribed, a transcript was provided to each participant for review. All teachers were given the opportunity to member check the transcripts. A member check consists of allowing each participant the opportunity to make changes to the transcript if incorrect information was included (Creswell, 2014).

The interview recordings and transcripts were examined thoroughly for any differences. After the interview session, the completed transcriptions were uploaded into the Dedoose Research Analysis password protected online software program. Dedoose was used to analyze and code the responses from each interview, and to help separate and organize the contents of interviews into different categories and themes (Dedoose, 2015).

All documents and recordings were secured in a locked cabinet located in the researcher's home. Tong, Sainsbury, and Craig (2005) advised researchers to document the procedures of their case studies and then to follow as many of the steps of the

procedures as possible. The researcher of this study documented the steps taken leading up to the qualitative interviews and followed and recorded the detailed procedures.

Researcher's Role

Tong, Sainsbury, and Craig (2005) argued for the inclusion of researchers' personal and professional perspectives. They asserted that qualitative researchers closely engage with the research process and with the participants and therefore are unable to avoid personal bias. Instead, researchers should recognize and clarify for readers their identity, credentials, occupation, gender, experience and training. Subsequently, this improves the credibility of the findings by giving readers the ability to assess how these factors might have influenced the researchers' observations and interpretations.

The researcher observed bullying among students throughout her 20-year career in education. The researcher began her career in education in a suburban school district and taught there the first thirteen years. Bullying behaviors continued to be observed while the researcher began working as an administrator in an urban charter school. In 2011, the researcher began working at the urban middle charter school and began reviewing literature on the topic of bullying. The researcher left the charter school to work as the leader of an urban public elementary school where the study took place. Not long after, the researcher began to hear teachers speak of bullying within the school. The counselor of the school worked with the researcher to address students and teachers concerns about bullying. In addition, the researcher also addressed the parents about the types of bullying at the school's parent meetings.

The researcher has written other papers on the topic of bullying after teaching for twelve years. Other experiences include working in an urban charter middle school as an

assistant principal and experiencing several students who were accused of bullying, had experienced bullying, or had witnessed bullying. The researcher is currently the principal of the urban elementary school where the teachers work who are being interviewed for the study. Additional experiences include consulting with the school counselor as well as other social service agencies regarding bullying cases within the same elementary school of the teachers who participated in the interviews.

Limitations

Limitations of a study "are factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings or the general ability of the results" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 133). The following are the limitations identified in this study.

- Teachers may have experienced varying professional development regarding bullying offered by the school district.

- Teachers taught at an urban elementary school that had 100% free and reduced lunch, with a large percentage of working class and poverty level families; the findings of the study should not be generalized to other settings or socioeconomic status groups.

- The research sample included a small number of participants who were interviewed by the researcher.

- The participants' memory of their past experiences may not be accurate.

Summary

This qualitative study investigated the daily experiences of elementary school teachers within one school district located in a large, mid-western city. The purpose of

this qualitative study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions regarding the extent that bullying and the teachers' effectiveness in responding to bullying had changed in their school. This study involved a qualitative research design and was conducted using fifteen questions to gain the perceptions of the elementary school teachers interviewed.

The study consisted of interviewing selected teachers individually within the elementary school. The interviews consisted of fifteen interview questions and additional probing questions emerged based upon the answers of the original open-ended questions. By answering the interview questions, the participants explored their perceptions of bullying within their school and school district.

This chapter restated the purpose of this research and provided a detailed explanation of how each interview question correlated to each research question. Limitations of the study were also stated in this chapter. Chapter four presents the study's findings including descriptive statistics and results of the fifteen interview questions.

Chapter Four

Results

This chapter provides an overview of the findings of the study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the changes in student-to-student bullying behaviors that occurred in the past seven years. A second purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time. Finally, the impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention was examined.

To examine the research questions, the researcher used a qualitative research design and constructed a fifteen-question interview designed to learn the perceptions of elementary school teachers about student-to-student bullying. The personal interviews were conducted by the school counselor with ten certified teachers in the Midwestern school district used in the study. The researcher focused on three research questions to obtain the qualitative data used in this study. The participants for the study consisted of a diverse group of teachers with three men and seven women. All participants interviewed taught at the elementary school in the study for at least seven years. Nine of the participants consisted of general education teachers who taught students from kindergarten to sixth grade. One participant taught one of the support classes offered in the elementary school. This chapter presented the key findings related to the three research questions and a summary of the themes that emerged from each of the three findings.

Study Summary

The researcher utilized the counselor of the elementary school as the interviewer of the ten teachers participating in the study and the gatherer of additional information obtained from observing the movements and facial expressions of the interviewees. Before the interviews began, the participants were assigned a number based on the order of the interviews. Once the interviews were completed, the tape recorder and the notes were handed off to the researcher who transcribed the recordings and gathered the data for the study. What follows is an analysis of the findings obtained from the interviews.

Finding 1: Changes in student-to-student bullying in the past seven years.
The first research question asked was, "How did elementary teachers perceive student-to-student bullying within the school as changing during the past seven years?" The first interview question designed to prompt the teachers to discuss possible changes in bullying practices was, "Have bullying practices remained the same over seven years?" Several common findings became clear during the interviews. All ten teachers agreed that student-to-student bullying within the school had changed with time. Seven of the ten teachers identified verbal and written bullying as the most common type of bullying currently taking place in their school. It has changed only in the way that there are several bullies now who bully as a group, but the leader may change based on social media. There used to be one big bully. Students will make relationships and they use those friendships to bully another student. Then they exist in that victim/aggressor so-called friendship. There is no more "One big bully." Five of those seven teachers identified social media as the primary reason that bullying has transformed within elementary schools. Interviewee 8 stated, "There is more opportunity to bully 24 hours

a day because technology has become plentiful in schools and social media allows

bullies to remain anonymous." Interviewee 7 expressed, "Even the verbal bullying

that begins at school can now continue at home because most students have a computer

at home and are on it during the evening." Interviewee 9 also spoke about changes in

bullying because of social media.

> Students who wouldn't dare bully a classmate face-to-face previously are now
>
> joining in to forward hurtful text messages or to make fun of others on social
>
> media, primarily as a favor to another student whom they don't want to be
>
> upset.

The overall responses from this question showed that teachers believe student-to-

student bullying has changed because of social media and the influx of technology

used in elementary school classrooms.

The next questions asked by the interviewer to address Research Question 1 were

used attempted to determine how bullying practices have affected the school and how this

has changed over the past seven years. The interviewer asked one primary question and a

follow-up question, "Has school climate changed over the past seven years?" Then she

asked, "If so, in what ways has student bullying affected school climate?" In response to

the first question about changes in school climate, nearly all ten educators spoke about an

increase in hostility among the students. Interviewee 1 stated, "Student behavior

becomes more aggressive and more blatant in the classroom as bad behavior becomes

more accepted on television and in other areas in society." In response to how bullying

affects school climate, all ten teachers stressed that bullying has prevented having a safe

school climate. Interviewee 8 explained, "School buildings can be a safe place or a place

of solace or it can become a frightening place or a sad place if the climate is not peaceful. I have experienced all climates here in seven years." Interviewee 3 responded.

My first day here the kids told me that they would run me off like they ran the other teacher off. I cried my first day because the kids ran the school. I had never seen anything like it before. It felt like I was on an island. I see a lot more positive changes now. People feel more safe and secure. We are now working together to combat bullying.

In summary, all ten teachers agreed that bullying negatively affects school climate for both the teachers and the students. The overall viewpoint showed the teachers felt less effective when too many students participated in bullying behaviors and stressed that school climates, in general, have become more hostile as students have become more aggressive and bullying behaviors have become more blatant.

The discussion then turned to student learning and changes in student bullying practices. The interviewer first asked the teachers, "How has bullying affected your teaching practices?" All ten teachers expressed experiencing interruptions to the teaching and learning process due to bullying. Four of the ten teachers expressed using much-needed teaching time to be more vigilant concerning students' actions. Interviewee 1 showed her frustration as she explained.

Teachers should always watch the students in their classrooms in addition to teaching because bullying takes place so quickly with hidden cell phones, etc. It can be difficult to make sure all students are learning and feeling safe at the same time.

When asked if a change has occurred in how bullying impacts teaching and learning, all ten of the teachers mentioned experiencing an increase in duties concerning maintaining an emotionally stable classroom. Interviewee 4 stated, "Times have changed. We have to learn how to handle continuous social situations in addition to increasing scores, teaching, etc. At times, we are going to miss something. It's just the way it is today."

Also, all ten teachers also noticed a change in how students portray blatant hostility toward each other and participate in constant name calling. All teachers felt it was their duty to keep the students safe and to be vigilant in determining which student was the aggressor versus the victim. The results of this study showed that teachers struggle with bullies who sometimes blame their victims. The teachers suggested the parents are encouraging this, and often will not take the teachers word when they tell them of the bullying practices of their child.

One of the three teachers, who felt that the effects of bullying had not changed much concerning student learning, spoke of the timeless concept of relational bullying. The teacher discussed how students often shut down in class because of feeling like outsiders within their own classroom. Interviewee 3 became very emotional as she began to tell her story.

> I remember 34 years ago when someone was bullying me. I still remember it. It sticks with me. It still affects me and takes me back to my childhood when I was often excluded by other students because of my weight, so I didn't want to answer any questions in class.

This teacher further explained that these practices still occur and the exclusion of some students by other students occurs daily.

The interviewer then began to focus on technology and asked the teachers, "How does technology affect bullying practices?" She followed that question with, "Have those practices changed over the past seven years? Seven of the ten teachers indicated that bullying has changed because of technology. The common synopsis of the teachers suggested that the increase in bullying practices directly correlates to the increase of technology within our society. Interviewee 4 stated,

> They have too many avenues of using social media, and students also have to use technology in schools with their lessons. Many schools have one-to-one computers in classrooms, but it (bullying) will only change when kids know that what they do at home (on the computer) is going to affect them at the school. Students are also more savvy on computers. They can get on a site quickly and write things quickly and click off of it quickly before we even realize it.

Two of the seven teachers who believed that bullying increased with the influx of technology in society felt that the overuse of cellphones was also to blame. Interviewee 5 spoke of the increasing number of applications students can use on their phones to bully.

> Students know how to get on Snapchat and Twitter from their cell phones, and they can get on things quickly, and teachers don't always know what is happening. Seven years ago, more students were writing mean things using only pen and paper. It was easier to see them passing notes. We collect cell phones, but we can't search them if they lie and say they don't have one.

The use of technology in schools has grown in the last seven years as schools have introduced various methods of enhancing learning using various online applications. Many teachers discussed how much time it takes to watch for hidden cell phones and misuse of the computers in the classrooms. Results from this finding showed that the teachers believe technology hinders their effectiveness in fighting bullying. The four primary reasons given included:

1) Teachers lack knowledge concerning the constant changes within social communication.

2) Students consistently use technology at school as part of the learning process and can quickly access social media despite firewalls.

3) Many students have access to computers outside of the classroom and a personal cell phone.

4) Verbal bullying at school leads to written bullying on social media after students leave the school building.

To summarize the findings for RQ1, all the participants were concerned about the changes that have occurred with bullying and the increase of bullying within the elementary school. Data showed a noticeable change in bullying over the past seven years primarily due to student access to social media. Some teachers also spoke of how social media has changed over the past seven years, and how students began bullying outside of the classroom using social media and continued bullying verbally within the classroom. One teacher explained that when students begin bullying practices outside of the classroom, it impedes their ability to realize a problem exists until it has already

occurred. The three teachers who had not noticed a correlation between technology and the increase in bullying taught in the lower elementary grade levels.

Finding 2: Teacher effectiveness in combatting bullying. The second research question asked was, "How did elementary teachers perceive their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time?" This research question was addressed through several interview questions. The first question was, "What is your responsibility concerning student safety?" All ten teachers acknowledged their responsibility in ensuring the physical and mental health of the students. Interviewee 8 put it this way, "I tell students that their parents expect them to be returned to them in the same manner that they were delivered to the classroom." Interviewee 10 explained her beliefs concerning student safety versus academics.

> Physical and emotional safety are my number one duty as a teacher. Without it, the classroom environment will not be what it needs to be in order to build a community and see the academic growth intended for the school year.

After all of the teachers discussed their duty regarding student safety, the counselor asked, "What role, if any, has bullying played in your responsibility to student safety?" and "How has this changed over the past seven years?" Two teachers expressed concern that they could not always catch the bullies before emotional or physical damage had occurred. Interviewee 3 was affected by the realization that bullying could occur in her classroom without her knowledge and the victim would not tell on the perpetrator.

> Sometimes, I find out that bullying occurred and I wasn't aware of it. It is kind of shocking that I sometimes can't tell that someone's been having a problem. I take it personally because I feel that I need to keep students safe.

Three others were worried that events stemming from other areas of the elementary school such as support classes, the playground or the lunchroom could ultimately cause a problem in their general education class. Interviewee 1 expressed this concern.

> My responsibility is to assure my students that they will be 100% safe in my class, but I can't prevent what happens in support classes. Sometimes I hear about it (bullying) when they come back and say that someone was teasing another student in gym.

As the teachers began answering the question about safety, it became clear that the teachers who mentioned their own experiences of being bullied as a child were also worried about ensuring student safety concerning bullying. Interviewee 9 began to speak about his ability to keep students safe. "They should not be sitting in the class wondering if they will get jumped on the bus stop. They need to know that they will not get hurt verbally or physically coming to school,"

> The researcher's follow-up question was "Do you feel that you have had any hindrances to those responsibilities (student safety)?" The teachers' primary concerns regarding their responsibility of protecting students from bullying resulted from a variety of contributing circumstances. Throughout all the interview topics, six teachers commented on the lack of parental support as a hindrance to their effectiveness in combatting bullying in their classroom. When asked specifically about the hindrances Interviewee 1 offered further explanation on this topic,

> Some of the parents are telling kids to hit other kids if they touch them. Kids are taking this literally! To tell your child to fight if they touch you is the wrong message. It sets us up for failure.

Interviewee 3 viewed the parents as one of the biggest obstacles to their success in handling bullying situations when they occur within their classrooms.

> Parents don't want to accept the possibility that their child is the bully. They used to take the teacher's word for incidents. Now parents want to go straight to the district to blame either the teacher or the other student.

Although all the teachers were interviewed individually, several began to shift in their seats and show obvious agitation when the counselor began to question them about parental involvement with bullying. Interviewee 4 stated, "Parental involvement is a barrier. Parents need to be involved when bullying occurs but in a more positive way. This will cause a positive relationship between the students and their teachers."

Interviewee 5 also spoke about the responsibility of the parents concerning bullying.

> Sometimes we get pushback from parents. We have to spend valuable time teaching kids about emotional responsibility. It takes time, especially when you are having to teach this to kids who have not had any previous lessons on emotional responsibility. There's really no district-wide training on this. Then the parents tell us (teachers) we don't need to teach their children how to keep their hands to themselves, but their children (who bully) hinder teaching practices in the classroom.

Interviewee 7 discussed how some parents could sometimes be a hindrance to their ability to handle a bullying situation because they do not want to follow the proper protocol, and will attempt to handle the bullying themselves.

> In the last two years, there has been constant reminders put up to let teachers and students know that bullying would not be tolerated. Yet, each year becomes more

challenging because there are younger parents now coming to the school to confront other parent's students instead of letting us handle the situation. They will also confront them on the bus stop. Then we (teachers and administrators) have an additional problem.

A variety of other hindrances to the teachers' effectiveness in handling bullying was also expressed by those interviewed. Three teachers were concerned about the lack of continuous training. Interviewee 8 explained, "Knowledge is power, but we have not been trained nor do we have a bullying curriculum." Interviewee 6 was concerned about the lack of having enough full-time support staff some school years. "Sometimes we do not have enough help. One year we may not have a full-time counselor or a full-time social worker or a full-time vice principal, so we have to juggle." Another teacher stated, "It's hard to keep up with all the new methods students have now to bully and how that changes from year to year."

The participants were then asked, "Has this (hindrances to keeping students safe) changed over the past seven years?" Six of the ten teachers interviewed cited that the biggest change in their ability to combat bullying and keep students both emotionally and physically safe occurs because bullying is easier to accomplish in secret. Interviewee 9 explained how bullying has changed due to this secrecy they share.

Students have far more ways that they can hide and bully each other. They can hide programs under the other icons, so their parents and teachers don't realize they have downloaded certain ways of communicating that may be hurtful. For example, one program allows students to take quick pictures of another student and distort it before sending it out to others. Students can do things on the phone

quickly without teachers even knowing they are doing something they shouldn't be doing until it is too late.

Interviewee 2 put it this way, "Students used to have landlines at home, and there was a limit to conversations they had outside of school, now conversations, as well as pictures, are at their fingertips."

To further expound on research question 2 regarding the effectiveness of teachers responding to student-to-student bullying, the participants were instructed to, "Describe all the types of student disruptions reported to the principal during the most recent school year" and asked them, "In which ways, if any, could any of those behaviors be considered bullying in your opinion?" The various responses showed the primary types of class disruptions reported by teachers as possible bullying-related incidents consisted of name-calling, pushing, spitting, hitting and kicking under the desk. Interviewee 6 commented, "Sometimes when students want to always get out of their seats, it's to pass by another student they are actually bullying. They pass by and bump them or initiate some other hurtful action." Although several teachers mentioned the increase in the blatant physical aggressive behavior, Interviewee 10 expressed an additional concern, "Some of the reported behaviors could possibly be considered sexual harassment." The participant listed those behaviors as "using objects to symbolize body parts, making comments about another student's body, writing sexually explicit letters, drawing body parts, or bumping, touching, or grabbing other students in private areas of their bodies."

In further reference to the second research question, teachers were asked their level of confidence in reporting bullying. Nine of the ten teachers felt that they could identify bullying based on the definition provided from the district's webinar training. In

response to the question, Interviewee 10 suggested, "I realize bullying is occurring when the behavior has been continuous." Interviewee 7 stated, "I feel bullying has occurred when I view behavior that makes others feel uncomfortable to the point of shutting down in some manner."

In addition, all but one of the ten teachers said they would intervene in a bullying incidence if they witnessed one occurring at school. Of those nine teachers, seven of them stated they would mediate the situation immediately, and then take the situation to the principal or the school counselor. The other two teachers stated they would confront the bully and then take that person to the principal and report the situation to their team and the counselor. Interviewee 3 described how she would handle a bullying incident.

> If I saw bullying, I would try to stop it, but you have to determine if you want to get between kids and their arguments, but if it is verbal bullying, I would ask 'are you using kind words?' 'Are you being nice right now?' I would make it a teaching moment.

As a follow-up question, the interviewees were asked to "describe the steps you would take and the personnel you would use if you witnessed bullying practices in the hallway or classroom." Eight of the ten teachers stated they would use the administrators and the school counselor as their second line of defense in dealing with bullying incidents. The other two teachers interviewed stated that they would follow protocol and discuss the incident with their grade level teams. The teachers felt that discussing the incident with their team would allow them to collect more information on both students before turning all the information over to the counselor or school principal. Interviewee 4 explained the process she uses to handle bullying.

I always use them (the counselor and principal) because of protocol. But it

depends on the parent. If the parent and I can handle it and it's a situation that we

are all handling already, then we handle it. But if it is a true bullying situation,

then I always inform the principal and the school counselor.

The interviewer changed the question to focus on the teacher's voice. She asked,

"To what extent do you, as a teacher, have a voice in determining consequences for

bullying practices? The follow-up question asked, "Do you feel that you have more or

less of a voice in student bullying issues now than in the previous seven years?" All ten

teachers indicated they have a voice in handling student bullying issues. However, all ten

teachers stated the strength of their voice depends on their leadership in the school.

Interviewee 5 stated, "With our current leadership, we have more collective meetings

now that target bullying, so we have more of a voice. We are good at meeting and

listening to one another and collectively changing protocol that is not working."

To summarize the sentiments of the teachers regarding their effectiveness in

combatting bullying, the researcher must review the response to bullying actions by the

teacher, the students, and the parents. Teachers also pointed to a change in student

aggressiveness and blatant student behaviors. When asked about their confidence in

recognizing and in confronting bullies, all the teachers voiced confidence in handling

bullying situations and in obtaining needed personnel to assist them.

**Finding 3: The impact of district professional development on student-to-

student bullying.** Research question three asked was, "Has the impact of district

professional development on anti-bullying practices changed in the past seven years?"

All ten teachers mentioned the Safe Schools online seminar training offered by the school

district each year. According to the teachers, the Safe Schools training is an effective

way to help teachers understand how students feel about bullying and gives various

strategies to respond to a bullying incident. However, four teachers gave a variety of

answers regarding additional training and material they would like to have regarding the

topic of bullying from their school district. Four teachers specifically addressed needing

one district-wide clear definition of bullying. Some of the teachers also addressed

needing professional development on how bullying looks in various forms. Interviewee 8

explained some of the needs of the teachers.

> We need to know the difference between a bully and an unhappy child. If a
>
> student goes over to another student and takes his pencil, he may just need
>
> attention, but if he is taking the pencil on a consistent basis and the other students
>
> feels incapable of stopping this behavior, it is now bullying. We need to view and
>
> discuss various scenarios since the situations keep changing.

Another teacher felt that the theme of district professional development in the past few

years has been on "trauma-sensitive" training, but the district has not focused enough on

anti-bullying training. Interviewee 1 stated,

> The only professional development we have had with the district that focuses on
>
> the student's social-emotional problems has not been about bullying. It was about
>
> traumatized kids. I even think schools have been specifically chosen in the
>
> district to be titled 'trauma sensitive schools.' If it (bullying) is not going to be
>
> handled the same for everyone and on a consistent basis at the district level, we
>
> need to handle it at the school level.

Seven of the ten teachers gave their suggestions for the types of district-wide professional development they felt would be beneficial for the teachers. One interviewee mentioned the district once used "Rachel's challenge" several years ago. Interviewee 5 stated, "There needs to be some psychological conversation about bullying. Maybe some specific instruction on how to handle bullying because bullying practices have evolved and we don't necessarily know how to handle it on a consistent basis." Interviewee 1 suggested involving the teachers in the district training over bullying.,

> I think we just need to have professional development on defining bullying. It should be teacher-driven so we can own it. We could come up with a problem-solving solution to show how we would handle each situation. The trainer could let us know if we are handling each situation in a productive manner.

The teachers had various ideas on how the district's professional development over bullying should be held. Some teachers suggested the districts provide ongoing professional development throughout the year concerning bullying. Others felt that extensive professional development at the beginning of the year for the teachers and a refresher training later in the year would be sufficient. One teacher felt the professional development over bullying should be offered to only the teachers who requested additional training on the topic.

The teachers also offered various suggestions of professional development activities the district could provide concerning bullying. Eight of the ten teachers liked the online webinar mandated by the district and the subsequent test they were required to take and pass regarding bullying practices. Six of the ten teachers expressed that the

online seminar was not enough by itself to help them throughout the year to handle bullying instances. Interviewee 5 stated, "I think we do a pretty good job, but we have different socio-emotional needs in the urban district, so maybe we need more training that is more specific to our school than the scenarios we watched on the webinar." Interviewee 4 added another viewpoint during her interview, "I think the training is pretty thorough. We do need to go back and revisit the tapes throughout the year. By mid-year, you forget all of the suggestions offered on the film." In addition to wanting additional anti-bullying training, three of the teachers offered reasons why the one-time training was not enough. Interviewee 9 offered, "Teachers need more training to gain a better insight because teachers are reporting it incorrectly and this only exasperates the problem." Interviewee 10 suggested, "I do think more emphasis should be placed on the importance of anti-bullying. It should be addressed more, yes."

All teachers in the study stressed the importance of needing either additional anti-bullying emphasis, more professional development on bullying or possibly an anti-bullying curriculum. Interviewee 10 commented, "For teachers, in-person training is what works best. E-mails and flyers get lost among the hundreds of others in our inbox or papers on the desk." Interviewee 9 stated, "I don't think it is an issue for teachers school-wide. I do think that any new incoming staff should be additionally trained and informed on the anti-bullying and discipline plan in place."

Nine of the ten teachers have used the option offered by the school to have the school counselor speak to classes on the topic of bullying. Eight of the ten teachers reported using classroom community meetings after bullying situations have occurred. Interviewee 9 summed up his thoughts and suggestions he has for his colleagues.

We also need information on how students can hide the many ways of bullying and how to deal with the whole class like a small community when it comes to bullying. If a child is hitting another student, it may not be a situation of bullying.

To summarize the third finding regarding whether the impact of district professional development on anti-bullying practices has changed in seven years, all interviewed teachers agreed a change has occurred. All ten teachers first mentioned the district-wide change to the Safe Schools online seminar training versus district-wide professional development on bullying. Although the teachers feel that Safe Schools training is effective, the majority of the teachers would like to review the topic throughout the year with additional webinars and anti-bullying professional development. However, the teachers disagreed on how often the professional development should occur. Most teachers offered suggestions for additional types of training and positive anti-bullying programs. Finally, several of the teachers also requested a clear definition and examples of bullying versus student conflict.

Summary

Chapter four consisted of an analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the interviews with ten certified teachers who have taught within one urban elementary school for no less than seven years. The interview questions were developed from three research questions over the topic of bullying and the changes that have occurred in elementary school student-to-student bullying. The findings from the data were separated into three categories. From the interviews, information about bullying emerged that allowed the researcher to view teachers' daily experiences concerning bullying. Chapter five includes a summary of the findings in addition to an overview of the problem, the

purpose, and the research questions. Chapter five also includes a review of the major

findings and findings related to the literature review as well as implications for action and

recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of how student-to-student bullying practices have changed over the past seven years at an elementary school in one urban school district. In many schools, teachers should balance teaching with ensuring students feel safe within their classroom and the school at all times (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Blum (2005) explained that a reasonable level of physical and emotional health usually precedes any academic connectedness. The majority of teachers participating in this study insisted that their students' physical and emotional safety was their primary concern. The teachers also suggested that building a classroom community helped all students feel safe and allowed them to teach with fewer interruptions. According to the interviewed teachers, when the students within a classroom feel safe, the class is more conducive to learning, and teachers see more academic growth.

Study Summary

This study was designed to determine how teachers within one urban elementary school viewed student-to-student bullying in their school and classroom. The discussions included the most prevalent bullying practices within the school and how those practices have changed over the past seven years. Other areas discussed included how bullying affects learning, how teachers view their effectiveness in handling bullying and the teachers' perceptions regarding effective professional development about bullying. Each topic explored how the teachers currently view bullying practices as well as how each category has changed or remained the same over the past seven years.

Overview of the problem. Bullying has been the forefront of the minds of school district leaders for many years (Olweus, 1978). Victimization at elementary school age can create students who are not ready to move on socially and academically to higher grades (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, & Sawyer, 2008). Research has also shown how prevalent bullying has been throughout the nation and the changes occurring in elementary student-to-student bullying. Yet, few studies have been conducted regarding bullying, which includes the individual perspective of elementary teachers. Researchers and school districts continue to study the best methods of eliminated bullying within schools and specifically, within classrooms.

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the changes in student-to-student bullying behaviors that occurred in the past seven years. The second purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time. Finally, the impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention was examined. This study involved a qualitative research design and was conducted using fifteen interview questions constructed with the intent of gaining the perceptions of the elementary school teachers. Three research questions guided this study.

RQ1. How did elementary teachers perceive student-to-student bullying within the school as changing during the past seven years?

RQ2. How did elementary teachers perceive their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time?

RQ3. How had the district's professional development impact student-to-student bullying over time?

Review of the methodology. The researcher used the ethnographic qualitative methodology for gathering the data needed for this study. The study consisted of interviewing a sampling of teachers at an elementary school located in a Midwestern urban school district. The participants were solicited by sending an email to all faculty members at the elementary school used in the study. The final participants were then selected based on the number of teachers who responded to the email and fit the criteria for the study. The researcher elicited the support of the school counselor to interview the teachers and the researcher transcribed the audio recording of the interview.

After all the interviews of the participants were completed, the interviews were first transcribed into text and then uploaded to the password-protected online Dedoose website. Dedoose Research Analysis software was used to code the responses from the transcribed notes. Dedoose software also helped separate and organize the interview contents by categories and themes. All content was read by the researcher and the responses were reviewed. Similar themes were coded for referencing. The material in each coded section was sorted, and then the results were summarized. The researcher combined the concepts and themes into categories, and the responses were used to arrive at conclusions.

Major findings. The first major finding from this study was related to the first research question regarding the teachers' perceptions and experiences with student-to-student bullying in an elementary school as changing during the past seven years. The results of the interview analysis revealed that all ten teachers agreed that student-to-

student bullying within the school had changed over the past seven years. The theme was that all kindergarten through sixth grade teachers interviewed perceived an increase in student-to-student bullying. Teachers felt that bullying through social media as well as verbal bullying increased while physical bullying decreased, and relational bullying continued to exist in the school but the amount of relational bullying remained the same. The second theme was that hostility among the students increased and became more aggressive and blatant.

The second major finding from this study was related to the second research question regarding teachers' perceptions of their ability to handle student-to-student bullying within the school as changing during the past seven years. The results of the interviews showed that eight of the teachers viewed their ability to handle student-to-student bullying within the school as changing with time. Three of the teachers stressed that student bullying has become more blatant. Yet three other teachers mentioned the secrecy in bullying actions and with bystanders who will not tell on the bullies. However, two teachers felt that their own consistency allowed them to keep bullying behaviors at a minimum in their classrooms.

The third major finding from this study was related to the third research question regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the impact of district professional development on anti-bullying practices as changing in the past seven years. All ten of the teachers mentioned the Safe Schools webinar training offered by the school district each year. The theme was that the teachers feel they need additional training either at the beginning or ongoing throughout the school year. One teacher mentioned that Professional Development on bullying should be available all year so teachers could

self-elect when or if they wanted to attend the training. A second theme was that teachers felt that a district-wide, clear definition of bullying and how it looked within the district in various forms was needed.

Findings Related to the Literature

Chapter two of this study provided an expansive review of literature that included the history and current problems with student-to-student bullying in schools. The first research question asked for the teacher's perception of whether student-to-student bullying had changed in the past seven years. Research from the literature review addressing the first research question showed student-to-student bullying had changed during the past seven years. According to Strauss (2012), bullying is much more difficult for teachers to detect in the classroom with technology being viewed as an essential aspect of students' daily curriculum. This literature corresponds to the interviewed teachers' overall perception that technology plays an extensive part in bullying occurring in their elementary school classrooms. Bosworth & Judkins (2014) concluded that bullying in schools has escalated due to the increased methods students can use to bully through social media. The interviewed teachers' responses also paralleled this research. An analysis of their interviews showed a consensus that their older students changed their primary method of bullying from verbal and physical bullying to using hurtful messages via cellular phones, laptop computers, and tablets. Baldry & Farrington (2000), concluded that students who portray any bullying also participated verbal bullying including spreading rumors, verbal aggression, and social rejection. The findings from the participants' interviews agree with the study. The one form of bullying mentioned by

all the teachers that remained constant in elementary school was verbal bullying even with the increase in cyberbullying.

Additional research showed that boys were more likely to participate in physical bullying while girls are still more likely to participate in verbal bullying, relational aggression and bullying by use of social media (Nansel et al., 2001). In this study, more than half of the teachers felt that relational bullying still exists primarily with the girls while many boys still participated in physical contact such as bumping, pushing, shoving, and tripping other students.

The second research question asked for the teacher's perception of whether their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying had changed over time. According to Rigby (2008), teachers sometimes do not realize the amount of bullying occurring in their classrooms or only identify a small portion of the bullies. Results of the current study showed that teacher effectiveness in handling bullying incidents remains a problem in elementary school. The teachers' experiences corresponded to Rigby's (2008) research. An analysis of the teachers' responses on this subject portrayed their anxiety in realizing that bullying occurred with their students and they were not aware of it. The teachers stressed that bullying incidents among their students, even if occurring on the bus or in other parts of the building, still affected their classroom climate.

Other research addressing teacher's effectiveness in handling bullying incidents indicated that students often reported teacher intervention in stopping bullying as ineffective which causes the victims to find other ways of handling the situation (Bauman, & Del Rio, 2006). According to Li (2007), over half of bullied children do not

report being bullied to a teacher. Most of the teachers in the current study stated that although they felt confident enough to confront the bully and talk to the victim, they would also need to seek help from both the school counselor and school principal to help with determining the extent of the bullying situation.

Other researchers suggested that the involvement of teachers in bullying incidents during childhood and the results of those bullying situations often influences a teacher's ability as an adult to intervene in bullying situations (Mishna et al., 2006). Some of the teachers in the study relayed their experiences with childhood bullying during the interviews and stressed their desire to ensure that all their students felt safe in school because of their own experiences.

Olweus & Limber (2007) indicated that teachers were in the unique position of being able to encourage and promote healthy relationships in the classroom to prevent and intervene in bullying situations. The current research corresponded to the primary suggestion provided by given from all ten teachers in the study that classroom communities be designed to help establish relationships as a deterrent to bullying. The third research question asked for the teacher's perception of whether the district's professional development impacted student-to-student bullying over time. According to Smith, Pepler & Rigby (2004), schools who provided bullying prevention programs allowed teachers to have more control with bullying situations including working with parents. The current research corresponded to the existing research. The teachers expressed their desire for annual training on handling the bully; the bullied and the parents.

According to Benbenishty and Astor (2005), professional training for teachers on how to prevent student violence was imperative to provide safe schools for all children. Several teachers who participated in this study discussed the need for ongoing professional training for teachers. An analysis of the teacher's interviews suggested the district should provide a professional anti-bullying training at the beginning of the year for the teachers and again later in the year to refresh their memory on anti-bullying and student code of conduct book.

Bradshaw et al. (2007), found that teachers who participated in district-wide anti-bullying professional development experienced greatly reduced discipline problems in the classroom. The teachers' responses supported Bradshaw et al. findings. Some teachers stressed that the current anti-bullying practices in their school and the mandated online webinar training helped them recognize bullying in their classrooms. However, some of the participants stressed that additional professional training on handling bullying situations should be available anytime it is needed.

Vreeman and Carroll (2007), conducted a study examining anti-bullying professional development regarding classroom management techniques and conflict resolution. The researchers found teacher training over all types of conflict resolution to be their most effective tool to fight bullying. Similar results were found in the current study. Teachers believe initial anti-bullying training should be district-wide and various aspects of bullying are reviewed with solutions given as examples for the teachers to use.

Conclusions

Safe classrooms and a culture that promotes learning are crucial to the academic success of all students. Elementary teachers must continue to keep up with the growing

number of methods used for student-to-student bullying. The new method of bullying

includes all types of new technology introduced that allow students quick access to social

media. Schools must continue to maintain an environment where students can learn

without fearing for their physical safety or experiencing emotional bullying. The

perception of the teachers in this study showed that the increasing number of class

disruptions in this school impacted learning. Using some of the techniques suggested by

the researchers (Adelman, & Taylor, 2002; Black & Jackson, 2007; Ferrell-Smith, 2008;

Fried & Sosland, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009) may prove to be effective in

combatting bullying in elementary schools. This qualitative study implied that

elementary teachers perceived bullying as an ongoing and changing phenomenon which

occurs for a variety of reasons. An additional implication of this study is that bullying

may be lessened or possibly eliminated by implementing a strong anti-bullying

environment and providing ongoing professional development for teachers. In the

following section, implications for action are provided, followed by recommendations for

future research and concluding remarks.

Implications for Action. Adolescent bullying has escalated as the various

methods students use to bully has grown (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014). To decrease

bullying behaviors that may be occurring in some elementary school settings, district-

wide bully-prevention committees could be implemented. These efforts could include

administering a survey to all elementary school teachers as well as creating a small

committee of teachers across the district to discuss possible bullying-prevention

practices. The teachers in this study are concerned about the constant changes in social

media which enable students to bully others with the push of a few buttons on their

cellular phones. The interviewed teachers also agreed that constantly-changing technology enabled students to participate in bullying behaviors without the teachers' knowledge until much later. On-going training over "bullying through technology" can occur throughout the district in the form of district webinars, newsletters, and building level professional training.

The teachers also spoke of the amount of instructional time lost due to handling student bullying behaviors and the escalation of blatant aggressive behaviors. Principals can consider networking with other principals to implement bully prevention activities that have reduced bullying in other schools. Some suggestions include classroom community meetings, improving supervision of the indoor and outdoor school environment during recess, passing times, and at lunch time. District and building leaders must work together with parents and teachers to identify and support bullies and victims of bullying. All stakeholders can collaborate to establish specific classroom and building rules against bullying, and establish positive consequences for students who help prevent bullying.

Some teachers discussed their childhood experiences with bullying during their interview. These same participants also discussed their perceived ineffectiveness in handling bullying within their classroom. The principal could implement professional development where teachers could voluntarily share their childhood experiences with bullying. These experiences may have affected their ability to effectively combat bullying in their classrooms. Additional professional development could be offered to these teachers, which may enable them to become more sufficient in their ability to handle bullying incidents as they occur.

Recommendations for future research. Recommendations for future studies that could build upon this research study include:

1. A qualitative research study could be conducted that examines teachers' perceptions of student-to-student bullying at the middle school or high school level. Interviewing teachers who work with older students could bring another dimension to the study.

2. A qualitative research study could examine the perceptions of district administrators, teachers, parents, and students on the topic of bullying. All interviews together could bring a deeper understanding of handling bullying within the schools and possibly increase overall learning within the school district.

3. A quantitative study could be conducted statewide by sending a survey to all elementary schools in Missouri soliciting teacher input on the subject. This quantitative study could provide a clearer picture of the bullying methods which changed the most over the past seven years.

4. A qualitative study could be conducted with teachers from other Kansas City, Kansas schools to determine if differences exist in teachers' perceptions regarding the changes in student-to-student bullying.

Concluding remarks. Throughout history, bullying has been a concern for schools, and the problem continues to exist even after years of anti-bullying programs and consistent research. This result of the current study showed that many teachers view student safety as their primary concern during the school day. Nevertheless, the perception of the teachers in this study showed that cyberbullying is a growing

phenomenon in elementary schools. The teachers indicated that parents often hindered their effectiveness in combatting bullying. All interviewed teachers stressed that school districts should provide ongoing, effective professional development throughout the year on combatting bullying within the schools and the classrooms.

In conclusion, the researcher hopes that this study has provided information that will be helpful in further studies. The results of this study show that bullying in one urban elementary school has increased in the past seven years. The primary change has been an increase in elementary students' use of social media to bully other students. Teachers and researchers agreed that for student-to-student bullying to decrease, teachers must be provided anti-bullying training on a consistent basis throughout the school year. In addition, all individuals involved with the school, including parents, must be willing to work toward the common goal of eliminating bullying. The administrators within the schools must also offer preventive bullying programs as well as react swiftly and consistently to all bullying incidents that occur in their schools. Anti-bullying programs, messages, mottos, and banners must be part of the culture of every school. Finally, all the teachers agreed all students have a right to remain emotionally and physically unharmed throughout society including within their schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Baker University IRB Request

BAKER
UNIVERSITY
School of education
Graduate department

Date:_ 6/6/17____

IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER _____
(irb USE ONLY)

IRB Request
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board

I.   Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)

Department(s)   School of Education Graduate Department

Name   Signature

1. Dr. Verneda Edwards   _ *Verneda Edwards* _____,   Major Advisor

2. Dr. Li Chen-Bouck   ___Li Chen-Bouck_____,   Research Analyst

3. Dr. Susan Rogers   _____,   University Committee Member

4. Dr. Jermaine Wilson   _____,   External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: (type name and include signature on line)
_____
          Patricia Hayes
Phone:
Email:
Mailing address:

          Blue Springs, MO 64015

Faculty sponsor:
Phone:
Email:
Expected Category of Review: _____ Exempt   ____Expedited
__X__Full

II: Protocol Title

An Examination of Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying in an Urban Elementary School.

Summary

The following summary must accompany the proposal. Be specific about exactly what participants will experience, and about the protections that have been included to safeguard participants from harm. Careful attention to the following may help facilitate the review process:

In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the perceptions of teachers in one urban public elementary school in regards to bullying. Teachers who have worked in the same urban school district for a minimum of seven years, will be asked how their perceptions regarding student bullying have changed over time. The teachers will also be asked if they perceive that professional development received by the district over time has made a difference in the occurrences of bullying in school.

Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.

There will be no different conditions or manipulation in the study.

What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

Teachers from one urban public school, who have worked for the district a minimum of seven years, will be interviewed. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the perceptions of teachers in one urban public elementary school in regard to bullying. Teachers will be participating in individual interviews and asked how their perceptions regarding student bullying have changed over time. The teachers will also be asked if they perceive that professional development received by the district over time made a difference in their perceptions of occurrences of bullying in school. The interview will consist of fifteen, open-ended questions. Interview questions 1 through 5 match RQ1. Interview questions 6 through 10 match RQ2, and interview questions 11 through 15 match RQ3.

Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical, or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

The subjects will not encounter psychological, social, or legal risks.

Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

The subjects will not encounter any stress.

Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.

The teachers will not be misled in any way.

Will there be a request for information that subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

Teachers will not be asked to share personal or sensitive information. The subjects involved in this study will be asked to provide demographic information including the number of years they have been teaching, the number of years they have taught in the district, the grade levels they have taught, and the current grade level they teach.

Will the subjects be presented with materials that might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

The subjects involved in this study will not be presented with materials, which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading.

Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

Each interview will be completed individually and will last approximately one hour.

Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

The subjects in the study will be teachers from one elementary school who have taught at the same school a minimum of seven years. All teachers in the school who meet the criteria will receive initial contact via e-mail.

What steps will be taken to ensure that each subject's participation is voluntary?

Each subject will receive initial contact via e-mail. Participants will be advised in the initial contact email that their participation is voluntary. Next, the subjects will be given a consent letter saying they understand participation is voluntary and they have the ability to withdraw during any portion of the study. Signing of the consent letter indicates willingness on the part of the subject to participate.

What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

No inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation. Participants will also be informed in the initial contact email about the opportunity to obtain a copy of the results of the study.

How will you ensure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

Teachers who agree to participate in the study will receive a letter of consent to sign before interviews begin. The letter of consent will indicate that they agree to participate voluntarily, that they can remove themselves from the study at any time and that all information will remain confidential.

Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No aspect of the data will be become a part of the permanent record of any participant.

Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.

No. None of the information will be part of a permanent record available to the supervisor, teacher, or employer.

What steps will be taken to insure the confidentiality of the data? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored? What will be done with it after the study is completed?

To protect the identity of the teachers, no names will be used in the study. Each teacher will be assigned a code name.

Data generated for this study will not be used for any other purpose. No names or other identifying factors will be available that could identify the subjects in the study. The data will be stored on a password-protected flash drive, which will be kept in a locked drawer that is only accessible to the researcher. The data will be stored for five years. Afterwards, the data will be destroyed.

If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no risks involved in this study.

Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

No archived data will be used.

Appendix B:Baker University IRB Approval Letter

Baker University Institutional Review Board

June 1, 2017

Dear Patricia Hayes and Dr. Edwards:

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at EMorris@BakerU.edu or 785.594.7881.

Sincerely,

Erin R. Morris

Erin Morris PhD
Chair, Baker University IRB
Baker University IRB Committee
    Joe Watson PhD
    Nate Poell MA
    Susan Rogers PhD
    Scott Crenshaw

Appendix C: Request to Conduct Research from School District

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Document Provided to Intended Researcher by: Patricia Hayes, Principal

Signature   Date: 4-30-17

_____

(Building Principal for District
Employee or Central Office Staff for
Out-of-district Researchers)

_____

DISTRICT ASSESSMENT TEAM ████████████████████
██
████████████████████████████

DIRECTIONS: The applicant should complete this form, obtain the necessary
                        approval and signatures, and return to:
                        ████████████████████████
                        ████████████████████
                        ████████████████

It may take up to three weeks for requests to be processed; please plan accordingly in
order to meet course deadlines.

   1. Please describe concisely the basic concepts and goals of your proposed project,
      and how it is relevant to the field of education.

      The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine ten elementary teachers'
perceptions regarding the extent that student-to-student bullying behaviors have changed
in the last seven years as technology increases within the schools. Additionally, the
impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention was also
examined. This study involved a qualitative research design and was conducted using
ten interview questions to gain the perceptions of ten elementary school teachers.

   2. List the names of all data collection instruments you intend to use and enclose a
      copy of each with this application. Also, enclose a copy of each parent/student
      consent form, if needed. Please describe in detail the distribution,
      implementation, and collection methods you intend to use in your data collection.

I have attached the interview questions for the ten teachers to answer.

No students will be directly involved

3. Give the names of the ████████████████████ you intend to involve to meet the project requirements. Are there certain demographics required for the project (i.e., grade level, gender, etc.)?

I will be using ten teachers from ████████████████

4. What amount of time would be required of staff or students in the schools in order to meet project requirements?

No school or work hours will be used by the teachers

5. Are there any other school records you would require (for example, achievement test scores or attendance)? No student identifiers will be made available including student names or ID numbers. However a method to distinguish students is available.

No school records will be utilized.

6. Give the name of each person who will enter the schools. For non-district employees, please provide existing background checks for individuals or a plan to ensure background checks are in place prior to entry in schools.

No non-district persons will be involved.

7. What is the date you wish to begin? The interviews will take place between May and June, 2017

8. By what date do you anticipate being finished? I anticipate being finished with the data

Interview process by the end of June, 2017. I plan to complete the study before December, 2017.

9. If this is a course requirement, please obtain the signature of your instructor responsible for this assignment and attach a copy of the assignment guidelines.

██████████ PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL

The approval or disapproval of requests will be made within the following general guidelines.

1. The only projects which will generally be approved are those which:
   a) contribute to the improvement of education in the Kansas City Public Schools;
   b) contribute to the improvement of education in general.

2. Even within the above categories, studies will generally be disapproved if they:
   a) appear to infringe on the privacy of pupils, parents, or staff members;
   b) present a burden to pupils or staff members;
   c) threaten school-community relations in any way.

██ Research solely for a course requirement will be considered only for the ██████ ██████████████████████.

4. At any point in the research process, ██████████████████████ staff can terminate the study if determined necessary for any reason.

██ Any results or product created as a result of this project which uses data from the district's students, staff, or facilities must be made available to the ████████ ████████.

PARTICIPATION OF THE SCHOOLS

Generally, participation in any research study conducted by an outside agency or individual will be completely voluntary on the part of the principals, teachers, pupils and any other personnel involved.

Project Approval Signature
Director of Assessment and Research, 816-418-7418

Appendix D: Teachers' Interview Questions

Teachers' Interview Questions

The following interview questions were assembled from the school's discipline

reports, information received while conducting research on the subject and from previous

teacher discussions regarding bullying. Each respondent was asked each of the following

questions:

1. Tell me about student-to-student bullying practices in your school in general. (Probing questions: Have these practices remained the same over the past seven years? If not, in what ways have they changed?

2. Tell me about your school climate. (Probing questions: To what extent, if any, do you think that the school climate has been affected by bullying practices? Has school climate changed over the past seven years? If so, in what ways has student bullying affected the change in school climate?)

3. What physical bullying practices, if any, do you see in your classroom, if any exist. (Probing questions: To what extent, if any, have your teaching practices been hindered because of bullying? In what ways, if any, has the learning environment within the classroom been affected by bullying? In what ways, if any, has this changed over the past seven years?)

4. What verbal bullying practices, if any, do you see in your classroom. (Probing question: To what extent, if any, has student-to-student verbal bullying changed over the past seven years?)

5. Tell me about any possibilities of improper student use of technology within your school. (Probing questions: What role, if any, has technology played in bullying within the school? How has this changed over the past seven years?)

6. Generally speaking as a teacher, what are your responsibilities concerning student safety? (Probing questions: Do you feel that you have had any hindrances to those responsibilities? What role, if any, has bullying played in your responsibility to student safety? How has this changed over the past seven years?

7. Describe the types of student disruptions you have reported to the principal during the most recent school year. (Probing questions: In which ways, if any, can any of those behaviors be considered bullying in your opinion? In which ways, if any, have these behaviors changed over the past seven years?

8. Describe your level of confidence in reporting bullying. (Probing questions: What affects your confidence concerning reporting student bullying? What can teachers,

administrators or district office personnel do to change your level of confidence in reporting bullying?

9. To what extent do you, as a teacher, have a voice in determining consequences for bullying practices? (Probing questions: Do you feel that you have more or less of a voice in student bullying issues now than in the previous seven years? Why?)

10. In general, describe the steps you would take and the personnel you would use if you witnessed bullying practices in the hallway or classroom. (Probing questions: In what ways, if any, have you used the steps and or personnel you described? Why or why not?

11. Describe, in general, professional development that should be available for teachers concerning student bullying practices. (Probing questions: How has this type of professional development occurred in your district? Do you feel that teachers need more or less training from the district that addresses bullying problems? Do you feel that teachers need more or less training from the individual school that addresses bullying problems? Has the availability of professional development for teachers concerning bullying changed over the past seven years?

12. In general, how do you think the school district should combat bullying in schools? (Probing questions: What role does your school district play in handling school bullying practices? What practices do you think they should have to combat bullying? How has this changed over the past seven years?)

13. In general, to what extent, if any, do you think that teachers should have input in school discipline practices concerning bullying? (Probing questions: How do you think teachers should be able to provide input? How is this carried out in your district?)

14. In general, what types of communication from the district concerning bullying practices do you think would be beneficial for teachers? (Probing questions: Do you receive this type of communication? How has this changed over the past seven years?)

15. Do you feel that there are any additional barriers to effective discipline practices that we have not discussed yet? If so, what are they

Appendix E: Teachers' Interview Transcripts

Interview on Bullying Practices in an Urban Elementary School

Discuss student to student bullying practices in general at your school.

1. I witness a lot of emotional abuse as far as inappropriate comments about another students' appearance concerning their clothes or their smell. Some of it is playing, but it escalates quickly into a serious mode. But most comments are simply embarrassing for the student.
2. Students who are berating each other and then it turns to physical. Then there is the cyberbullying then it carries over into school from things that stemmed from home.
3. A lot of bullying I have seen is verbal. They talk about each other shoes and hair. I didn't notice a lot of physical bullying the 2nd grade, but a lot of verbal
4. We have in depth training on bullying and what to do.
5. Bullying is decreasing. We meet to talk about bullying and have community meetings every morning which causes kiddos to be more aware.
6. There has been bullying. Most kids who bully, do so they can feel in charge or feel superior of the other students. I don't think it is good for the school and we don't need it here and every child has the right to come to school and feel safe.
7. It is not tolerated as a teacher; I'm able to stop it in my own classroom. If I can't stop it, I will go further, but usually I am able to stop it.
8. We do experience some verbal bullying and some physical bullying also, but it is mostly verbal bullying. Also we see Bullying happening more with social media, Facebook, cell phones, texting, Snapchat, etc.
9. Name calling writing texting, physical confrontation, trying to trip other students, taking things from others.
10. The bullying that takes place is mainly quiet comments from one student to another student. There were a few times when a student would use a pass to go to the bathroom and something was said or was said and then became physical.

Have bullying practices remained the same over the time (past seven years)?

1. Student behavior has become more aggressive and more blatant as it becomes more accepted on television and other areas in society. The teacher determines how long the interchange takes place. If the teacher is not playing attention, then the teacher misses it. If the teacher doesn't see it then it continues.
2. There has been a change. Then it got better, same sex classroom minimizes it a lot in school. We had a huge change after we had a change in leadership. We had more supervision and more intervention.
3. I notice less when we went to uniforms. I hear a lot of verbal abuse in my classroom. Students are talking about each other's mothers, their bodies; everything. Sometimes they will keep going even after you tell them to stop. Rumors going around, but not a lot of hitting.
4. The practices have changed in seven years. We were not having training as we have now, because bullying has changed.
5. In some ways it's getting better; some worse. We go back and forth from BIST to PBIS so bullying is becoming in the forefront of students' minds because it is in the forefront of teacher's minds.
6. It has changed. We had a meeting several years ago, and it (bullying) slacked off a bit, but then it stepped back up as more students came. I have seen it at its worse, but the more we talk about, it the better it gets.
7. It's changed. Even the verbal bullying that begins at home can now continue on at home on the computer or cell phone. I have class meetings as often as I see issues arising. We begin with
8. I feel that bullying is happening more and differently. There is more opportunity to bully 24 hours a day because social media lets the bullies be anonymous.
9. Students who wouldn't bully a classmate face to face are now joining in to forward hurtful text messages and join in on social media, even as a favor to another student whom they don't want to be upset.
10. During most of that time I was not in a classroom, so I cannot give the most accurate answer.

How does bullying affect School Climate?
1. We have a strong staff who constantly tries to put out the bullying fires. Students need to express their feelings with bullying. We need to address those offenses immediately and we need to go to the upmost offense. I don't tolerate it, but some adults do not take it seriously. The hallways are great under control. The transitions are on point and well-monitored. Sometimes teachers miss the moment. Bullying needs to be taken care of at the highest level.
2. It (bullying) can bring the moral down, because you begin to go into survival mode. Bullying is not conducive to learning, so we go into a survival mode. It keeps students from learning and teachers from teaching. If teachers are not careful, it rubs off on us and shows in our personalities. When I initially came to the school, people was very negative. There was an island type of feeling among grade levels and grades. We now have an increase of collaboration. There was a lot of negative comments from the school. That has decreased. People still speak negatively but not a lot. People have changed because of more pride in the school and school spirit.
3. When I first came to the school, I felt isolated, my previous school had closed and it was a great community. My first day here, there was an in-service meeting and the kids told me that they would run me off like they ran the other teacher off. I cried my first day because the kids ran the school. I had never seen anything like it before. It felt like I was on an island. I see a lot more positive changes now. People began to feel more safe and secure. We are now working together.
4. It's easier to shut down the behavior now. It was not as easy in the past.
5. Everyone makes me feel that I am a part of that school community. We take the saying "it takes a village" to heart. We had a student run away from home and run to the school. This portrays our school culture.
6. The kids here want a lot of attention and they want to learn, there was a lot of bullying at first, but it has gotten better now. Kids don't care how much you know until you show them how much you care. They feel like they belong here and they don't want to leave.
7. We can't teach in chaos. If there is chaos anywhere in the school, it still can bleed over into our classroom.
8. School buildings can be a safe place or a place of solace or it can become a frightening place or a sad place if the climate is not peaceful.
9. The climate is one where we all work together for one goal; having a calm school. When I see bullying, I work with the secretary, the counselor, the administrators and the teachers; even the maintenance crew sometimes gets involved in mentoring students.
10. There quickly becomes a negative atmosphere in the classroom (when bullying occurs). Instead of it feeling like a safe place, there becomes a tension because of the words of some of the students.

How has the climate been affected by bullying practices?
1. Bullying has calmed down because the climate has changed in the building
2. People in general mimic what they see. If teachers are fighting, the kids mimic it. I have been here before when the culture was negative and everyone was talking negatively. When people see the professional bullying and bullying is taking place, they mimic it.
3. Bullying can bring the moral down. It makes me sick to hear a lot of fighting in the school. If we can get the fighting curtailed, a lot more learning can occur. If the building is not peaceful and people speak negatively to each other, it causes a bad climate across the building.
4. Bullying today children are trying to commit suicide and children are now at a younger age bringing weapons to school to get other students. This has affected school climate because you see angrier children. Even with supervision, they still feel that they are going to find a way to get back at the other child, even with teacher intervention.
5. We did have bullying happening on the bus and in the school, PBIS has helped us change. Most of our kids know we will not tolerate bullying.
6. When a child gets picked on and other students see it, it causes other students to pick on students. Students will mimic what they see. Bullies attract more bullies. It has gotten better. Here. You have to let bullies know that they can't win.
7. Peaceful compared to previous years.
8. In previous years, the school was a place with a lot of complaining and discontent because of the climate that was caused by student behavior.

9. When students are bullying, it causes a chain of reactions, teachers are yelling and stressed and students feel either scared if they are the victim or apprehensive if they are witnessing the bullying.

10. Kids seem to get angry easier, quick fuses. Other kids then know that you can come back to the student to get a reaction.

What physical bullying takes place at this school and how has it changed?

1. Physical bullying usually begins with playful touch. The student who is receiving the touch is offended even though the other student is not playing. I always tell the students to put a space between each other. Some kids think touching is just a joke, but fighting still takes place ultimately. Parents are telling kids to hit other kids if they touch them. Kids are taking this literally. To tell your child to fight just if someone touches you is the wrong message. It sets us up for failure.

2. I do not see a lot of physical bullying in my classroom. It has to do a lot with the culture that is built into my classroom and my mobility. I'm able to troubleshoot behavior in its initial state. When I begin to see physical bullying; it is a red flag to me that I am not as physical in presence as I need to be. Behavior should be addressed in the morning if it begins in breakfast or on the bus. It starts off as verbal in the morning and then it turns to physical. Teachers have to be vigilant to prevent it from progressing. I think we see more physical bullying in the lower grades because they are learning about space.

3. I think students come in and size each other up. They want to see who can be the biggest and the baddest. Some students are more aggressive, then some of the other students have to make sure they are seen, and not seen as weak, so they have to get in each other's face. It did not used to be like that so much where students have to jockey for position to see who is the baddest.

4. I really don't have a lot of bullying in my second-grade class. Bullying is where students are afraid of someone and you don't want to come out, but I don't really see true bullying. I let my students know at the beginning of the year. I let them know that I won't tolerate it. I have the students role-play so they will know how it feels when you talk about other students.

5. I see more verbal than physical bullying. Usually the verbal bullying turns to physical bullying after arguing begins on the bus or in other venues in the morning. In the classroom, students feel freer to verbal bully because it is harder to catch them.

6. Yes, as school work becomes more difficult. Sometimes when students want to always get out of their seats, it's to pass by another student they are actually bullying. They pass by and bump them or initiate some other hurtful action

7. The last seven years has brought a broader vocabulary. They are exposed to too much. Meaner words, uglier words, inappropriate words, and a higher level of anger than I have seen seven years.

8. Students will sometimes bump another student on purpose, but most of the bullying Is from exclusion from mean words.

9. The physical bullying is bumping another student's shoulder in line. Students bumping into each other; boys will bump shoulders; girls will slap each other's hair.

10. The physical bullying seems to take place when there is a new student that comes into class.

How has bullying affected your teaching practices?

1. Sometimes I begin doing more problem solving then teaching.

2. When I began teaching, I learned by trial and error. One girl in the class began bullying me. One student convinced others that I didn't like them. Eventually, I realized I needed to pow wow with them. That lesson taught me. As I grew in classroom management, I was better able to assess students and make relationships. Having teachers move up a year helps and dividing students by sex helped us a lot.

3. I had to troubleshoot and have classroom meetings, because learning was not taking place. I had to stop and see where the students were.

4. My teaching practices have not been hindered by bullying. They will tell me if they think they are being bullied, but it is not really bullying, it's back and forth behavior.

5. It takes time away from the classroom time. I spend more time talking to them about things that should be a given. You don't make fun of people, Kids should know this. Sometimes we get

push back from parents. It takes time. We have to spend more time teaching about emotional responsibility. Especially when you are having to teach this to kids who have not had any previous lessons on emotional responsibility. They say we don't need to teach their children how to keep hands to themselves, but it is hindering teaching practices in the classroom.

6. In gym students will go after the loose balls, and call names to each other, but the bully always wins the ball because he has already made the other student fear him.

7. I don't allow my teaching practices to be hindered. Bullying affects school climate because it has to be a calmness in the classroom. I can only teach in an atmosphere where there is no chaos. If there is bullying, there is no learning.

8. I teach two main rules: Respect one another; Hands and feet to yourselves

9. Students won't apply themselves; Students don't want to be seen as the student who is smart in the room because they think they will be bullied if they are seen to be weak, so they won't complete their work.

10. It takes time away from teaching. There are certain students that do not do well when we try to do centers. It seems some students only do well when right with the teacher.

Have teaching practices been hindered. How does bullying hinder learning? How has this changed in seven years?

1. Teachers have to always watch the students in their classrooms in addition to teaching, and bullying takes place so quickly and is often hidden so it's difficult sometimes to make sure all students are learning and all students are safe at the same time.

2. It takes time to be able to not let bullying stop your teaching sometimes because bullying is not something teachers learn in teaching ed.

3. Beforehand, students felt closer to their teachers and would tell them right away. Different types of lifestyles and what they see every day causes them to see things on the streets and see people going to jail or getting arrested. They have a "don't tell" attitude because that is what they see in their neighborhood.

4. We have to learn how to handle social situations in addition to increasing scores, teaching, etc. At times we are going to miss something. It's just the way teaching is today.

5. With deliberate conversations and specific lessons, physical bullying is less and less. The luster is off the schoolyard bully. It's not as much of that. They are more likely to tell on them. It is now more acceptable to be a verbal bully. I won't say we were allowing it before, but it used to say it is not my responsibility to handle bullying, or we would say "kids will be kids". Now we realize it is our responsibility.

6. When kids are in competition with each other there will be some aggressiveness. Bullying really doesn't affect my teaching in gym. I don't see it as much because they (students) want to play in gym, so students don't really bully because they want to stay in gym.

7. In the last two years, there has been constant reminders put up to let students know it would not be tolerated. Each year becomes more challenging and each year becomes more difficult because there are younger parents now coming to the school to confront older students.

8. Yes, at times, we have to make sure the students' attention is on learning and not on bickering or teachers have to stop too often to reprimand rather than teach.

9. Quite a bit because I have to be concerned about what is going on when I turn my back. I have to be both concerned about the students and what they are doing and the lesson. It's changed because of social media. Sometimes students are bullied in the evening online and then have to ride in on the bus with kids who all know what is going on. It can be a nightmare.

10. I think that it is sometimes unseen. If there is bullying going on, I'm pretty certain that the student's mind is focused more on their own safety rather than the lesson.

What can we do here at this school?

1. We have to train our teachers on what to look for concerning bullying. We need to have some professional development with our students to demonstrate appropriate touch and how to handle it. We need more information, more training, more professional development. Our staff needs to come up an acronym to deal with anger.

2. Teachers have to be fair and vigilant across the board. I have to be extremely careful about everything I say and do, so I have to be more thoughtful and be careful with my words. As my classroom management increased I began to assess students at the door, so I can have a relationship with them and get to know them. Splitting students by sex alleviates 50% of the issues. We still have more girl issues than boys in verbal bullying.

3. Even pencils can become problems. I told them (the students) to leave things at home. We have to figure out a way to keep possessions at home. I think poverty is sometimes the problem.

4. Everyone in the school has to be on the same page. We have to have clear rules and constant reminders about what we will accept as a school.

5. Before technology became so big in schools, we only had half the problems with verbal bullying.

6. We need to have clear cut rules across the whole school concerning bullying.

7. We can provide more training of how to deal with classroom conflict, and watch out for the beginning of bullying that often occurs at the beginning of the day before it escalates.

8. There must be a zero tolerance among school administrators, teachers and family members.

9. A lot of bullying behaviors deal with cell phones. They are difficult to police because parents ae allowing students to bring them to school. I do not allow phones in my classroom but they will still bully after school and it bleeds over into the classroom.

10. I'm working on having morning meetings that will address the important things of the day, but also take a moment to relax the mind and get to a state where the students can (hopefully) better focus on the lessons rather than what is going on with other students or what is going on at home. I think that students need to know what is accepted and what will not be accepted. I think very early on when something happens, it is addressed by the teacher and then by administration.

To what extent has student to student verbal bullying changed?

1. It's become more blatant. Students call people out of their names and demean them. They try hard to hurt them. These kids are used to being spoken to in a demeaning way so they think it is normal. I see unhealthy relationships and I stop them, but it has become common in some families to the students don't see the harm being done.

2. They talk negative to each other about crazy things, like their hairlines, their shoes; Things that we didn't think about in the past. They are now, based on the learning environment talking about their scores and their reading levels because we have a lot of low level students. One student was talking about college and how she wasn't going to go to college, and the other student said, "that's stupid" and the other student replied, "well you have to use "imagine learning" (the low level reading program) because of your reading scores, so you are stupid". It was really just mis-communication. They weren't even understanding each other. The first student was just trying to say that the other should go to college because she is smart; but the way she put it sounded like a putdown.

3. Bullying is less than it used to be, but it's usually about clothing and hair. It is curtailing. Some things we can control and some things we can't control and stays the same. I have to communicate with the kids and have them communicate with each other. Sometimes the verbal bullying has turned to hygiene, but I think it is less now.

4. Student are talking about each other's shoes and clothes. I think this has gotten worse for the younger level. Students are getting younger and younger worrying about name brand clothes.

5. Students will talk about physical differences or just not like another student for any reason, or sometime because the student wants the teacher's attention.

6. Verbal bullying has escalated. Bullies like attention so they always do more barking than biting. They want territory and that part hasn't changed, but the talk and language has changed. It's gotten worse.

7. There has been a lot of secretive underhanded comments. Students will be saying something negative to other students. If another student is not like them, they will talk about them. I don't really hear so much about the attire, but I hear a lot about the shoes. We will take off our shoes and say which shoes are running the fastest. They are referring to the price. I tell them "Let's not talk about anybody else shoes unless you have money to replace them."

8. The social media concept, because if they don't bully in school, they can always bully on social media. The bus ride in the morning can be a total nightmare after some students see the things that have been placed on social media the night before.
9. Name calling or talking about what people are saying. Students mostly bully about shoes. That has been the big issue this year because the district went to uniforms, but shoes and hair are still made fun of by other students. No change; there has always been an emphasis on clothes and appearance.
10. Verbal altercations/bullying is more apparent in our school than physical. Again, it comes back to teaching out staff and students that verbal assaults do in fact count as bullying and can be just as hurtful if not more damaging to a student's self-esteem.

Social Emotional Bullying changes. (relational bullying)

1. It has changed.
2. It has changed only in the way that there are several bullies now who bully as a group but the leader may change based on social media. There used to be one big bully. Students will make relationships and they use those friendships to bully another student. Then they exist in that victim/aggressor so-called friendship. There is no more "One big bully." There are more students who are bullying this way now so it minimizes the big bully, but creates more people who are bullying in as a group. There was one student who was bullied at home and she became the bully at the school, but she was behind all of the other students, but she was good at getting all of the other students on her side to keep others from being friends if she did not them to be. She was bullied at home so she learned how to have her friendships based on a victim/aggressor relationship. We have a lot of victim-aggressor relationships.
3. Relational bullying has remained the same. I remember 34 years ago when someone was bullying me. I still remember it. It sticks with me. It takes me back to my childhood when I was bullied. It still affects me and takes me back to my childhood when students are excluded.
4. Relational bullying still exists but it is worse with social media. It's easier for students to forget someone's feelings when they can hide online or behind text messages.
5. It has become worse because society has changed. People are more openly mean on television and students see that. If I don't bully here at school, I can bully you at home on social media. This is more difficult to manage. Parents don't monitor what their students are doing so it becomes some big vicious circle. They are seeing parents at home with bad behavior and they are copying that.
6. The social/emotional component of bullying I don't think has changed, however the more access the students have to contacting each other has increased. Therefore, it could increase the overall exposure to targeting or being targeted.
7. It is the same as always.
8. It is the same. Only their method has changed.
9. It still occurs in most schools. Ours is not any different.
10. It has changed in there are more students participating who normally would not.

Improper use of technology.

1. I did not witness this but I heard the students were bullying each other on face-book and snapchat, I know students do it, but we need to let them know what we are not going to accept that they say online. I don't see a lot of cyber-bullying signs in our school, but I see a lot of "no bullying allowed" signs.
2. Last year we have had more students getting on pornography than I have seen in the past. The increase of cyberbullying and social media has grown. People are more depressed after they see some social media. Even adult's behavior has changed on social media. This has affected our students as their access to technology has increased. When I was a child, we had to pick up a landline, but now students have cell phones and computers. They have more access than ever. Even in the wee hours of the morning when they are supposed to be sleeping. They use words and pictures to write awful messages. The methods of bullying have grown so much. You and tweet it, snapchat it and
3. Media plays a big role. Students are repeating all of the negative things they have heard. It is just that. They are reading things on the internet and seeing on TV, but they don't know what they are

talking about. They get along and then they fight and then they are bullying. After you talk to them they cannot explain why they were upset.

4. Media has played a big role. They are now repeating a lot of things they are hearing that they did not even hear several years ago. They have too many avenues of social media, and students also have to use technology in schools with their lessons. It will only change when kids know that what they do at home is going to affect them at the school. Students are more savvy on computers. They can get on a site quickly and write things quickly and click off of it quickly. Teachers have to catch up with technology as lessons are often placed on technology. They know how to get through things quickly. Babies can manipulate cell phones.

5. I have younger students so they don't use the computer as much

6. Social media is big. There are students who have been bullied on social media that are embarrassed to even come to school. But I am aware and watchful for bullies. Bullies will tell students to go do something and the student will be so afraid that he will do it without thinking about the repercussions. Bullies pick their battles. They only pick on certain students who are weak. They want territory. When a new kid comes to school, they don't have a chance.

7. I have a number of students who will turn the computer around so it is not facing me.

8. Students know how to get on snapchat and twitter and they can get on things quickly and teachers don't always know what is happening. Students used to only use pen and paper. It was easier to see them passing notes. Those students who are caught have to turn the phones in at the beginning of the day and have to sit at my computer to complete mandated computer assignments where I can watch them.

9. We have had instances of students getting beyond the firewalls; and getting on porn. A few years ago, I had a student do all of his bullying when he received his computer time at school. Today, every student has access to their phone so students can bully each other by using social media with just a quick push of a couple of buttons. Computers are in students' faces all of the time. Bullying can go on very quickly and unnoticeably.

10. Technology plays an extensive part to bullying in the 21st century culture and schools. Clearly stating cell phone policies and other technological devices including classroom laptops, should be defined and monitored throughout the school day. Learning of bullying after school hours between classmates could be resolved with mediation between the students and/or the parents.

Finding 2: Teacher effectiveness in combatting bullying

What are your responsibilities as a teacher concerning student safety?

1. My responsibility is to assure my students that they are 100% safe in my class, but I can't help what happened in other classrooms such as support, but I do hear when they come back to say that they had problems in support classrooms. I have to make sure I follow up. I have to assure them that no bullying is going to happen in my class and if it does I will write the student up who brought it. And I follow up with my write-ups. I make sure that I have turned it in to admin and I do separate them. Once I implement all my strategies, and it continues, I do tell administration and I discuss with the students that I don't want anyone hurt.

2. I will say I need help with my kids if bad behavior continues. I list out what I'm going to do. If they don't want me to call them girl or boy, I won't do that. We try to live by those rules as a class. I follow up with students. They post their rules and I post mine, but I have to know when bullying is taking place.

3. Sometimes, I have found out that bullying had occurred and I wasn't aware of it. It is kind of shocking that I sometimes can't tell that someone is having a problem. I take it personal because I feel that I need to keep students safe. I try to talk to the students and talk to the parents.

4. I am in charge of both their physical safety as well as their emotional safety.

5. My first concern is about student safety, but I tell them that they have to come tell me first and that I can't help them if they don't come tell me first.

6. I am expected to keep them (students) safe at all times. I have to internalize. I cannot say I did not know or I did not see. If I am hosting a book club with 15 kids, I am in charge. Their safety is my responsibility.

7. Safety is first in my class. If students can't follow my directions then they don't participate, so I watch and stay aware.
8. I don't allow student to do any other activities than those which I have organized. I tell students that their parents expect them to be returned to them in the same manner that they were delivered to the classroom. But I tell students that they have to do their part.
9. Students should feel comfortable in their environment. They should not be sitting in the class wondering if they will get jumped. They need to know that they will not get hurt verbally or physically. I have to make sure they are comfortable while they are in my classroom. Students should be able to be emotionally and physically comfortable at schools. If they can't feel safe than they can't feel comfortable enough to learn.
10. Physical and emotional safety are my number one as a teacher. Without it, the classroom environment will not be what it needs to be in order to build a community and see the academic growth intended for the school year.

Do you feel that you have had any hindrances to those responsibilities?

1. No. I don't. I know that administration is on a needs to know basis as a teacher, but no I don't feel hindered. I feel that things have been taken care of with the bullying situations. I wish that the powers that be with city and government would have more strict rules because it does affect people. Probably on a higher level. I feel our tolerance level for bullying is still too high.
2. I don't believe that there is a good understanding of bullying. Parents are using the term way too loosely. Parents want to blame the teacher or say their student is being bullied.
3. Parents don't want to accept the possibility that their child is the bully. They used to take the teacher's word for incidents. Now parents want to go straight to the district.
4. I have an incident when I had to get the rest of the class away from one student. I had to take the students to the back of the room and the parent still blamed the other student.
5. Not recently, but this does happen in the past. The lack of follow through hinders me. Sometimes we don't have enough help. Sometimes we do not have enough help. One year we may not have a full-time counselor or a full time social worker or a vice principal, so we have to juggle.
6. No
7. No, but it distracts because it takes away from what we are doing in the classroom.
8. Knowing is power, but we haven't been trained or have a bullying curriculum, nor have enough support from district administration.
9. No, but I can't control what happens outside of the door. Many times students keep things quiet when it happens until it blows up in the classroom.
10. No, I don't believe I have. Understanding and knowing about current issues is first and foremost. We can't be blind to the fact that it is happening nor can we sit back and stay idle either. We must continuously learn about the issue and inform our entire school community of the expectations we have here for our scholars.

Has this changed over the past seven years?

1. Yes - It seems that the same students seem to be the worse students, students are retaliating and taking matters in their own hands.
2. Yes - The behavior is much more blatant.
3. Yes - students used to stop when they are reprimanded, now students are more blatant in all of their actions.
4. I have to be aware of what is going on because students often won't tell.
5. No change
6. Students are using behaviors now that they would not have used years ago. I had one case where an elementary school girl was bullying the new teacher next to my room. Because of her size, the teacher was afraid of the sixth-grade student.
7. No change because I keep consistent.
8. Yes - Students are more anxious and angry. They won't tell on each other.
9. Students have far more ways that they can hide and bully each other. They can hide programs under the other icons so they can hide and do things on the phone quickly without teachers even knowing they have a phone on them until it is too late. Students used to have landlines at home

and there was a limit to conversations they had outside of school, now conversations are at their fingertips.

10. Yes - Although students have different experiences and more exposure to negative interactions/material, we as adults need to adapt and learn how to solve the problem and move along with them.

Describe the types of student disruptions you have reported to the principal during the most recent school year.

1. I've reported disrespect name calling, cattiness, physical threats, body bump-don't want to fight for real, aggressive horse-play, pushing, shoving, boy-girl issues, girls want to demean others if they start liking a boy who they like.
2. Disrespect to the point where students are using profanity at the teacher, pushing or fighting between students or students walking out of the classroom without permission
3. Walking out of the classroom; getting out of their seats; threating other students.
4. I rarely report minor incidents but I will report it if a student throws something. I did have to call the principal when a student was sexually harassing each other.
5. Shouting out, disrespectful behavior, or responding at a slow rate; name calling; arguing; Most of the behaviors are spillover from the neighborhood or the bus. Different – we are seeing them less this year because we have started to partner with the bus company and teach them some of the behavior triggers and ways to de-escalate behavior. Sometimes it needs a switch in bus drivers.
6. Sexual harassment, student calling each other names outside of their gender. It happened after school in the after-school program, not during the class.
7. Students fighting, shoving, students calling each other names; mostly class disruptions.
8. Pushing shoving, yelling spitting, loud ugly angry and hard to calm down.
9. Bumping, pushing, yelling curse words out to other students, fighting, disrupting the class.
10. Using objects to symbolize body parts, making comments about another student's body, writing sexually explicit letters, drawing body parts, or bumping, touching or grabbing other students in private areas of their bodies**.**

In which ways, if any, can any of those behaviors be considered bullying in your opinion?

1. Students cannot take much themselves, but feel as if they can say anything to anybody. They want to say what they want. – Students are bolder now. Mom is giving them bad advice mow, like my mom says you better hit them and get them back.
2. It is the increase of violence itself. Bullying is a by-product of all of the ways the world is changing.
3. Sometimes when students get out of their seats, sometimes it is to intimidate other students. I tell students to try to have peace at least at school.
4. The sexual harassment was considered bullying because it was continuous.
5. Sometimes the bullying behavior begins earlier, and the student's behavior continues in class in other behaviors.
6. Well, it is bullying when students call other students out of their name. Sometimes, students have been doing this on a routine basis, but we don't always catch it.
7. When I look at bullying I view things that are taken out of line and made others uncomfortable. Name-calling. Students are calling each other names they hear on the street or at home
8. At a young age, all loud and dangerous acts should not occur. It's more blatant
9. Only when these actions are repetitive toward another student or increases aggressive behaviors.
10. Some of the reported behaviors could possibly be considered sexual harassment.

Describe your level of confidence in reporting bullying

1. I don't have a problem in reporting bullying at all.
2. There needs to be a constant PD at the beginning of the year. It is a process. There a lot of relational bullying. We need more conflict resolution to prevent bullying. My level of confidence has increased over the years. We need a bullying handbook. We see a lot of miscommunication with the parents concerning.
3. I need a clear, concise definition of what bullying is. What does it look like?
4. It has increased over the years, but I would like to have a clear definition

5. I am confident in going through the steps to report bullying
6. I usually handle most of the problems in my class myself. I usually don't bring others in unless it is a major fight, but most of the time that is not considered bullying.
7. I feel pretty confident.
8. Confident because of the years in education and my current administration
9. I am very confident; I don't have a problem in knowing when I see bullying and reporting it.
10. This is a topic I have no problem with addressing with the individual student/s, teachers, administration or even parents.

What affects your confidence concerning reporting student bullying?

1. Nothing – I know it when I see it and I report it.
2. There needs to be a PD at the beginning of the year where people diagnose bullying. We see a lot of miscommunication and teachers not knowing how to handle conflict resolution
3. I need a building definition of bullying. I struggle sometimes.
4. Nothing. I write it up and report it.
5. Nothing. I know that it will be handled
6. I need to know what bullying really looks like
7. Nothing, but sometimes, it's hard to tell if it is truly bullying because everyone uses the word freely.
8. I need a clear concise definition and booklet kids usually say all actions against them are bullying
9. Nothing really – Sometimes the bullies say they are the ones being bullied.
10. I have no concerns at this time.

What can teachers, administrators or district office personnel do to change your level of confidence in reporting bullying?

1. Sometimes we need to have a clear picture of what bullying is. It needs to be consistent across the board.
2. We need PD that includes role-playing and increasing our view of bullying. We need to see role playing as new types of bullying are being introduced.
3. Sometimes it depends on how long you have been teaching
4. I feel confident
5. No, I feel pretty confident,
6. I'm confident
7. I'm already confident
8. I feel empowered enough to be confident in reporting it
9. I'm confident in reporting it, but we need to consistently review the steps
10. I am confident in our district and school's policy, so no change personally is needed at this time.

To what extent do you, as a teacher, have a voice in determining consequences for bullying practices?

1. My voice is heard. The admin. Has always has come to get my input about what I think about behavior.
2. I would like to have more of a voice on the district and building level, but I think the most important say is in our own classrooms. Schools do have to be more collaborative in determining what bullying looks like and what we will accept in our schools.
3. We are able to make our own rules in our classroom and give our own consequences for misbehavior. Everybody has their own level of tolerance of what they accept.
4. It is collaborative. We make decisions together.
5. We as a staff decided what we wanted our expectations to be.
6. I have a voice and students respect it
7. We have a paper to fill out about bullying. We could fill out a paper to put the student in ISS or we could send students to the opposite room.
8. We need to create and address what kindness looks like
9. We have a voice, but not as much of a voice when it comes to what happens to the student after we report them.
10. Following the school plan and staying consistent with the plan will help when incidents occur. However, it is our duty as teachers to also speak up with something when the plan is not working

over a period of time and for more than just one student. We should be confident and trust our team enough to have open, respectful conversations with one another if issues like this occur.

Do you feel that you have more or less of a voice in student bullying issues now than in the previous seven years? Why?)

1. I think I have more of a voice because the leadership is different. The leader I have now allows me to have a voice. In the past, I had leaders who would not help the teachers deal with certain teachers.
2. The voice hasn't changed. The circumstances have. The term is used loosely so we are dealing with bullying a lot more because students and parents are using the term more loosely.
3. It depends on confidence in your leadership. I feel that it changes based on the leadership in the building. Sometimes you are afraid of the back-lash so you won't go to your leader.
4. I don't think I have a difference.
5. We have more collective meetings now that target bullying so we have more of a voice. We are good at meeting and listening to one another.
6. Teachers need to have
7. I would always have a voice.
8. I have more of a voice, but it depends on the leadership.
9. I have more of a voice today because of increased collaboration.
10. With time and experiencing teaching, I definitely feel I have more of a voice on multiple topics, including student bullying.

In general, describe the steps you would take and the personnel you would use if you witnessed bullying practices in the hallway or classroom.

1. My style is to take it to the student first, I would shut it down. If I see another administrator, I would call them and tell them what is going on and later I would ask them if they handled it or I would trust that they handled it. I let the kid know that they would not act like that in front of me.
2. I mediate, I document in case it is a continuous basis; I make a referral to the counselor and don't use the term bullying, and bringing in people to talk about self-image.
3. If I saw bullying I would try to stop it, but you have to determine if you will get between kids, but if it is bullying, I would ask "are you using kind words?" "Are you being nice right now?" I make it a teaching moment. I will also use the counselor to address how students can communicate. I also use my team to help me with talking with the students. It is like these are our kids, and we have to let someone talk to them sometimes.
4. I will first call the administrator and then we go from there.
5. The first thing I am going to do is talk to that child. It is the norm at my school that it is perfectly normal for anyone to step in and help other teachers. We had a new teacher come to our school, and she was taken back by everyone helping her. She thought people were helping because they thought she needed more help. We had to tell her that it is just the culture of the school. I would report it to the recovery room teacher or the principal.
6. I confront the student and ask them about their conversation.
7. If it is not in my classroom I take the student to their teacher. If it is my student, I would confront the student.
8. I will stop and talk to the student and report them to the administrators.
9. I will confront the student and talk to them about their choices. I will go back to the team and tell them also.
10. Each situation is different and each student is different in the way they respond to teacher "interference". Approaching each incident differently is key when trying to problem solve the issue between the students. Typically, it would be a mediation between the students and myself to get to the root of the issue. From there, allowing both students to express their feelings without interruption from the other party. Explaining that feelings are someone's opinion, there is not right or wrong to it. From there continuing to process through the incident and allowing the students to say to each other what made them mad, why the responded, and how to move forward.

In what ways, if any, have you used the steps and or personnel you described? Why or why not?

1. I stick to the procedure as much as possible.

2. I usually handle most behavior myself, but I will call and administrator if the student is being disrespectful, raising their voice or trying to leave without permission.
3. I have had administrators and the counselor speak to one or all of my students.
4. I always use them because of protocol. But it depends on the parent. If the parent and I can handle it, then we handle it. But if it is a true bullying situation, then I call the administrator.
5. I use them on the regular. I will also pull kids out of line to remind kids that we cannot allow them to do what they want to do. I may take them with me or I may take them to the recovery room teacher. If it is a bigger situation, I'll just
6. I have had administrators and counselor come in my class.
7. I have had administrators and counselor come in my class.
8. I have had administrators and counselor come in my class.
9. I will go to the team of teachers first, and then go to the counselor and/or administrator. I have used these steps and they have worked pretty well.
10. I follow the protocols laid out in the handbook, but resolving issues in class immediately is something I do all the time.

Finding 3: The impact district professional development has on bullying

Describe, in general, professional development that should be available for teachers concerning student bullying practices.

1. I think we just need to have PD on defining bullying. It should be teacher driven so we can own it. We should come up with a problem-solving solution. This is how we will handle it. Safe posters letting them know that we will not accept bullying here.
2. We have online Safe Schools training. I think we need something more systematic than Safe Schools Training.
3. I do think the safe schools training is effective. Before that, I don't remember really having any type of bullying training for whole-district.
4. Think the "Safe Schools" training is good, but we should be able to go back and re-visit those tapes.
5. Rachel's challenge. It is not burdensome. There needs to be some psychological conversation about bullying. Maybe some specific instruction on how to handle bullying because bullying practices have evolved and we don't necessarily know how to handle it.
6. Knowing all of the ways students bully today and how to handle it.
7. We have always had safe schools training and counselors to use for bullying. We also had professional development for bullying.
8. Something more than online webinars. We need hands-on PD.
9. We need to know the difference between a bully and an unhappy child. If a student goes over to another student and takes his pencil, but if he is taking the pencil on a consistent basis and the other students feels incapable of stopping this behavior, it is now bullying. We need to view and discuss various scenarios since the situations keep changing.
10. Professional development should be available anytime a teacher is needing more information. It should also be a professional development at the beginning of the year for the teachers and for the students to refresh their memory on anti-bullying and the student code of conduct book. More than this however, additional training and support for trauma sensitive students could potentially decrease the number of infractions and overall behavior school wide.

How has this type of professional development occurred in your district?

1. Only PD we have had with the district was not about bullying. It was about traumatized kids. If it is not going to be handled at the district level, we need to handle it at the school level.
2. We have only had online webinar and questions since I've been here.
3. I've only experienced safe schools and webinar that I can remember.
4. Yes
5. Our counseling department comes to talk to us about bullying. The counselors come to talk to us about bullying. Maybe we need more access to online resources offered also.

6. No
7. Not since I've been here
8. I've only had safe schools training
9. I don't think so.
10. It has occurred. It might not always have been known school wide, but I know the district has provided it. We have an online system that allows us to look at all the PD/training opportunities within the district. As a teacher, I believe it is our responsibility to keep an eye on the PD/trainings that pertain to us if not presented "in house".

Do you feel that teachers need more or less training from the district that addresses bullying problems?

1. It's become less. We had all types of training for bullying, but I haven't seen it for years.
2. I think the issue should be mandated from the district and resources provided.
3. More – I don't remember having any other than safe schools
4. I think the training is pretty thorough. We do need to go back and revisit the tapes throughout the year.
5. I think we do a pretty good job, but we have different socio-emotional needs in the different, so maybe we need more training that is specific to the school.
6. more
7. We are required to do safe schools training, and the counselors will talk about bullying.
8. more
9. Teachers need more training to gain a better insight because teachers are reporting it incorrectly and this only exasperates the problem.
10. I do think more emphasis on the importance of anti-bullying should be addressed more, yes.

Do you feel that teachers need more or less training from the individual school that addresses bullying problems?

1. We need to have more discussions on bullying
2. We need to have PD that also includes role-playing
3. More
4. No, I think it is adequate
5. No, I think it is adequate
6. More
7. We need a reminder every year. We should all come together and talk about what is going on in our classrooms.
8. More
9. I know about bullying, but it wouldn't hurt to have discussions.
10. I don't think it is an issue school wide. I do think that any new incoming staff should be trained and informed on the discipline plan in place.

Has the availability of professional development for teachers concerning bullying changed over the past seven years?

1. We did not have safe schools training in the past, we do not hear of students bullying on the same level.
2. Yes
3. Yes, we now have a little more training.
4. Yes, we didn't even have safe schools training
5. We have more now
6. I think it was more individualized per school.
7. Yes
8. Yes, there weren't all the signs about bullying, it wasn't spoken of as often; I think there is more of an urgency today.
9. Yes, it was spoken of, but the PD was more based on the school
10. I think there are more opportunities since the anti-bullying state law took effect.

In general, how do you think the school district should combat bullying in schools? (
1. We need to monitor the student and shut them down. First offense should be a five day in ISS and a follow up, mandated mentoring, 2. We need more than slogans, we need resources, more PD days, time to bring people in to help us. Allow us more spots in alternative school for student bullies if they have gone too far. 3. We need to bring more people in on the building level and district level to help us combat bullying. 4. There should be some type of class that the student should be able to attend because the students think they have control, so we need to take time to address them so they can change their practices. 5. Absolutely – zero tolerance. 6. Put more about bullying on code of conduct. 7. Zero tolerance 8. Have hard, fast rules 9. Have and stress no bullying policy and then enforce it. 10. Having a clear, stated plan where the students and parents are aware of such plan should be first and foremost. Clearly outlining what bullying is and what the repercussions will be if it happens. From there staying consistent with disciplinary actions and allowing for group mediation from the counselor should be a must as part of their consequence as well.

What role does your school district play in handling school bullying practices?
1. It provides a student Code of Conduct book. I don't think it says bullying. 2. This should be a conversation but a conversation with added knowledge or training. 3. We have surveys about bullying practices and code of conduct. 4. Reporting it to the principal and to the parent. 5. There is a policy in place, code of conduct (expectation framework), security counselors—PBIS, etc. 6. It's in our discipline handbook 7. They only mandate safe schools training. 8. It's in the discipline handbook book needs to be more extensive. 9. They send out surveys to the students and teachers. Its aa gray area in the code of conduct book. They district needs to define how to identify it, 10. The district itself does not have to have an anti-bullying law in the code of conduct book. However, individual schools should have a plan in their student handbook and discipline plan.

What practices do you think they should have to combat bullying? How has this changed over the past seven years?)
1. There needs to have a bullying choice on the sheet. There should be a level of bullying choices on the code of conduct form. Simple touches may be classified as something light, but it may really be bullying. Used to be more emphasis in schools. 2. Everyone follows the same rules. 3. I like that the counselor will come talk to your whole class. 4. Have kids have bullying sessions as a punishment and to give parents information also. We need to put more of the responsibility on the parent. I think we had training, but there wasn't as much of a focus on bullying. I don't think it was in the beginning of the year training. 5. We have made a commitment to say, "It is not ok" and we are going to handle it. Everyone knows that if "a" happens then "b" will be the result. 6. We need an all-school anti-bullying week **7.** We need to keep it in the forefront of everyone's mind. 8. Teach the teachers, kids and parents about bullying. 9. We have to do something as a whole school, we have to help students change their behavior if we want them to change. We need to pull bullies out and talk to them the first day. We need to change the environment of our school.

10. Continuing to educate and not only teaching, but showing students how to express their feelings in a positive manner. We can't expect them to change, in less we teach and show them our expectations for them.

In general, to what extent, if any, do you think that teachers should have input in school discipline practices concerning bullying?

1. There should be a bullying committee; just dealing with bullies.
2. Teachers should have input, but only after they have had training on bullying
3. We need to be able to focus on teaching, but also, we need to understand bullying to combat bullying in our classroom.
4. Teachers should let students know immediately at the beginning of the year what they will accept in the classroom and what they will not accept.
5. Teachers should have input. There are people who make all the decisions, but I don't think that that is the only lens who should look at it. Yes, everyone else who works in the building should play a role.
6. Teachers should be able to collaborate with students and administrators and the school counselor to come up with a solution to bullying in their school.
7. PST Team/committee…We are asked to be a part of that. Teachers should have a say in how anti-bullying training occurs.
8. Teachers should have input. They face bullying situations every day.
9. Teachers should be able to speak out and say they are disappointed with how things are handled concerning bullying.
10. A Discipline Committee should be a part of the school who ultimately is responsible for creating and implementing the plan with the help of the rest of the staff. Anyone however, should have the right for input and suggestions when it comes to school wide plans such as this.

How do you think teachers should be able to provide input? How is this carried out in your district?)

1. Teachers should be able to provide surveys about bullying periodically to see clear questions that would pinpoint classrooms that are having issues and how to make changes to the classrooms that are having bullying problems. (By a survey on bullying)
2. Yes, but only after then have been trained on bullying. (By a survey on bullying)
3. We should have more meetings where we can brainstorm solutions. (By a survey on bullying)
4. Myself and the principal work hand in hand with bullying and classroom behaviors. (By a survey on bullying)
5. We have a professional development committee in the school and in the district. This allows teachers to have a voice and input. We are given an opportunity to have discussions with our administrative. They make decisions with an ear toward the teachers and what their needs. (By a survey on bullying)
6. All teachers should be interviewed or surveyed so we can see the behaviors that are occurring on a daily basis. Then training should be provided.
7. Teachers only have a part in anti-bully training through a survey issued by the district.
8. Administrators, teachers and a school counselor should come up with a plan together. (By a survey on bullying)
9. Teachers can assist in coming up with a plan to stop the problem; it may mean Saturday school, but then someone would have to be there to help hold the students accountable. (By a survey on bullying)
10. Simply asking their opinions in whole group or individual meetings or inviting them to be part of the discipline team.

In general, what types of communication from the district concerning bullying practices do you think would be beneficial for teachers?

1. From the district level, we need to have district-wide data of our discipline rates; how many kids are in trouble because of bullying. What are we doing to reduce that number? What is the plan? I would like to have a synopsis on bullying from the district.
2. I would just be interested in how to diagnose bullying more so than percentages on how much it occurs. I just want to focus on instruction.

3. Sometimes it's just better to say, "there is a problem with this student, I need to handle this over to the administrators, and I need to go back and teach my class. But I do need to know how to recognize it.
4. I believe if we had effective interventions at various levels then we can see where the real problem begins. If we can stop it as the kid stage of horse playing, then the bullying will not get to the bullying stage. The district should give training on how to stop bullying at the beginning stages so it will not continue on to a serious stage.
5. Mostly comes from the building administrator –We do have a couple of Professional Development days from the district.
6. I would like to see anti-bullying tips and other district communication about how to handle bullying,
7. **Face to face meeting**
8. We need district-wide definition of bullying.
9. Knowing the law, and knowing what can happen to bullies and to teachers who allow bullying to go on.
10. For teachers, in person training is what works best. E-mails and flyers get lost among the hundreds of others in our inbox or papers on the desk. Direct communication from our principal is the best way to approach it.

Do you receive this type of communication? How has this changed over the past seven years?

1. I have received any type of communication concerning bullying statistics.
2. No, and it hasn't changed
3. No, and it hasn't changed
4. No, and it hasn't changed
5. No, it's been pretty steady.
6. No, and it hasn't changed
7. Pretty much the same
8. No, and it hasn't changed
9. No, and it hasn't changed
10. I think it depends on the principal. If the principal receives the information and chooses to share it. It has changed, due to PDs on this topic being communicated via e-mail and in person from our principal.

Do you feel that there are any additional barriers to effective discipline practices that we have not discussed yet? If so, what are they

1. Students need to know how to code switch, so they know how to behave specifically in this school. Also, students need to be able to drop a note to the administration.   Our discipline committee could investigate.
2. Having universal behavior ways such as "The Melcher way". We need universal discipline for the school. That helps everyone say "Something is not right here. That way we can immediately say what type of behavior is occurring.
3. We have so many changes to our classrooms during the year. We have students added all year.
4. We need more parent involvement. We need to either have parent workshops or whatever we can do to inform parents about bullying. Get out speakers and have a stop bullying rally.
5. Parental involvement is a barrier. Parents need to be involved and involved in a positive way. This will cause a positive relationship.
6. I'm going do what I need to do concerning my classroom and safety.
7. Continue with safe schools, increase counselor input, etc. A lot of bullying begins on the busses before and after school.
8. I've said it all.
9. Talk it out and work it out. We are at a time when we have to train students to keep themselves safe in this world. You have kids who say I'm gonna do something bad because I don't like anybody and sometimes they get away with it. We have to be immediate and consistent.
10. Additional barriers we have are inconsistent views with what we teach here in school vs. what is being taught or seen at home.

Appendix F: Teachers' Consent Letter of Participation

Appendix F: Teachers' Consent Letter of Participation

Dear Elementary School Teachers:

I am a doctoral student at Baker University in the School of Education. For my doctoral dissertation, I am completing a qualitative research study to examine elementary teachers' perceptions regarding the extent that bullying has taken place in their school. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the changes in student-to-student bullying behaviors that occurred in the past seven years. A second purpose of this study is to examine elementary teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in responding to student-to-student bullying as changing over time. Finally, the impact of the district's professional development regarding bully prevention will also be examined.

The study will consist of examining the perception of teachers who have taught elementary school in one district for at least seven years. These teachers will participate in a two-hour focus group interview session. All participants will be verbally answering and expounding on fifteen interview questions during one session. A third party, a district elementary school counselor, will be conducting the interview.

With your permission, the principal of the elementary school where the study is taking place will be transcribing the interview recording. The names of the individual teachers will not be used in the study or during the interview. The possibility does exist that the transcriber may be able to recognize individual teachers' voices.

Data from this survey will be used for the sole purpose of this study and will not be reported or recorded in any other way. No data from this survey will become part of any individual's permanent record that could be made available to any other district employee, superintendent or board member.

Individual names will not be recorded or reported in the results of this study. This study will add to the knowledge gained from earlier studies that focused on elementary teachers' perceptions of bullying. Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and teachers may withdraw their participation at any point of the study with no consequence.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, Patricia Hayes, Doctoral Student, Baker University

I agree to participate in this study: _____
                                                             Signature