

Creating an effective bully prevention program: Program implementation
strategies that effectively reduce bullying behavior with Hispanic adolescents in
low socio-economic schools

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by
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Creating an effective bully prevention program: Program implementation strategies that effectively reduce bullying behavior with Hispanic adolescents in low socio-economic schools

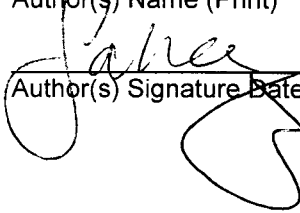
Title of Item

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3 to 5 keywords or phrases to describe the item

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Chapter One

Introduction

Larry and Brandon

In February of 2008, a student by the name of Larry King was shot dead at his school E.O. Green in Oxnard, CA. Larry was in the 5th grade and had been wearing high heels, makeup and feminine attire to school to display his newly discovered identity as a gay adolescent. He was being exactly who he wanted to be without shame or embarrassment, and was showing his peers that he wasn't afraid of who he was. Other students however, did not have the same sentiments as Larry. Brandon McInerney confronted Larry about his sexual identity one day, and rather than becoming intimidated, Larry chose not to back down, maintaining that he was proud of who he was. As time passed, tensions between Larry and Brandon began to grow and on February 11 he shouted "Love you baby" as he passed by Brandon in the halls, and asked Brandon if he would be his valentine in front of all the other students on the basketball courts. He also paraded back and forth in his high heels and makeup in front of Brandon in order to get back at him for taunting him days prior about his sexuality. Brandon was visibly upset and encouraged other students to join forces with him against Larry. When nobody showed any interest, Brandon declared one day at school that everyone should say goodbye to Larry because he wasn't going to be alive anymore. The next day Brandon came to school and shot Larry in the head two times during first period in the computer lab in front of all of their classmates. Larry was declared brain dead a short while later and Brandon is now facing 25 years in prison. He has already served five years since the date of the incident.

It is said that Brandon McInerney himself is a victim of his life circumstances which played a role in how he viewed Larry. Brandon was raised with a white supremacy perspective on society, his home was filled with drug and alcohol induced stupors by his parents, and violence was no stranger to their home. This upbringing made it all the more likely that Brandon would react so heinously to another person that he could not be accepting or tolerant.

Larry also faced some background identity struggles. He was adopted at a young age and suffered from reactive attachment disorder in which a child fails to develop relationships with his/her caregivers. He most likely felt like an outcast with his family and his peers for most of his life, and once he realized he was gay, it is reasonable to speculate that he took on the identity very strongly and finally felt like he belonged to a group that was accepting of him. Strangely, acceptance, tolerance and respect are what both people wanted, but neither were able to give it, resulting in this tragedy.

The Problem

The questions that school administrators, parents, teachers, students and the community had after this incident was what could have been done to prevent this horrible turn of events? Was there something that could have been done differently, something that would have helped both students to a degree in which a heinous act would be unthought of? In 2008, anti-bullying programs were not commonly implemented everywhere as much as they are today. As unfortunate as it is, it has taken a number of school tragedies such as the Columbine school shootings, E.O. Green, Taft Union High, and several others to spread the message that something needs to be done to intervene before it's too late.

Bullying is something that is said to have always existed to some degree or another in schools for generations on end. The tales of being teased at young and adolescent ages were common, the tales of students committing suicides and homicides were not nearly as common. A new generation of bullies has brought with it a new generation of severity, methods, and outcomes that long outdate the stories our parents and grandparents used to tell us to comfort us when we endured unpleasant interactions with our peers growing up. Now, bullying is a danger to the mental, emotional and physical well beings of the individual targets as well as the community.

Social media has brought about an entirely new avenue for students to target each other and spread the word to a whole social network of people who include students from the same schools and nearby schools. Rumors are no longer confined to word of mouth within a tighter social circle, but rather broadcasted to a mass of people who are all connected to each other within the community and even neighboring communities. Facebook, twitter, Instagram, and text messaging are ways that students interact, and defame or threaten each other.

So who takes responsibility for molding future generations into compassionate, respectful and peaceful individuals who are capable of co-existing peacefully with one another? That question has many answers which include the parents, teachers and administrators, social groups, religious group affiliations and more. Schools and parents have taken strides in implementing anti-bullying programs that are designed to help students cope with the realities of interacting with their peers and different social groups, and the opportunity to report any behavior that they witness or are part of that is damaging to themselves or others. Yet, bullying

is still taking place at school sites across the country even with the implementation of the anti-bullying programs. This leads us to ask ourselves what are we doing wrong and why we aren't seeing the results we anticipated.

Research Goal

Schools, parents and the public are increasingly viewing bullying as a concern that should be dealt with compassionately and aggressively on school campuses around the country. In this paper, we examine the Olweus programs and the implementation design to evaluate what really works in reducing bullying behavior on campus and off campus. The purpose of this study is to analyze and interpret data pertaining to Olweus implementation on our campus from 2011-2012, and to find the best recommendations for future implementation and improvement.

The findings of this research will be applied to the OLWEUS program which is in its third year of implementation at Sunshine Intermediate School. The data collected from the year prior to implementation (2010-2011) and first year of implementation (2011-2012) will be compared and studied in order to identify the strengths of the program on our campus, as well as to identify the weaknesses of the design that require further improvement and change. Further research will be conducted to uncover the most effective practices that best serve our particular needs at Sunshine.

Research Questions

The parameters within the research goal contain more questions that need to be analyzed in order to determine what the most effective strategies and techniques are at successful school sites. The questions that will be researched and evaluated include:

- 1a.) What is the incentive and / or motivation for students to bully each other?*
- 1b.) If we address and treat these incentives and motives, will it stop the behavior?*
- 2.) To what extent is bullying taking place on this campus based on the data as reported from 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years?*
- 3a.) What are the different ways that bullying is taking place at Sunshine Intermediate?*
- 3b.) What are students reporting in regards to bullying experiences and witnessed interactions, and to what extent are parents and staff involved in intervening?*
- 4.) Has a change occurred from 2011-2012 that shows improvement in bullying behavior after the first year of implementation?*
- 5.) What are the future recommendations for program improvement and a reduction in bullying behavior?*

Significance

By examining the incentive and motivation for students to bully each other, it becomes easier to identify students who are more likely to become bullies. Interventions can be put in place to take necessary preventative measures against vulnerable students becoming

targets to those individuals. For example, if emotional disturbance were to be determined as a precursor for future bullying behavior, the correlations between emotionally disturbed students and their bullying behavior could be monitored over time to establish whether or not the correlation is strong enough to install preventative interventions of these particular groups of students on a mass scale, ultimately resulting in less negative interactions with their peers.

The data collected from the 2010-2012 academic years at our school site will serve to identify how frequently bullying is occurring both on campus and off. This data will also include reports on the various types of bullying that students are experiencing. By understanding the different modalities through which negative peer interactions occur, we can better instill roadblocks to prevent or monitor student interactions through these avenues and stop or address them immediately before they progress to higher levels of conflict and trauma. If students were to report that the highest number of witnessed bullying experiences occurred through technological means such as text messaging or social media, parents could be notified to keep close watch on student accounts, maintain access to their username and passwords, or revoke their privileges all together.

Chapter Two

What is bullying?

Every year more and more victims of bullying are missing school, falling into depression, committing suicides or homicides due to the torment they endure from their peers. Many argue that bullying is something that has always existed at school and a part of growing up is learning how to deal with others effectively. However, others argue that bullying has a broad spectrum of severity ranging from occasional teasing to complete social exclusion and hate crimes which are extremely damaging or fatal to children and adolescents. Effective interventions are needed in order to ensure that steps are being taken to stop bullying in its moderate and most severe forms.

Bullying is defined as repeated acts of aggression towards a victim who is weaker in regards to physical size, social status or other factors (Olweus, 1993). Sexual orientation, identity, physical attributes, race, gender, religion and social interactions are all factors that can contribute to becoming targets of bullying. Newer generations also bring with them new forms of negative behavior such as cyber bullying which is conducted through social media and text messaging.

Types of Bullying

There are many ways to classify types of bullying depending on the source of reference. According to Olweus (1993), there are two different types of bullying. One of them is referred to as “direct” bullying because the target is confronted or attacked openly and intending for the

target to know they are being attacked. The other is “indirect” bullying where social exclusion or rumors may be spread about the victim without the target necessarily knowing who is attacking them. (Besag, 2002; Fitzgerald, 1999; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Duy, 2013) claim that there are three different types of bullying which are physical, verbal and psychological. Of course, physical bullying would include any physical harm or contact intended to cause injury to the victim. Verbal bullying could be identified through arguments, threats, or name calling, whereas psychological bullying might include social exclusion or damage to the target’s property.

In further research, these main categories are found to have more elaborate descriptions and sub-categories. Wang, Iannotti & Luk (2012) describe five categories of bullying and their components: physical, verbal, social exclusion, spreading rumors and cyber. Wang identifies three main sub-groups of people who exhibit bullying behavior. The first subgroup is the All-Types Bully which consists of individuals who exhibit all five bullying behaviors and are clear aggressors to attack targets through any means possible. The second group consists of the verbal / social bullies who are likely to attack others verbally or be involved in social exclusion, but much less likely to use physical means to cause harm to victims. Those who are part of the verbal / social group have a moderate chance of being involved in cyber bullying since that too is a medium for verbal attacks and spreading of rumors. The third group is Non-Involved which means they have a very low likelihood of being a part of bullying aggression at all.

According to Wang, Iannotti & Luk’s (2012) research findings, low incident levels of bullying in general were found in 5th grade boys and girls, increasing dramatically in 7th-8th

grade, and declining again in 9th and 10th grade overall. These results suggest that boys are the prevalent demographic linked to the All-Types bully which includes physical, verbal, social, spreading of rumors and cyber bullying, particularly in grades 7-8. This indicates that males are more aggressive overall since they use all the methods available to them to harm their victims.

Girls were found to be the predominant demographic of verbal / social bullies, also peaking in grades 7-8. Although female bullying behavior can be vicious and often include very severe physical attacks, it is still less common than among boys and shows that using vocal attacks and social de-ranking is seen as more harmful in the long run than spontaneous physical attacks. This tells us that middle school intervention is the best time to counter bullying behavior as it has the highest incident rates among grade levels 6-12. This information may also help us target interventions for females and males differently, since they exhibit different variances in their behavior.

Why do students bully each other?

Thornberg (2010) identifies reasons that students become bullies and others become the victims. In this study, school children were interviewed as to why they believe bullying occurs. Seven main themes were gathered, most of which have sub-categories that contribute to the overall theme. The first theme is bullying in reaction to deviance, meaning that the student is perceived to be different from the rest of the social group in some form or another and is targeted as a result. One deviance could be in relation to the appearance of the individual where they are perceived to be ugly, fat, short, thin, undesirable skin color, wear glasses, have bad attire, etc. Another deviance pertains to behavior in which the student is

targeted for having a particular form of speech, clumsiness, or anything that does not fit in with the peer group. Deviance in characteristics was identified as being perceived as stupid, nerdy, odd, weird, being less mature than the rest of the group, or even having disabilities. Many students reported that they were hesitant to befriend these individuals in fear that they would be targets of bullying by association.

The second theme is bullying as social positioning, which has three subcategories. Bullying in status positioning means that students bully others in order to enhance or maintain their own popularity by identifying themselves as superior and others as inferior. Next is bullying as power positioning in which a student is attempting to exert power over another. Last is bullying as friendship positioning where a student is attempting to keep friends for themselves or gain more friends by labeling individuals as unworthy of friendship to have them outcast from the group or positioned lower so that they are viewed as less desirable links within the social circle.

The third theme is bullying due to emotional disturbance of the bully. Students perceive some bullies as emotionally disturbed individuals who bully others because they are angry people in general, have serious problems at home or in their lives outside of school, are abused themselves, or have been bullied in the past.

Fourth is bullying as a revengeful act towards someone who has hurt them or where a negative interaction has taken place. If a student was rejected, hurt or excluded either directly or indirectly, they may retaliate against the perceived threat and become the aggressor to spite the person and punish them for having hurt their feelings somehow.

The fifth most common theme is bullying as a game. Often, students will become bored at school or want to have some fun and view the reactions of their targets as funny or entertaining. Based on the reaction of the victim, if it appeals to the perpetrators as amusing, they will continue to target this person seeking the reaction they enjoy. There may also be an audience who also finds the situation funny or entertaining and encourages the perpetrators to continue.

Sixth is social contamination where bullying may *not* occur on a one-to-one personal interaction, but when a group of students get together and victimize a student whom they may have had perfectly pleasant interactions with when they were alone. This is often seen as a result of peer pressure from an individual bully who wants to target someone and encourages members of their group to join in on the behavior in order to maintain their status as part of a superior social circle. Students may be hesitant to decline the bully's pressure because they are afraid of becoming a target themselves or becoming socially excluded.

The Seventh and last theme is bullying as a thoughtless happening where the perceived bully says or does things without realizing the harmful effects that it has on the person / people involved. As a result of not realizing the impact of their actions, they may continue the behavior frequently because they see nothing wrong with it.

Jensen (2009) discusses the difference between learned emotions and hardwired emotions and how these emotions should be dealt with in students with varying life circumstances. Those who may not have nurturing adults at home may not learn these learned emotions, and are only aware of the hardwired emotions that humans are born with which is

joy, sadness, fear, disgust, surprise and anger. In order for children to gain emotional intelligence, they need to be taught humility, forgiveness, empathy, optimism, compassion, sympathy, patience, shame, cooperation and gratitude.

Shapka and Law (2013) add to the literature with a study of the reasons that children engage in aggression both in the scope of traditional bullying and cyber bullying. They identify two main reasons for their engagement. One is reactive aggression where an individual is acting out in response to a threat or is retaliating in response to a hurtful situation or being provoked. The second one is proactive aggression which is not retaliation or a defensive response, but rather an attempt to provoke another individual and attain superiority or dominance over them. Traditional bullying usually has more of the proactive component rather than reactive, as bullies will seek out a person and have a face to face interaction with them. Cyber bullying usually has more of the reactive component where messages are posted and people react and respond to them. The only proactive component to cyber bullying occurs when students plan and post messages or pictures to instigate a conflict or impose harm on another person.

Interestingly, Shapka and Law (2013) also analyze the ethnic factors pertaining to aggression and how the upbringing and parental dynamics within families contributes to the levels of aggression in children and adolescents. They compared East Asian families with Canadian families and found that East Asian students were far less likely to participate in proactive aggression against others than Canadian students. This was attributed to the cultural aspect of the students' families in which aggression is more fiercely looked down upon, and higher parental anxiety exists as well as social pressure to raise respectful, obedient, disciplined

and academically focused children. This was true for both traditional bullying and cyber bullying, where the use of social media is more closely monitored by East Asian parents than Western parents. East Asian parents were said to be more intrusive in raising their children, and are more likely to instill cultural values pertaining to Confucius and Taoist premises of social harmony and respect.

Another theory as to the engagement of students in peer victimization behavior is thought to be just another form of delinquent behavior as exhibited by individuals who partake in other delinquent behaviors. According to Luk, Wang & Simons-Morton (2012), adolescents who partake in bullying behavior also partake in other destructive behaviors such as lawbreaking activities, substance abuse, and early sexual activity. Luk, Wang & Simons-Morton (2012), indicate that this is likely due to the externalizing of emotions or psychological conditions that manifest such conduct. Also, the Problem Behavioral Theory (Jessor & Jessor, 1977) notes that problem behaviors definitely co-exist and have strong relationships to each other in adolescence. Therefore, identifying students with problematic behavior may be an indicator that they are also victimizing other students. Further investigation into these individuals would be needed to adequately determine whether or not victimization of peers is occurring, but their existing problematic behavior can help identify potential threats on campus.

Impacts of Bullying

The media has brought much needed attention to individuals who were chronically bullied and suffered severe psychological or physical traumas as a result. Many of these cases

include self-mutilation, substance abuse, and even suicide ideation or execution and homicides. Troop-Gordon and Ladd (2005) have found that victims of bullying in childhood often suffer social and psychological maladjustment in adolescence and adulthood. The premise supporting this idea is that positive and negative perceptions of the self and one's peers are developed during childhood. If psychological well being is damaged at this stage through interpersonal relationships, they will continue in the later stages of life and manifest themselves in relational adversity, dysfunction, social incompetence, low self-esteem, and depression. Self and peer perceptions in children are shaped by factors such as the experiences they have in relation to their peers and how lonely they may be at school particularly in their fourth grade year. Between the ages of 9-12, children become more self critical, and define themselves in terms popularity and social status. This is particularly damaging to children who have negative interactions with their peers because they internalize the messages of less than desirable social statuses as a reflection of their self worth. External non-acceptance becomes internalized, and if they are not guided through these experiences to understand that the source of discomfort is only one or a few individuals, the child may generalize the entire group of peers as hostile aggressors. In turn, the child may grow to become an aggressor in order to defend themselves against their perceived threats.

Conversely, some students who exhibited peer aggression were reported to have positive perceptions of themselves and expressed that they were well liked by the majority of their peers. This could be a sign that students are attempting to maintain their own higher social statuses within their groups by marking individuals as inferior in social status to their perceived superiority. Girls are said to have higher rates of internalizing of problems, likely attributing

negative experiences to internal factors pertaining to themselves. Boys are said to have higher rates of externalizing problems, finding other individuals to blame as the source of discomfort within peer groups, rather than attributing negative interactions to factors reflecting themselves. The internalizing and externalizing of problems leads not only to the victim-aggressor dynamic, but also is indicative of future social dysfunction that is carried into adolescence and adulthood as a result of the interactions experienced at this stage of life.

According to Esbensen and Carson (2009), students who are bullied are reported to have low self esteem, depression, anxiety and avoidance behavior. Those who exhibit feelings of loneliness and rejection are at increased risk of suicide in extreme cases. Many of these students develop negative feelings of school as a safe place and become less likely to want to go to school, which affects their academic achievement. Esbensen and Carson (2009) state, there are four main manifestations of peer victimization. The first one is low psychological wellbeing in which an individual's self-esteem is affected as is their empathy, perceptions of self efficacy, and sentiments of being powerless. The second is poor social adjustment in which a student views some peers as positive or negative, they lack conflict resolution skills, fear committing to school attendance, are afraid to be victimized and view school as an unsafe place. The third, is psychological distress such as depression, vulnerability, insecurity, generalized anxiety or anxiety specific to social interactions. Fourth, is physical unwellness in which the person's health suffers as a result of the internalizing of emotions that causes the body physical stress. Overall, Esbensen and Carson (2009), found that students who were repeatedly victimized had higher rates of the four categories of consequences. Students who

had less frequently been bullied did experience some negative consequences, but at a much less severe rate than the prior group.

Hamilton, Newman, Delville & Delville (2008), examine the biological effects and prolonged conditioning that occur as adults in relation to chronic bullying experienced in adolescence or childhood. The study was conducted to monitor the variances of biological responses to stress in both men and women who were either bullied in the past or non-bullied. Their physical feedback responses were measured at the introduction of the stressor, at the end of the stressor, and some time after the stressor had been removed.

The study implies that people who have consistently high cortisol levels exhibit constant states of mental distress, especially when they perceive themselves to be helpless to the circumstances or if they view the stressors as uncontrollable or unavoidable. This is associated to anxiety which is a mental maladjustment, particularly generalized anxiety in which the subject experiences very frequent or constant mental distress. Depression is correlated strongly to feelings of helplessness and ideas that negativity is unavoidable. The physical manifestation of the psychological condition results in persistently high levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Non-bullied Individuals in the study who were monitored after the stressor was removed, experienced a decline in their cortisol levels after the experience was over. This is associated with a sense of relief and a return to normal functioning and no perceived incoming threats. Frequently bullied individuals hadn't increased or decreased significantly like the control group had, because their cortisol levels were high to begin with and were in a state of plateau.

Bullied men who reported that they still had lingering anger over their earlier peer interactions showed higher cardiovascular responses such as increased heart rate and blood pressure when exposed to stressors versus men who were bullied but do not have lingering anger, or men who were non-bullied. Women in the bullied and non-bullied group did not show differences within the female groups, but all of them did have mild increases in cardiovascular responses at the time of the stressor. This led to the conclusion that a further study should be conducted on the physiological responses to anger and victimization, narrowing the scope of individuals who were simply bullied or not bullied. Also, the tend and befriend principal (Taylor, 2006) of females was mentioned which is the theory that instead of having stronger physical responses to stress like men do, women seek out positive interactions with their social group to cope and work through feelings of discomfort. In this case, stress decreases and so do the physical feedback mechanisms like blood pressure and cortisol levels. Women are thought to be more resilient to stress due to the tend and befriend model, experiencing stress emotionally and psychologically, whereas men experience stress physically and attempt to work through it on a problem solving model.

Ledwell and King (2013) discuss the clear correlation of parental relationships and students' abilities to deal with their emotions and negative peer interactions. Parental support is a very prominent variable that contributes to adolescent psychological well being even though children are becoming increasingly independent from their parents beginning in adolescence and on into early adulthood. Factors that are affected by parental relationships are social competence, depression, self-esteem, behavioral and emotional problems, support-seeking or

avoidant behavior, coping abilities, and the buffering of harmful or stressful experiences.

According to Ledwell and King (2013), students with positive parental relationships have a higher social competence, less depression, higher self-esteem, less behavioral and emotional issues, seek support to work through stressful interactions and have higher aptitudes for coping with stressful encounters. Students with negative parental relationships or when the parents are frequently absent from the lives of the students, the aforementioned factors are effected significantly. They experience less social competence, higher depression, lower self-esteem, higher chances of behavioral and emotional issues, and are more likely to avoid seeking support resulting in lower aptitudes for coping mechanisms.

Interestingly, because students with positive parental relationships tend to have higher self-esteem, they are less likely to become victims of bullying like many of those students who have low self-esteem and are victimized because they are perceived to be weak. Open communication between parents and children is useful in mediating the effects of a negative peer interaction, returning the individual back to a more positive mental state and they restore more positive perceptions overall. It is thought that it is especially true for females more than males because of the nature of female communication as a means for externalizing internal distress. Males may or may not use the same means of communication to externalize their feelings, but are less likely to find it as effective at alleviating internal tension as females do. The gap begins to close between male and female communicative tendencies pertaining to their parents as the age level rises from adolescence.

Are individual interventions for bullies enough to prevent peer aggression?

Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010) analyzed the individual and contextual predictors to bullying behavior in order to target specific people and design appropriate interventions for bully prevention. The study showed that although it is necessary to counsel and identify students who exhibit problematic behavior, simply counseling the individual is not sufficient. Bullying conduct takes place within a *social* context in which the victim is targeted due to their social status or deviances in individual characteristics that result in a lower social status. Often times, the perceived aggressor or aggressor group will have cordial interactions with the victims when they are on a one to one basis rather than in their peer groups.

Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010) suggest a multi-contextual intervention approach to address school bullying behavior. This includes universal contextual interventions such as class sessions that change normative beliefs about peers, promoting compassion and empathy, and establishing a school wide culture of respect. Group contextual interventions are also encouraged to identify peer groups, understand their collective behavior, and design interventions within a class or administrative setting to counter their shared beliefs and actions against other peer groups. Individual contextual interventions are still necessary, but they are *in addition* to the universal and group contexts. Students who show predictors of bullying behavior, such as those who are emotionally disturbed, participate in defiant or delinquent behavior, or are labeled as bullies within the social context should be counseled and monitored as a prevention strategy that could infiltrate the higher order social constructs of group interactions.

Barboza, Schiamberg, Oehmke, Korzeniewski, Post, and Heraux (2009) also describe the multi-contextual nature of bullying behavior and what changes should be made in order to prevent peer aggression. The individual characteristics of a student are said to be important in relation to the greater contexts in which they exist. These constructs are referred to as the microsystem and macrosystem that the person is a part of. The microsystem includes the child's most immediate environment such as the classroom, larger school setting, parental relationships, bully/victim interactions and peer relationships. The macrosystem is the broader environment that shapes societal and communal norms of behavior and beliefs. For example, is physical fighting an over generalized behavior that is specific to boys? Is gossip and rumor spreading an over generalized behavior that is specific to girls? Media exposure is a huge factor in shaping normative beliefs and behavior as the general public is said to take conscious and subconscious cues from what they see, read and hear.

Barboza, Schiamberg, Oehmke, Korzeniewski, Post, and Heraux (2009) also describe the contextual characteristics that predispose individuals to exhibiting peer aggression or victimization. First are the individual characteristics such as physical attributes, race, sexuality, socio-economic status, disability, or self-esteem. Second is the school climate, which involves the behavioral expectations of teachers, staff and administrators and the social constructs within the school. Third is the family context and the amount of parental support that is available to students to help them deal with their stressors, as well as the values instilled by the parents in regards to social harmony and respect. Fourth is the peer group context, in which positive companionship is the motive and beliefs become shared between individuals within the group in order to obtain the positive companionship, even at the expense of others. In this

way, beliefs and attitudes about particular individuals or groups become shared and the behaviors become more or less approved of by the companions of the aggressor. Last is the community context which addresses the role of media exposure in shaping normative beliefs and behaviors that infiltrate the smaller social constructs like the community, family, peer group, school and individual contexts.

According to Barboza, Schiamberg, Oehmke, Korzeniewski, Post, and Heraux (2009), all of these contexts are integral to the actions and attitudes that take place in schools and society. In order to change the beliefs and behaviors, there needs to be interventions at each level of the social system. Clearly, changing the messages sent out to the public through the media presents a real challenge and may not be in our immediate control as educators or parents. However, the amount of exposure that children and adolescents have to it is something that can be managed with the appropriate parental support. Further, the family context that is responsible for the emotional and mental state of a child also often out of the control of teachers or administrators. Parent education may be a resource that could promote messages of compassion, empathy and tolerance for peers, and encourage the monitoring of exposure to media. Peer group, school and individual contexts are within the reach of school faculty, and may make improvements in peer conduct, but are still insufficient on their own without the family and community contexts to prevent bullying behavior all together.

Are anti-bullying programs effective at reducing peer aggression?

Smith, Schneider, Smith and Ananiadou (2004) conducted a study to measure the effectiveness of whole-school anti-bullying programs, particularly the Olweus program and

whether it leads to reduced bullying behavior. They used the group of students, design of interventions or quality of the research guiding their practices to assess the program's effectiveness.

In data collection, the self reports of bullying by students were found to increase, but did not match the reports that were given by teachers, peers or observations. This was thought to be due to the fact that anti-bullying messages increases bullying awareness and students are more likely to feel victimized when they are empowered to report it. It may not be as obvious to teachers or peers because they are not the victim. This may be seen as a negative factor when data is gathered because more students are reporting the bullying incidents pertaining to themselves, driving up the number of bullying cases, when in fact the program is being measured to assess the decrease of bullying reports. Therefore, the data can be skewed in either direction for or against the effectiveness of the program when measuring the number of cases reported. Currently, there are very modest results according to the gathered data that does show an overall improvement in bullying incident frequency, but not nearly as desirable as the results attained in Norway, Scandinavia, Finland or Italy where the Olweus program was most successfully implemented. It is speculated that it was highly effective in these schools because there were much smaller class sizes and the state has higher involvement in interventions for social welfare and jurisdiction overall. This represents a higher respect and tolerance for interactions among people in general that has become engrained in the culture in these countries, and translates the same message to families and school aged children.

Many of the reports of schools that have implemented the Olweus program and gotten positive results have very diverse demographic populations where the program implementation was tailored to their particular site. Their reports about the details of their interventions are very vague and pertain specifically to their population which makes it extremely difficult for school officials at other sites to replicate them in a quest to achieve similar results.

Smith, Schneider, Smith and Ananiadou (2004) suggest that rather than studying interventions on a whole school approach, the logical links between theories on bullying behavior and the program should be evaluated. They suggest that there is not sufficient evidence to say that whole school anti-bullying programs are effective or ineffective, but rather that they should be studied with great precision and given more time to find what really works, with different groups and different methods. It was reported that the most data that was collected was in regards to student self-reports of bullying interactions. Observations from teachers, classmates, administrators and parents were the weaker links of data collection, and it is suggested that these factors must be emphasized in future studies for more accurate analysis.

Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Voeten (2005) outline the specifics of a successful Olweus implementation study in Finland that was conducted where there were 48 participating teachers for grades 4, 5 and 6 while attending a twelve month training on the program. The measured factors of program effectiveness included the frequency of bullying, extent of observed and experienced bullying, student attitudes and beliefs related to bullying, and their participant roles. Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Voeten (2005) said that improvement occurred at sites

with intense program implementation in terms of bullying frequency, observed and experienced bullying and attitudes about bullying and participant roles.

Teachers were trained on three approaches to bullying intervention, being the individual approach, class approach and school approach. On the individual approach, teachers were trained on interventions of various methods such as the Pikas Method of Shared Concern, The No Blame Approach, and the Farsta Method. At the class level, teachers were trained on intervening using role play exercises, group scenarios and discussions, and resources to guide class sessions. On the school level, it was outlined that a whole school policy against bullying should be written and clearly expressed in the school culture. Their training also included sharing experiences in their own classes and how to deal with them, research and facts about bullying, various forms of interventions, collaboration on how to design future interventions, and consultations with program experts on the challenges they have faced. Follow ups were strongly emphasized and teachers were forced to regularly report the concrete actions they had taken in their classes in comparison to the design of the intervention they were trained on.

The study showed that in low and high implementation schools, the specifics of how the program was implemented and the way it correlated to the results they experienced were different. First, high implementation schools had almost every single teacher having frequent conversations with individual students about being bullies or victims. In low implementation schools, it was only about half of the teachers having these conversations. Systematic follow up procedures to these conversations were also a measured variable and showed a big difference in the high implementation schools as opposed to the low implementation schools. Both high

and low implementation schools had school wide policies and messages against bullying, but this did not affect the differences in program results.

Teachers were really the deciding factor of the quality of program delivery and the results achieved from the implementation. Many of them did role playing exercises and put a lot of work and preparation into their lessons, whereas other teachers were more passive. School management was said to play a large role in supporting teachers with resources so that they would be more likely to deliver the program with sincerity and enthusiasm without having to worry about things like preparation and materials.

In a study by Brown, Low, Smith and Haggerty (2011) for Steps to Respect, they analyze a whole-school bullying intervention program that focuses on intervention at the school level, peer level, and individual level. Like the Olweus program, staff are trained on the culture of the program and the interventions that are outlined. Teachers learn how to teach social competency, compassion and positive bystander behaviors. Parents are informed about the Steps to Respect program and what will be outlined in the class lessons as ways to cope with emotional distress without externalizing their behavior onto others, or internalizing their feelings causing harm to themselves. An overall school climate is established in which respect for one another is emphasized and bullying is clearly not tolerated.

Out of the 16 schools that were involved in the study, only one of them found positive effects in bullying perpetration and six schools found positive effects on bullying victimization. An overall finding of anti-bullying programs in general, was that whole school anti-bullying approaches are effective in reducing bullying and victimization, but the exact effectiveness

varies immensely at each implementation site. This makes it extremely difficult to determine the exact procedures, strategies or interventions that should be used as a “one size fits all” solution. The most effective whole school approaches to bullying intervention were noted to be the European program trials of the highly successful Olweus approach. This leads us to further questions as to the efficacy of the program in Europe as opposed to being significantly less successful in the United States.

In a study on Bully Busters, authors Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) analyze a bully intervention program that is highly teacher focused and based on psychoeducational research with strategies that lend themselves to effective interventions with various categories of students. The teachers are trained on seven main modules which include increasing awareness of bullying, recognizing the bully, recognizing the victim, interventions for bullying behavior, assisting victims, the role of prevention, and coping skills. Teachers attended trainings to learn about the seven modules and supervisors were assigned to them to observe their class sessions and provide follow up suggestions for intervention strategies on a weekly basis. Checklists were provided for short term progress monitoring of program implementation benchmarks, and all resources and materials were provided. At each scheduled workshop, teachers would share their challenges or successes with the entire group as a collaborative effort to learn from one another and guide each other. They were also expected to outline exactly what they had done for particular problem students who were identified by the administrators of the site.

Effectiveness of the program strategies were measured by teacher reports, student reports, and the amount of disciplinary or behavioral cases that were referred to school

counselors or administrators. As teachers became more experienced with students who had various needs and behaviors, they were more and more prepared on how to work with them effectively. There were fewer cases of referrals and pressing behavioral issues and reporting of bullying incidents had decreased. Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) suggest that a teacher targeted bullying prevention program is more precise and effective than the whole school approach.

Summary

According to the literature, there are many different motives and methods for peer aggression in schools. Some methods of aggression are physical and verbal attacks which are the types of bullying that is normally thought of when bully scenarios come to mind. There is also psychological bullying, social exclusion, rumors and gossip, as well as the more recently popular cyber bullying. There is a very broad spectrum of reasons as to why students bully each other. These include a deviation from the norm on the part of the victim, such as a speech impediment, physical attributes, race, sexuality, etc. Other reasons consist of gaining superiority in the social hierarchy and labeling others as inferior, emotional disturbance, revenge, game playing, and thoughtlessness on the part of the aggressors. The literature has also shown that family dynamics play a huge role in the coping skills of children and adolescents when processing negative peer interactions and emotions. Parental support often is the buffering mechanism between processing negative feelings and the ability to return to a healthy emotional state. Culture and upbringing was also said to be a factor where parents may

raise their children with a higher emphasis on compassion and empathy for others due to their historical and cultural ties to these engrained concepts.

In successful bully prevention programs, a number of factors were discussed that contributed to an effective program. It should be noted however, that since schools are so diverse and have extremely different demographics, factors for success will be varied at every site. The ones brought to attention by the literature are small class sizes, school wide level intervention, class level intervention and individual intervention. On the school wide level administrators should ensure that peer aggression is not tolerated and create an amicable and respectful environment for everyone. On the class level, teachers should be trained, supported with materials, mentoring, and advisement. There was a significant emphasis on following up with teachers for progress monitoring purposes and keeping teachers accountable for their action steps towards reducing bullying at their site. Teachers were by far the most decisive factor in the success of bully prevention programs at different school sites. The more intensive the training, support and accountability, the more effective the programs would become. This requires a great deal of commitment on the part of administrators and program coordinators in order to implement school wide messages and very high levels of teacher support. It also requires dedication on the part of the teachers which is more likely to happen as long as they have the resources and follow up they need to be sincere in their lesson delivery and mentoring efforts.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Research Design

The research design is a combination of ethnographic research and case study examination pertaining to the effectiveness of the anti-bullying program at Sunshine Intermediate School. The Olweus Program (1993) has used surveys as a means for evaluating the effectiveness of implementation strategies at each school site. The information gathered by the Bullying Prevention Committee at Sunshine Intermediate School in combination with the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire standard school report form a foundation for understanding how much bullying was taking place before the program's implementation. The same questionnaire was used again after the first year of implementation in order for the Bullying Prevention Committee (BPC) to decide if the program is effective enough to be resulting in significant progress at our site, or if the implementation needs to be modified to obtain more desirable results.

Setting of the Study

Participants

The participants of the study include seventh and eighth grade students at Sunshine Intermediate School. Prior to the first year of Olweus implementation, surveys were conducted to gain insight into the realities that students face at school in their interactions with one another. They were asked about how often they are bullied, witness bullying, or participate in bullying others. Students participated in the surveys voluntarily and anonymously. The

following school year, students anonymously and voluntarily completed the surveys again prior to Year Two's program implementation.

Nature of the School

Sunshine Intermediate School is a relatively small school that currently serves 793 students in grades seven and eight, with 35 teachers and three administrators. It is an urban school where 94% of students are Hispanic, 90% are socio-economically disadvantaged, and 68% are English learners. The conditions of the community infiltrate the lives of the students here. Many of whom have family members who are gang affiliated, substance abusers, have extensive criminal records, and live in crowded homes. A significant number of the parents are migrant agricultural laborers who do not speak English and have an education that is no higher than the eighth grade.

Every school in the same district as Sunshine Intermediate School is currently in Program Improvement and has been striving to increase the API and AYP to sufficient levels of proficiency. However, a huge language barrier exists in this community, not to mention all of the factors that come into play with the nature of a low income, high crime community which affects the academic performance of students, and their behavior. Further, the families within the community are very closely associated which raises concerns for student interactions on campus and off. Peer aggression in the past has resulted in a larger conflict between families of students in the community.

Data Collection

Instruments

Surveys

The surveys were conducted the year prior to Olweus launch by seventh and eighth grade students in regards to their experiences and perceptions of how much school bullying is taking place. The same surveys were conducted again the following year after one year of program execution. The questionnaires address what types of bullying are most common, where the majority of the interactions take place, bystander involvement, and the degree of support from parents, teachers and staff. Unfortunately, these surveys were never analyzed to provide suggestions on how to maximize the quality of the program. This is due to the fact that one round of surveys took place before Year One implementation and then again after Year One and prior to Year Two. The time frame was not long enough to evaluate the true quality of the program, but was only useful in confirming that Sunshine Intermediate School was in need of bully prevention program in general because bullying is a concern for the school's population and learning. This study will analyze the results of the surveys in detail in order to identify the current program's strengths and weaknesses, and how to improve the implementation of the program for higher success and maximum effectiveness.

Sample Selection

The participants of the study include seventh and eighth grade students at Sunshine Intermediate School who participated completely voluntarily and anonymously. The questionnaires asked students to indicate how often they were bullied, witnessed bullying, or participated in bullying others.

Analysis

Once the data is examined in detail, it will be coded for prevalent themes and patterns relating to bullying. These themes will address the different ways that students are experiencing bullying at Sunshine Intermediate School, to what degree they are reporting their experiences, how much adults are involved in intervening, and what changes took place after Year One of the Olweus program launch. After observing the survey response patterns, the researcher will identify the current program's strengths and weaknesses, and advise on how to improve the implementation of the program for maximum effectiveness and significantly reduced peer aggression incidents.

Chapter Four

Findings Prior To Olweus Launch- YEAR 2010-2011 (YEAR 1)

Being Bullied

Table 1a. Percentage (and number) of surveys completed by grade and gender

	7th	8th	Total
Girls	52.6% (171)	47.2% (179)	49.7% (350)
Boys	47.4% (154)	52.8% (200)	50.3% (354)
Girls and boys	100.0% (325)	100.0% (373)	100.0% (704)

Graph 1b. Number of surveys completed by gender

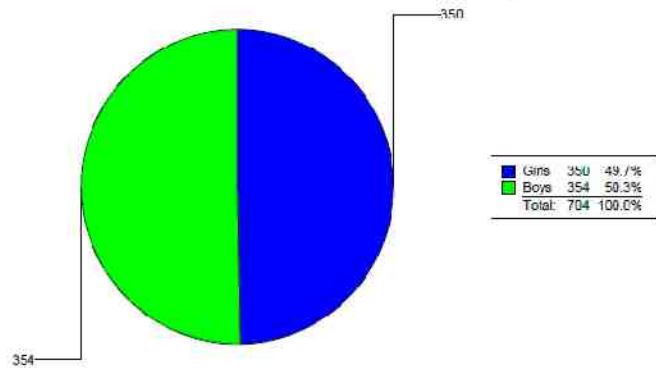


Table 1a. shows the total number of students that participated voluntarily and anonymously to the survey. There were 704 students total in the 7th and 8th grade and the boy to girl ratio is more or less even in both grade levels. The percent of boy and girl participants is displayed clearly in Graph 1b which is visibly almost split even. The percent of students contributing to the data in 7th grade is relatively even to the percent of students participating in the 8th grade as well.

Table 2a. How often have you been bullied in the past couple of months? (Q4) Percentage (and number) of girls by grade

	7th	8th	Total
have not been bullied	59.8% (101)	72.9% (129)	66.5% (230)
Once or twice	32.0% (54)	18.6% (33)	25.1% (87)
2 or 3 times per month	3.6% (5)	4.5% (8)	4.0% (14)
About once a week	0.6% (1)	1.7% (3)	1.2% (4)
Several times a week	4.1% (7)	2.3% (4)	3.2% (11)

Table 2b. How often have you been bullied in the past couple of months? (Q4) Percentage (and number) of boys by grade

	7th	8th	Total
have not been bullied	58.8% (90)	71.0% (142)	65.7% (232)
Once or twice	24.8% (38)	12.5% (25)	17.8% (63)
2 or 3 times per month	6.5% (10)	8.5% (17)	7.6% (27)
About once a week	3.9% (6)	3.5% (7)	3.7% (13)
Several times a week	5.9% (9)	4.5% (9)	5.1% (18)

Students were asked how often they have been bullied at school in the past few months which is displayed in Table 2a. for girls both 7th and 8th grade, and 2b. for boys in both grade levels. In both cases of girls and boys, the majority of students reported that they had not been bullied at all. The next most common reporting after not having been bullied at all is having been bullied once or twice in the last couple of months. Both 7th grade boys and girls reported higher percentages than any other category at almost 25% for boys and 32% for girls. 8th grade boys and girls were significantly less at 12.5% for boys and 18.6% for girls. Overall, girls in both grade levels reported being bullied once or twice at 25.1% and for boys in both grades it was reported at 17.8%. From this information we can conclude that 7th grade girls are reporting the highest incident rates of being bullied once or twice in the past few months.

Next, it appears as though boys in both grade levels are reporting higher levels of more frequent cases of bullying interactions. 7.6% of boys total say they are bullied two to three times per month, the majority of these reports coming from 8th grade boys, whereas total girls in both grades report only 4%. The reports of boys total for being bullied once a week are low overall at 3.7% and relatively even for both grade levels, but this is still higher than what girls are reporting of bullying incidents once a week at 1.7%. Again, the reporting for bullying

incidents taking place several times a week is higher for boys total at 5.1%, whereas for total girls in both grades it is 3.2%.

After observing the above data, it appears as though the majority of students 66.5% of girls and 65.47% of boys in grades 7 and 8 reported that they have not been bullied at school. For those who reported being bullied once or twice in the past few months, 7th grade girls were the majority. Interestingly, the reports of frequent bullying cases at 2-3 times a month, once a week, and several times a week were low overall in contrast to the number of participants. However, those who did report the more frequent bullying incidents were boys in 7th and 8th grade.

Table 3a. Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who have been bullied "2-3 times per month" or more in the past couple of months by grade (Q4 dichotomized)

	7th	8th	Total
Girls	8.3% (14)	8.5% (15)	8.4% (29)
Boys	16.3% (25)	16.5% (33)	16.4% (58)
Girls and Boys	12.1% (39)	12.7% (48)	12.4% (87)
Girls (National Comparison)	10.5%	10.4%	10.4%
Boys (National Comparison)	13.9%	14.0%	13.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	12.1%	12.3%	12.2%

Table 3a. shows the percent of high frequency bullying incidents as a compilation of data from students reporting peer aggression from 2-3 times a month, once a week and several times a week in comparison to the national average. The data shows that girls in both grades are equally reporting slightly less high frequency bullying at 8.4%, than the national average

which is 10.4%. Boys however, are reporting a bit higher equally in both 7th and 8th grade at 16.4%, in comparison with the national average which is 13.9%. Overall, the boys reporting slightly higher incidents and girls slightly lower incidents puts Sunshine Intermediate School in line with the general national average of 12.2% high frequency incidents taking place across the country, and 12.4% taking place at this school site.

- Most students say they are not bullied, results are more or less in line with the national average.
- Frequent bullying occurs with a low number of the population, mostly boys.

Bullying Others

Table 4a. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months? (Q24) Percentage (and number) of girls by grade

	7th	8th	Total
have not bullied another student	66.5% (113)	61.5% (110)	63.9% (223)
Once or twice	25.9% (44)	29.1% (52)	27.5% (96)
2 or 3 times per month	3.5% (6)	3.9% (7)	3.7% (13)
About once a week	2.9% (5)	1.1% (2)	2.0% (7)
Several times a week	1.2% (2)	4.5% (8)	2.9% (10)

Table 4b. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months? (Q24) Percentage (and number) of boys by grade

	7th	8th	Total
I have not bullied another student	70.1% (108)	64.4% (125)	67.0% (233)
Once or twice	18.8% (29)	22.2% (43)	20.7% (72)
2 or 3 times per month	5.2% (8)	7.7% (15)	6.6% (23)
About once a week	2.6% (4)	2.6% (5)	2.6% (9)
Several times a week	3.2% (5)	3.1% (6)	3.2% (11)

Table 4a and 4b show how often girls and boys in 7th and 8th grade have reported bullying others in the past couple of months. Again, we see that the majority of students overall reported not having bullied another student at all with 63.9% for total girls and 67% for total boys. For those who reported bullying others once or twice a month, it is significantly higher for girls at 27.5% whereas for boys they reported 20.7%. Of the 27.5% of girls who reported bullying others once or twice a month, the majority of girls are 8th graders reporting at 29.1%, followed by 7th grade girls at 25.9%.

Reporting participants claiming to bully others more frequently at 2-3 times per month, boys take the lead again at 6.6% in both grades, the majority being 8th grade boys. Girls in 7th and 8th grade equally reported bullying others 2-3 times a month at 3.7%. The highest frequency incidents of once a week to several times a week are also predominantly boys with 2.6% total boys claiming to bully once a week and 3.2% total boys claiming to bully several times a week. Although boys are slightly higher in both grades than girls, it should be noted that there is an interesting spike in the number of 8th grade girls reporting to bully others several times a week at 4.5%. However, even with this spike their numbers are still lower than the boys who bully most frequently.

Table 5a. Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who have bullied another student(s) "2-3 times per month" or more in the past couple of months by grade (Q24 dichotomized)

	7 th	8 th	Total
Girls	7.6% (13)	9.5% (17)	8.6% (30)
Boys	11.0% (17)	13.4% (26)	12.4% (43)
Girls and Boys	9.3% (30)	11.5% (43)	10.5% (73)
Girls (National Comparison)	8.9%	10.0%	9.4%
Boys (National Comparison)	12.4%	13.8%	13.2%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	10.5%	12.0%	11.3%

Table 5a. shows the percentage of students who bully others 2-3 times a month, once a week, or several times a week at Sunshine Intermediate School in comparison to the national average. In this case, we see that the total population of girls and boys at the school site have a lower reporting in every instance than the national average. Girls total report 8.6% in comparison to the national average which is 9.4%. Boys total report bullying others 12.4% whereas the national average is 13.2%. The total population of participants at Sunshine Intermediate School report bullying others at 10.5% whereas the national average of all participants in grades 7 and 8, both boys and girls is 11.3%. Therefore, we can conclude from this information that boys participate in bullying others frequently more than girls at Sunshine Intermediate School, but slightly less often than boys across the rest of the country.

- *Most students do not bully others.*
- *Occasional bullies are mostly girls, frequent bullies are mostly boys.*

Table 5a. Percentage (and number) of girls who are not involved, victim only, bully-victim, and bully only (combination of Table 3a and Table 5a)

	7th	8th	Total
Not involved	85.7% (144)	84.2% (149)	84.9% (293)
Victim only	7.1% (12)	6.2% (11)	6.7% (23)
Bully victim	0.6% (1)	2.3% (4)	1.4% (5)
Bully only	6.5% (11)	7.3% (13)	7.0% (24)
Not involved (National Comparison)	82.3%	81.5%	81.9%
Victim only (National Comparison)	8.8%	8.5%	8.7%
Bully victim (National Comparison)	1.6%	1.9%	1.8%
Bully only (National Comparison)	7.2%	8.1%	7.7%

Table 6b. Percentage (and number) of boys who are not involved, victim only, bully-victim, and bully only (combination of Table 3a and Table 5a)

	7th	8th	Total
Not involved	74.5% (114)	75.3% (146)	74.9% (260)
Victim only	14.4% (22)	11.3% (22)	12.7% (44)
Bully victim	2.0% (3)	4.6% (9)	3.5% (12)
Bully only	9.2% (14)	8.8% (17)	8.9% (31)
Not involved (National Comparison)	76.8%	75.3%	75.9%
Victim only (National Comparison)	10.8%	10.9%	10.9%
Bully victim (National Comparison)	3.1%	3.0%	3.1%
Bully only (National Comparison)	9.3%	10.8%	10.1%

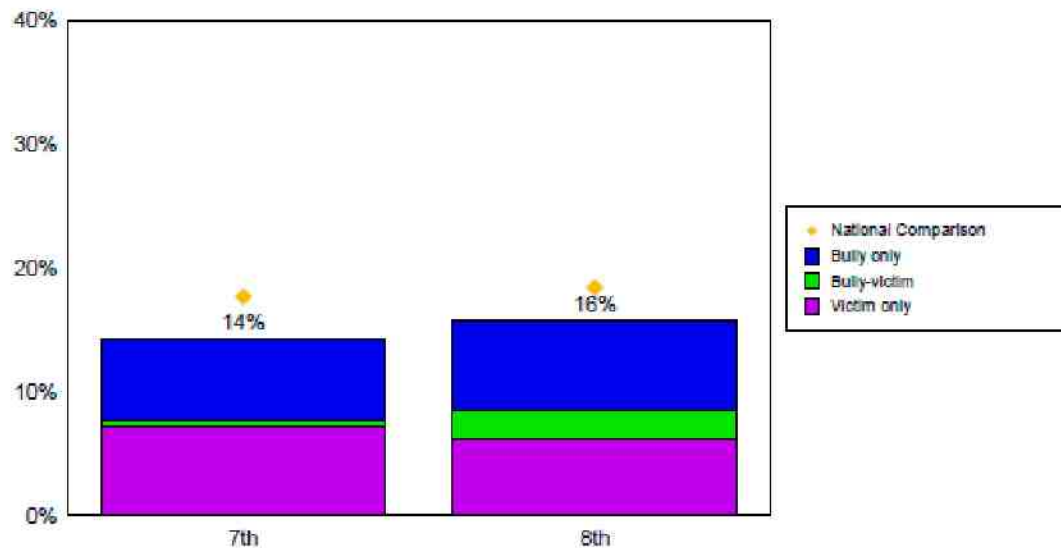
Table 6a and 6b shows how often boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade report their roles in negative peer interactions as being not involved at all, always the victim, sometimes the bully and sometimes the victim, or always the bully. The vast majority of students claim that they are not involved in peer aggression situations at all, with 84.9% of girls and 74.9% of boys in both 7th and 8th grade. Boys claim that they are always the victim at 12.7% total, of them mostly 7th grade boys. This is nearly twice as much as what girls report at Sunshine Intermediate School, claiming that they are always the victim 6.7% of the time. Boys also report that they are both the bully and victim 3.5% of the time, which is low overall, but almost twice as much as girls which is even lower at 1.5%. Boys also have a higher rate of claiming to always be the bully at 8.9% over both grade levels, and girls claim to always be the bully at 7%.

In comparison with the national average, the majority of girls claiming not to be involved in bullying interactions at all for Sunshine Intermediate School is slightly higher at

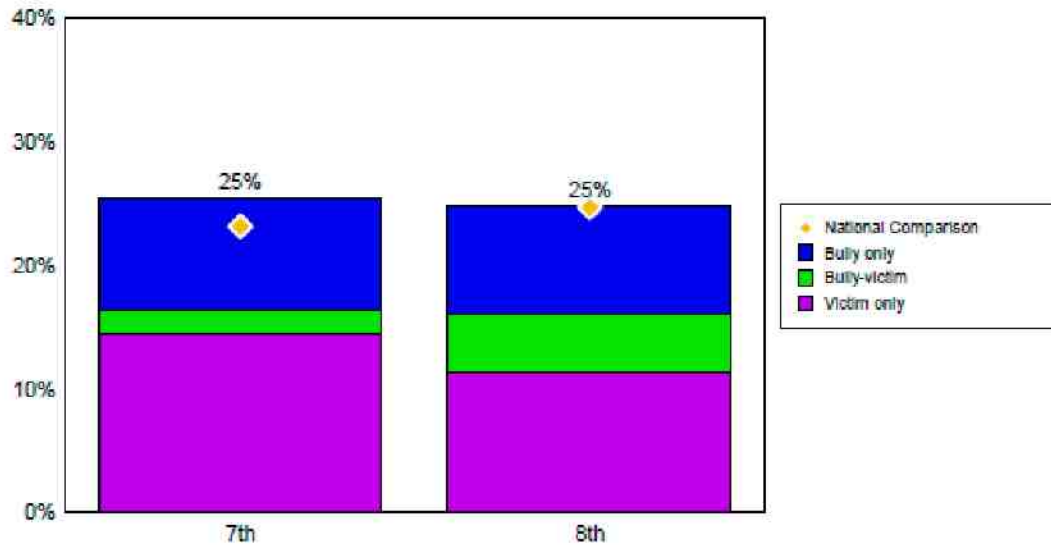
84.9% than the rest of the girls in 7th and 8th grade across the country at 81.9%. The rest of the data for girls also indicates a slightly lower involvement across all categories of victim only, sometimes bully and sometimes victim, as well as bully only than the national average. Boys however, have slightly higher reportings than the national average of always being the victim at 12.7% for Sunshine Intermediate compared to the boys in the rest of the country at 10.9%. The ones claiming to always be the bully are interestingly lower than the national average at 8.9% for the school site compared to 10.1% for the national average.

In conclusion, it appears as though boys are more involved in bullying scenarios in general and tend to feel slightly more victimized than the rest of the boys their age across the country. The girls are less involved than the boys and girls their age in the United States. They also seem to feel less victimized or aggressive towards their peers than the statistics in the rest of the country suggest for their age and gender. These trends can be seen clearly not only with the data in the Tables 6a. and 6b., but also Graphs 6a. and 6c. which show the data visibly comparing Sunshine Intermediate School's data to the rest of the country.

Graph 6a. Percentage of girls involved in bullying



Graph 6c. Percentage of boys involved in bullying



- *Most students say they are not involved in bullying.*
- *Boys are involved more often than girls.*
- *Boys at Sunshine Intermediate feel more victimized than the rest of the country.*

How and where is bullying taking place?

In order to get a better understanding of how bullying occurs at Sunshine Intermediate School, it is important to analyze the student reports on the various ways that they have experienced peer aggression. Table 7 shows the total number of boys and girls in both grade levels who are bullied 2-3 times a month, once a week and several times a week, and what types of incidents they have been involved in. The different types of bullying that are indicated in the table are verbal bullying, social exclusion, physical attacks, spreading rumors and gossip, damage to property, receiving threats, racial comments, sexual comments or aggression, cyber bullying, or other ways.

Table 7. Ways of being bullied, for students who reported being bullied "2-3 times a month" or more (Q4). Percentage (and number) of students who reported being bullied in various ways by other students (Q5 to Q13)

	Verbal	Exclusion	Physical	Rumors	Damage	Threat	Racial	Sexual	Cyber	Another way
Girls	13.5% (47)	5.4% (19)	3.4% (12)	10.3% (36)	4.3% (15)	4.9% (17)	7.7% (27)	8.3% (29)	3.2% (11)	4.0% (14)
Boys	15.9% (56)	6.6% (23)	7.1% (25)	8.8% (31)	5.1% (18)	5.7% (20)	9.4% (33)	7.9% (28)	3.4% (12)	6.6% (23)
Girls and Boys	14.7% (103)	6.0% (42)	5.3% (37)	9.6% (67)	4.7% (33)	5.3% (37)	8.5% (60)	8.1% (57)	3.3% (23)	5.3% (37)

The highest claimed type of bullying for Sunshine Intermediate School is verbal attacks, reported mostly by boys at 15.9% over girls at 13.5%. This is a surprising find since one would naturally expect that girls would have the higher incidents reporting on verbal attacks, and that boys would likely have more physical attacks than verbal ones. The total verbal attacks between boys and girls over both grade levels is 14.7% which is significantly higher than the rest of the categories. The next highest claimed category of bullying is spreading rumors and gossip which is at 9.6% for both boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade. Girls tend to be higher in this area at 10.3% than boys at 8.8%. After that is racial bullying at 8.5% for the total population of the school, and boys at 9.4% and girls at 7.7%. Sexual bullying follows closely behind at 8.1% for the total population with boys at 7.9% and girls at 8.3%. Social exclusion, physical attacks, threats, other ways, and damage to one's property are all present amongst Sunshine Intermediate's population, but they are less predominant than the aforementioned categories. Shockingly, cyber bullying came in at the least reported method of bullying which was not expected at all due to the widespread use of social media among adolescents and the attention that has been brought to cyber bullying through the media. By analyzing the reports from students it can be

concluded that verbal attacks and rumors are the most engaged in activities for those who bully others frequently.

Table 8. Ways of being bullied, for students who reported being bullied "2-3 times per month" or more (Q4). Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who reported being bullied in various ways by other students (Q5 to Q13). Girls mainly bullied by girls, girls mainly bullied by boys, and boys mainly bullied by boys according to Q15 (See appendix)

	Verbal	Exclusion	Physical	Rumors	Damage	Threat	Racial	Sexual	Cyber	Another way
Girls bullied by girls	3.7% (13)	1.7% (6)	0.9% (3)	3.1% (11)	1.1% (4)	1.1% (4)	1.1% (4)	2.9% (10)	1.2% (4)	0.6% (2)
Girls bullied by boys	2.0% (7)	1.1% (4)	0.3% (1)	1.7% (6)	0.6% (2)	1.7% (6)	2.3% (8)	1.4% (5)	0.3% (1)	0.9% (3)
Boys bullied by boys	9.1% (32)	2.3% (8)	3.7% (13)	2.6% (9)	2.3% (8)	1.7% (6)	3.7% (13)	2.8% (10)	0.6% (2)	2.6% (9)

Table 8 breaks down who is targeting whom among the school site’s population according to gender. In the highest category of reported incidents on campus, the verbal attacks shown to be 14.7% in table 7, boys are the ones attacking each other most at 9.1% as seen in table 8. By examining every category, it appears that boys are bullying each other most across the board and more frequently than girls bullying girls, or boys bullying girls. The only category where girls take the lead in bullying one another is the spreading of rumors and gossip category which is not a surprise, although boys are not far behind in that area either. It can also be concluded that the amount of bullying taking place on the part of one gender to another gender is not very prevalent, but rather girls attack girls and boys attack boys.

- *Verbal attacks, rumor and gossip are the most common form of bullying.*
- *Boys bully each other most, boys and girls rarely bully each other.*
- *Surprisingly, cyber bullying is the least common form of bullying.*

Table 10: Where the bullying occurred, for students who reported being bullied "once or twice" or more (Q4). Percentage (and number) of students who reported being bullied in various places

	On playground (during recess or breaks)	In hallways / stairwells	In class (teacher in the room)	In class (teacher not in room)	In the bathroom	In gym class or locker room / shower	In the lunchroom	On the way to and from school	At the school bus stop	On the school bus	Somewhere else at school
Girls	26.7% (31)	25.0% (29)	25.8% (30)	12.9% (15)	5.2% (6)	12.9% (15)	6.0% (7)	17.2% (20)	1.7% (2)	1.7% (2)	26.7% (31)
Boys	33.1% (40)	24.0% (29)	24.0% (29)	13.2% (16)	6.6% (8)	21.5% (26)	5.8% (7)	12.4% (15)	1.7% (2)	1.7% (2)	24.0% (29)
Girls and Boys	30.0% (71)	24.5% (58)	24.8% (59)	13.1% (31)	5.8% (14)	17.3% (41)	5.9% (14)	14.8% (35)	1.7% (4)	1.7% (4)	25.3% (60)

Table 10 shows the possible places that bullying incidents take place for all students reporting at least one bullying incident up to those being frequently bullied. It includes various places on the school campus as well as a few places that are frequently traveled on the way to and from school. Some of these are the bus stop, school bus, or possible walking routes between the school and residences. The highest number of incidents are shown to take place on the playground at 30% for both boys and girls total in both grades, or in the case of Sunshine Intermediate School, the Physical Education area and lunch quad where most students gather during breaks and lunch. The next most common place incidents take place are the hallways and in class while the teacher is present, with both ranking at about 25% for both genders and grades. This is a telling find since teachers should be able to notice when harmful interactions are taking place in their classrooms, especially if it is negative enough to cause a student to feel as though they are being bullied. Right along with these two locations is the "somewhere else at school" category which likely includes other uncommon and less supervised area at 25% for the total school population. The gym and locker room is the next most common location for bully attacks at 17.3%, although most of the cases included boys at 21.5% over girls at 12.9%. On the way to and from school is next at 14.8% overall, and then in class with the teacher not in the room at 13.1%.

This data tells us that students are experiencing bullying in places that are mostly supervised commonly such as the common gathering areas during breaks and lunch, in class with teachers, and other places on campus. Less supervised areas have activity as well, like the locker room or in class without the teacher, but interestingly enough it occurs right under the noses of adults on campus.

- *On the playground / quad is where most incidents occur. Next is in the classroom with the teacher.*
- *Most incidents take place in supervised areas.*

According to the literature, many peer interactions that take place individually are much more respectful and even friendly as opposed to what happens when groups of students get together. Some students may have no problems together when they are one on one, but the dynamics may quickly change when social hierarchies and peer group behavior come into play.

Table 12 shows how students who are not “active bullies” or the main aggressors would react

Table 12. Joining in bullying. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "yes" or "yes, maybe" to Q36: Do you think you could join in bullying a student whom you do not like?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	21.2% (73)	21.2% (73)
Boys	29.4% (103)	29.4% (103)
Girls and Boys	25.3% (176)	25.3% (176)
Girls (National Comparison)	17.7%	17.7%
Boys (National Comparison)	27.2%	27.2%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	22.5%	22.5%

The results show that overall 25% of boys and girls in both grade levels report “yes” or “maybe” to joining in on bullying behavior if they didn’t like the target. Boys were reported at 29.4% whereas 21.2% of girls responded “yes” or “maybe”. Sunshine Intermediate’s total percent of students willing to join in on peer aggression for disliked targets is higher at 25.3% than the national average which is 22.5%. The same is true for both boys and girls, as both percentages are higher than those reported for the national average.

Table 21. Reactions from peer group (The Bullying Circle). Percentage (and number) of students who responded that “I just watch what goes on” to Q37: How do you usually react if you see or learn that a student your age is being bullied by another student(s)?

	7-8 th	Total
Girls	32.2% (89)	32.2% (89)
Boys	28.4% (67)	28.4% (67)
Girls and Boys	30.5% (156)	30.5% (156)
Girls (National Comparison)	18.7%	18.7%
Boys (National Comparison)	24.0%	24.0%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	21.3%	21.3%

Table 21 shows how many students are passive bystanders when they observe a person becoming a victim of peer aggression. Unfortunately, the data for Sunshine Intermediate School’s population is significantly higher for all groups than the national average. 30.5% of total boys and girls in both 7th and 8th grade reported that they “just watch what goes on” if they observe someone being bullied. The national average for this category is 21.3%, which almost 10% lower than the reports for Sunshine Intermediate. Further, by looking closer at the

data for each group, the national average for girls who are passive bystanders is 18.7% as opposed to 32.2% at the school site. That is a significant difference that is more pronounced than the boys whose reports in the rest of the country are 24%, but at Sunshine Intermediate school report 24%.

Table 13. Empathy with victims. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "feel a bit sorry" or "feel sorry and want to help" to Q23: When you see a student your age being bullied at school, what do you feel or think?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	86.8% (302)	86.8% (302)
Boys	72.2% (252)	72.2% (252)
Girls and Boys	79.5% (554)	79.5% (554)
Girls (National Comparison)	87.9%	87.9%
Boys (National Comparison)	74.6%	74.6%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	81.2%	81.2%

Table 13 addresses the sentiments of students who may be passive bystanders that watch bully scenarios unfold or those who see an incident occurring and continue to move past it without taking action. The total number of boys and girls in the 7th and 8th grade reporting that they "feel sorry" or "feel sorry and want to help" are 79.5% for Sunshine Intermediate. Girls tend to show more empathy at 86.8% feeling sorry for bully targets and boys less empathetic at 72.2%. This is more or less in line with the national averages of girls reporting empathy at 87.9% and boys at 74.6%. The overall national average is 81.2%, confirming that the

rest of 7th and 8th grade boys and girls across the country tend to be slightly more compassionate than this school site's population.

Referring back to what was learned in the literature, many students do not intervene or put a stop to bullying behavior they witness because they are afraid of becoming targets themselves. Table 14 displays how many students claimed that they were sometimes, fairly often, often or very often afraid of becoming a victim.

Table 14. Feeling afraid of being bullied. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "sometimes," "fairly often," "often," or "very often" to Q38: How often are you afraid of being bullied by other students in your school?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	32.9% (114)	32.9% (114)
Boys	21.2% (74)	21.2% (74)
Girls and Boys	27.1% (188)	27.1% (188)
Girls (National Comparison)	27.4%	27.4%
Boys (National Comparison)	18.6%	18.6%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	23.0%	23.0%

Again, it appears that the reports of fear are higher for the school site at 27.1% than the rest of the country which is at 23%. Girls are at 32.9% for Sunshine Intermediate School compared to 27.4% across the United States, and boys are at 21.2% at the site in contrast to only 18.6% for the rest of the nation.

Through the analysis of the data so far, it is conclusive that boys generally engage in more bullying behavior than girls and are less empathetic to those who are victims. Both

nationwide and school specific data confirm that boys are more likely to join in on bullying behavior than girls are when they witness a student being targeted. Sunshine Intermediate school tends to be above the nationwide averages in the area of passive bystanders, joining in on aggression and fear of becoming targets. The area where they are not above the nationwide averages are in the category pertaining to the feelings of empathy and compassion towards those who are targeted. This may suggest a more aggressive school environment than originally thought.

- *Boys are more likely to join in on bullying behavior.*
- *Boys are less likely to show empathy to victims.*
- *Girls are more likely to be passive bystanders.*
- *Girls are more fearful of becoming targets themselves.*
- *Boys are more aggressive overall and engage in more aggression.*

Reporting Bullying

The Olweus program places a large amount of emphasis on students reporting bullying behavior to adults at school and at home so that proper action can be taken to protect students from future attacks. Table 11d shows the number of students who have not told anyone at all about the bullying they have experienced. Overall, 32.2% of students at Sunshine Intermediate have not told anyone about negative peer interactions. The data shows that 36.2% of boys in 7th and 8th grade have not told anyone, and 24.1% of girls in both grade levels have also not told

anyone about bullying situations they have been part of. This shows that girls are more likely to report bullying to another person than boys are.

- *Girls are more likely to tell someone about bullying than boys.*

Table 11d. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have not told anyone about the bullying

	7-8th	Total
Girls	24.1% (7)	24.1% (7)
Boys	36.2% (21)	36.2% (21)
Girls and Boys	32.2% (28)	32.2% (28)

Table 11c. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have told a brother, sister, or friend about the bullying (Q19d and Q19e combined)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	51.7% (15)	51.7% (15)
Boys	36.2% (21)	36.2% (21)
Girls and Boys	41.4% (36)	41.4% (36)

Table 11c. shows the number of boys and girls in both grade levels that have told a sibling or friend about the bullying they have experienced. Again, in the data it is clear that girls are more likely to tell someone at 51.7% than boys at 36.2%. Overall, 41.4% of students told a sibling or friend.

Table 11b. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have told a parent/guardian about the bullying (Q19c)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	34.5% (10)	34.5% (10)
Boys	22.4% (13)	22.4% (13)
Girls and Boys	26.4% (23)	26.4% (23)

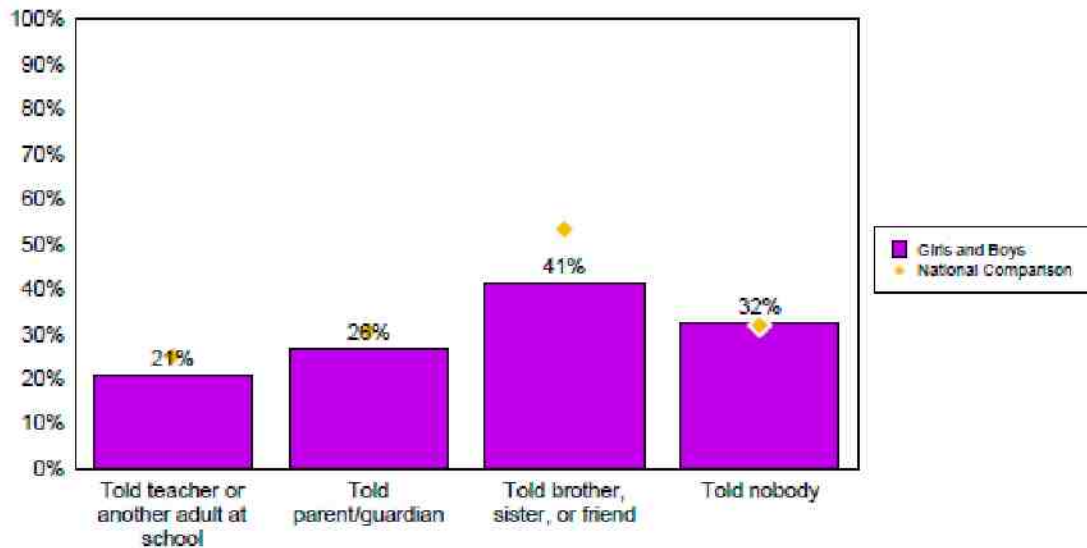
Table 11b shows the number of boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade who have told a parent about the bullying they have experienced. The data confirms the pattern that girls are more likely at 34.5% than boys at 22.4% to report bullying to a parent or guardian. Overall, 26.4% of students have reported one or more incidents to their parents.

Table 11a. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have told a teacher or another adult at school about the bullying (Q19a and Q19b combined)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	10.3% (3)	10.3% (3)
Boys	25.9% (15)	25.9% (15)
Girls and Boys	20.7% (18)	20.7% (18)

Table 11a shows the percent of boys and girls in the 7th and 8th grade who have reported bullying to a teacher or another adult on school campus. Interestingly, there is a deviance in the data where boys are significantly more likely to tell an adult at school at 25.9% than girls at 10.3%. Overall, 20.7% of students are likely to tell an adult at school.

Graph 11c. Percentage of bullied girls and boys (according to Table 3b) who have told/not told anybody about the bullying



After analyzing all categories of student reporting, it can be concluded that students are most likely to tell a brother, sister or friend about their bullying experiences at 41.4%. The next most likely scenario is for students not to tell anyone at all at 32.2%. Students who are bullied are less likely to tell parents at 26.4% and least likely to tell an adult at school at 20.7%. It should be noted that they boys were significantly more likely to tell an adult at school rather than a parent.

- *Girls are more likely to tell someone than boys.*
- *Boys are only more likely to tell someone if it is an adult at school.*

Intervention: Peers and Adults

Bully prevention programs require involvement on the parts of students, parents, teachers and administrators collaborating together to create a respectful and protected learning environment for students.

Table 16. Interventions by other students. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "often" or "almost always" to Q21: How often do other students try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	9.3% (32)	9.3% (32)
Boys	9.8% (34)	9.8% (34)
Girls and Boys	9.6% (66)	9.6% (66)
Girls (National Comparison)	13.9%	13.9%
Boys (National Comparison)	17.9%	17.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	15.9%	15.9%

Table 16 shows the percentage of 7th and 8th grade boys and girls who report that other students attempt to put a stop to bullying when they see a student being victimized at school. The data pertaining to Sunshine Intermediate School is significantly lower than the national averages, showing that students may not be compassionate or empathetic enough to stand up for one another. Boys and girls were more or less even for the school site, averaging at 9.6% overall. The national average for boys and girls in both grades is 15.9%, with a higher ratio of boys in the United States intervening at 17.9% compared to girls across the country at 13.9%.

- *Students intervene much less than they should in comparison to the national average.*
- *Boys are more likely to stand up for each other than girls.*

Table 17. Contact with school from adults at home. Percentage (and number) of students (out of those who have been bullied according to Table 3a) who responded that an adult at home has contacted the school "once" or more in the past couple months in order to stop their being bullied at school (Q22)

	7-8 h	Total
Girls	34.5% (10)	34.5% (10)
Boys	29.3% (17)	29.3% (17)
Girls and Boys	31.0% (27)	31.0% (27)
Girls (National Comparison)	21.4%	21.4%
Boys (National Comparison)	27.6%	27.6%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	25.0%	25.0%

Table 17 shows the number of adults at home that have made contact with the school once or more in the past few months in an effort to take action to protect students from bullying incidents. Sunshine Intermediate School shows a higher percentage at 31% overall than the national average at 25%. It should be noted that the parents of girls are higher at 34.5% at the school site, whereas the parents of boys across the United States report more frequently at 27.6%. This shows that not only are girls at the school site reporting to parents at home more often than boys, but that the families in the community appear to be more concerned and involved than those in the rest of the country.

- *Families at Sunshine Intermediate are more concerned than parents in the rest of the country.*
- *The parents of girls are the majority of incidents that are reported to school staff.*
- *The national average shows that boys' parents call in most frequently. Why aren't they as proactive at Sunshine Intermediate?*

Table 19. Interventions from adults at home with bullying students. Percentage (and number of students (out of those who have bullied other students according to Table 5a) who responded that an adult at home has talked with them "once" or more in the past couple months about their bullying other students at school (Q35)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	27.6% (8)	27.6% (8)
Boys	16.3% (7)	16.3% (7)
Girls and Boys	20.8% (15)	20.8% (15)
Girls (National Comparison)	27.6%	27.6%
Boys (National Comparison)	24.9%	24.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	26.0%	26.0%

Table 19 shows the number of adults who have spoken to their children at home about bullying other students at school once or more in the past few months. In contrast to the data in Table 17, the parents at Sunshine Intermediate School seem to be less involved in counseling their children as to the importance of treating their peers respectfully with 20.8% overall at the school site and 26% overall for the national average. Further, the parents of boys are much less likely to counsel their kids at 16.3% in contrast the parents of boys in the rest of the country at 24.9%. The parents of girls are exactly in line at the school site with the national average with both at exactly 27.6%. This shows that the parents of girls are more concerned and involved with raising children who are respectful of their peers than boys. This may be attributed to the fact that girls are more likely to speak with their parents about their feelings and interactions as seen in the prior data as well as the literature. Naturally, this would result in parents being more aware, involved and connected to the school's mission increasing safe peer interactions.

- *Parents of boys are counseling their children less than girls.*

- *Girls' parents do counsel them more than boys about bullying.*
- *Girls may be more open to speaking about their **emotions** than boys, leading to more parent discussions.*

Table 15. Interventions by teachers or other adults at school. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "often" or "almost always" to Q20: How often do the teachers or other adults at school try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	39.7% (137)	39.7% (137)
Boys	34.7% (119)	34.7% (119)
Girls and Boys	37.2% (256)	37.2% (256)
Girls (National Comparison)	40.3%	40.3%
Boys (National Comparison)	39.3%	39.3%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	39.8%	39.8%

Table 15 shows how often teachers put a stop to bullying situations that they see taking place at school. 7th and 8th grade boys and girls at Sunshine Intermediate School who reported that teachers "often" or "almost always" intervene in negative peer interactions ranked at 37.2%. This is slightly lower than the national average of 39.8%. Again, it is clear in the data that girls are more likely to communicate their interactions in general than boys, with girls at 39.7% reporting that their teachers frequently intervene. Boys at Sunshine Intermediate are again lower at 34.7% than the national average at 39.3%. This supports the notion that boys at the school site in particular are less likely than girls and other boys their age across the country to communicate their feelings and negative peer interactions.

- *Teachers intervene more with girls than they do with boys.*

Table 18. Interventions from teachers at school with bullying students. Percentage (and number) of students (out of those who have bullied other students according to Table 5a) who responded that the class (homeroom) teacher or any other teacher has talked with them "once" or more in the past couple months about their bullying other students at school (C34)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	27.6% (8)	27.6% (8)
Boys	32.6% (14)	32.6% (14)
Girls and Boys	30.6% (22)	30.6% (22)
Girls (National Comparison)	32.0%	32.0%
Boys (National Comparison)	33.7%	33.7%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	33.0%	33.0%

Table 18 shows the number of students who reported that teachers spoke with them once or more in the past few months in regards to bullying situations observed or brought to the attention of the teacher. Overall, 30.6% of 7th and 8th grade boys and girls reported one or more conversations with their teachers at Sunshine Intermediate School in contrast to the national average which is 33%.

Table 22. Evaluation of class (homeroom) teacher's effort to counteract bullying in the classroom. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "little or nothing" or "fairly little" to Q39: Overall, how much do you think your class or homeroom teacher has done to cut down on bullying in your classroom in the past couple of months?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	50.0% (173)	50.0% (173)
Boys	56.8% (196)	56.8% (196)
Girls and Boys	53.4% (369)	53.4% (369)
Girls (National Comparison)	47.8%	47.8%
Boys (National Comparison)	53.1%	53.1%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	50.5%	50.5%

Table 22 shows the degree to which teachers are working to reduce bullying behavior in their classes. The number of students who reported that their teachers take “little to no action” or “fairly little action” at Sunshine Intermediate school is 53.4% overall in comparison to the national average which is 50.5%. Boys at the school site have a relatively higher rate of feeling that their teachers do not intervene as much as they should at 56.8% compared to the girls at 50%. This likely confirms the pattern in the data which shows that boys do not communicate their peer interactions as much as girls do which makes it more difficult for adults to intervene because they do not have the necessary awareness.

After analyzing the data, it is apparent that students have the least amount of intervention in stopping bullying behavior among all categories, particularly at the school site. Sunshine Intermediate is at 9.6% student intervention in comparison with the rest of the country at 15.9%. It should be noted that boys are significantly lower at 9.8% at the school site in comparison with 17.9% of boys in the rest of the country. 31% of parents at the school site have made contact with the school in regards to bullying behavior pertaining to their child. The majority of these cases are the parents of girls at 34.5% compared with boys at 29.3%. This suggests that girls are more likely to communicate their feelings and interactions with their parents than boys are, causing parents of girls to be more involved and proactive in protecting them from future incidents. 20.8% of the population at Sunshine Intermediate reported that their parents have spoken to them once or more in the past few months in regards to bullying others. Again, it is clear that most of these cases are the parents of girls at 27.6% in contrast to the boys at only 16.3%. This makes the case stronger that since girls are more likely to communicate their feelings and interactions with their parents, the adults at home have a

higher awareness and are more likely to counsel their kids. The same pattern is apparent when it comes to teacher interventions with girls compared to boys.

- *Boys do not feel that their teachers are as involved in intervening as they would hope.*
- *Teachers may need more support to learn the signs of bullying and recognize when it is happening.*

Patterns and Problems (2010-2011)

The patterns present in the data are represented by participants from Sunshine Intermediate School in comparison to the national averages. This allows researchers to gauge how close or far off the school site is from the nationwide norm and to identify issues that are particular to the population of the school. The majority of students participating in the survey reported that they had not been bullied at all, at 66.5% for 7th and 8th grade girls and 65.7% for 7th and 8th grade boys. Bullying incidents from once or twice in the past few months are at 25% for girls and 17.8% for boys, with much lower percentages for students reporting higher frequency bullying scenarios. The good news is that more than half of the student population feels safe and respected by their peers at school. However, those who are bullied in high and low frequency instances make up approximately one fourth of the population over both grades and genders. This is in line with the national average that is reported for other schools in the country with the same grade levels and age group.

In regards to students reporting their involvement in bullying other students, again the majority claims not to be involved in showing aggression towards their peers. Those who claim to bully occasionally are mostly girls in both grades. Among students who claim to bully others

frequently, it is a low proportion of students overall in comparison to the national average. The students who report to engage in frequent peer aggression are a majority of boys over girls.

Students were asked about their roles in bully scenarios as either victims, bullies, sometimes both, or not involved at all. Not surprisingly, 60-65% of students at Sunshine Intermediate School in both grade levels and genders claimed to not be involved at all. Boys are higher in all categories than girls, suggesting that they are the victims and bullies more often in general. They have higher frequency bullying incidents and involvement, sometimes switching roles between targets and aggressors. They are also slightly higher than the national average which shows evidence that it is particular to the school site as well as their age and gender.

Students reported that the most common form of bullying to take place was verbal attacks for both boys and girls, although boys showed higher levels than girls. Rumors and gossip was the next most common form of peer aggression, which was mostly done by girls about other girls. Racial and sexual attacks were also significant, although still much lower than generalized verbal attacks. The least common is cyber bullying which was a bit unexpected considering the amount of time that students spend on social media. Bullying is mostly targeted to members of the same sex rather than between the two sexes.

The most prevalent places where bullying occurs are in the commonly used and highly supervised areas such as the “playground” and hallways. Sunshine Intermediate is a middle school so the “playground” translates to the lunch quad and Physical Education areas that are open for students to roam during breaks. It is not surprising data in the sense that there is a large number of students gathering together in these areas which would make it reasonable for

all kinds of peer interactions to occur, including negative ones. However, it is surprising as well since there is high supervision in these areas due to the high volume of students. Even more interesting is that the next most common places reported for bullying to occur are in the classroom with the teacher. It is the responsibility of the teacher to watch for inappropriate peer interactions and to enforce a peaceful and respectful learning environment. For frequent bullying instances to occur with a teacher present is a telling piece of data. The locker room is a low supervision area, and it still has less bullying instances than in the classroom with the teacher present. The same is true for on the way to and from school where students are gathered together with minimal supervision, and bullying does occur, but at a lower rate.

Boys are more likely to join in on bullying behavior than girls are when they see that a student is being bullied. This is true for both the school site and nationwide which suggests that the behavior is likely gender and age specific. Boys engage in bullying behavior more overall than girls do and are less empathetic or compassionate to those they see being victimized. Girls are more likely to be bystanders than boys, simply watching scenarios unfold without taking any action. Girls are also more compassionate and empathetic to those they see being victimized, but won't necessarily report it or stop what they are witnessing out of fear of becoming a target themselves. Boys did show fear of becoming targets, but less than girls whose fear was higher.

Students were asked about how often and to whom they communicate about bullying incidents they experience. After analyzing the data, the consistent finding was that girls are much more likely than boys to tell someone about bullying experiences. This was true for

Sunshine Intermediate and the statistics reported for 7th and 3th grade girls nationwide. The boys at Sunshine Intermediate School had an even lower level of communicating bullying incidents with anyone, even in comparison to the national average.

Sunshine Intermediate shows that both boys and girls were most comfortable telling a brother, sister or friend about aggressive peer interactions. Again, the girls had higher numbers in this category than boys indicating that girls are likely more comfortable sharing their feelings and confiding in others overall than boys who tend to withhold their emotions (Ledwell and King, 2013). The next most common category was for students to tell nobody at all about experiences, possibly because they feel that nothing would result or benefit them, fear that others may find out and cause them to become targets, or they feel it is insignificant to them. The last two categories showed that students did tell their parents and possibly an adult at school, but less often than one would hope. Girls were consistently higher in reporting than boys for all categories which suggests gender specific ways of dealing with emotions, communication, and confiding in others (Ledwell and King, 2013).

Students are the least likely to intervene and report bullying scenarios, even less than the national average. This suggests that there is a low level of student support for one another on campus. Family concern and contact with the school at Sunshine Intermediate School is higher than the nationwide average which suggests close family involvement in the community. However, it is mostly the families of girls who are contacting the school to seek help for their children who are being bullied, or to counsel their children in respecting and maintaining courteous interactions with others. The number of boys were significantly lower, indicating that

there is likely less communication of boys with their families when they feel bullied or are bullying others. This could be attributed to Hispanic culture in which boys are not always emotionally nurtured and the norm is an attitude of male dominance while emotional weakness is looked down upon. For this reason, parents of boys may not have the awareness of the peer interactions of their children because boys do not communicate it the way that girls do. Shapka and Law (2013) discuss the way that cultural norms within families affect the way that children behave in regards to peer interaction, as well as the role that parents play in buffering their emotions and behavior.

Teacher involvement and intervention shows more or less similar results in that there is a higher level of intervention by teachers who observed girls bullying others or being bullied. Further, boys were still less commonly intervened upon by teachers than girls, likely due to the nature of girls being more open and communicative with those around them in general. However, it should be noted that the number of boy interventions by adults at school were higher than parent interventions. It is speculated that this could confirm the notion that adults at school may be more comforting for boys to confide in because they are emotionally supported at school, in contrast to the Hispanic culture at home which does not traditionally encourage male emotional vulnerability. This is again a cultural speculation with regard to the role of parents and the buffering of appropriate peer interaction and emotional processing as mentioned by Shapka and Law (2013).

Chapter Four Part II

Year 2011-2012 (Year 2)

Being Bullied

Table 1a. Percentage (and number) of surveys completed by grade and gender

	7th	8th	Total
Girls	52.1% (172)	44.7% (175)	53.4% (347)
Boys	47.9% (158)	45.3% (145)	46.6% (303)
Girls and boys	100.0% (330)	100.0% (320)	100.0% (650)

Graph 1b. Number of surveys completed by gender

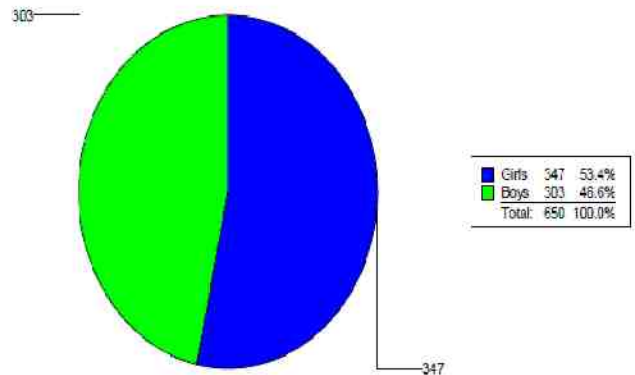


Table 1a. shows the total number of students that participated voluntarily and anonymously in the survey. There were 650 students total in the 7th and 8th grade and the boy to girl ratio is more or less even in both grade levels. The percent of boy and girl participants is displayed clearly in Graph 1b which shows that there are slightly more girls than boys. The percent of students contributing to the data in 7th grade is relatively even to the percent of students participating in the 8th grade as well.

- *Year 2 is a smaller sample than Year 1. 704 students for Year 1 and 650 for Year 2. There's also more girls than boys.*

Table 2a How often have you been bullied in the past couple of months? (Q4) Percentage (and number) of girls by grade

	7th	8th	Total
have not been bullied	52.6% (90)	69.0% (120)	60.9% (210)
Once or twice	31.6% (54)	20.7% (36)	26.1% (90)
2 or 3 times per month	8.2% (14)	3.4% (6)	5.8% (20)
About once a week	4.7% (8)	0.6% (1)	2.6% (9)
Several times a week	2.9% (5)	6.3% (11)	4.6% (16)

Table 2b. How often have you been bullied in the past couple of months? (Q4) Percentage (and number) of boys by grade

	7 th	8 th	Total
have not been bullied	62.5% (97)	65.3% (94)	63.9% (191)
Once or twice	25.2% (39)	19.4% (28)	22.4% (67)
2 or 3 times per month	3.2% (5)	4.9% (7)	4.0% (12)
About once a week	1.9% (3)	5.6% (8)	3.7% (11)
Several times a week	7.1% (11)	4.9% (7)	6.0% (18)

Students were asked how often they have been bullied at school in the past few months which is displayed in Table 2a. for girls both 7th and 8th grade, and 2b for boys in both grade levels. In both cases of girls and boys, the majority of students reported that they had not been bullied at all. The next most common reporting after not having been bullied at all is having been bullied once or twice in the last couple of months. Both 7th grade boys and girls reported higher percentages than any other category at 25.2% for boys and 31.6% for girls. Overall, girls in both grade levels reported being bullied once or twice at 26.1% and for boys in both grades it was reported at 22.4%. From this information we can conclude that 7th grade girls are reporting the highest incident rates of being bullied once or twice in the past few months.

Next, it appears as though girls are reporting higher incidents of being bullied 2-3 times per month at 5.8%, the majority of these cases taking place with 7th grade girls. The reports of being bullied once a week and several times a week are low overall but higher with the boys in both grade levels than girls.

After observing the above data, it appears as though the majority of students 60.9% of girls and 63.9% of boys in grades 7 and 8 reported that they have not been bullied at school. For

those who reported being bullied once or twice in the past few months, 7th grade girls were the majority. Interestingly, the reports of frequent bullying cases at once a week, and several times a week were low overall in contrast to the number of participants. However, those who did report the more frequent bullying incidents were boys.

- *Reporting is higher in Year 2 than Year 1. It is possibly due to increased awareness.*
- *Girls were higher this year in 2-3 times a month category, boys were higher for once a week and several times a week.*
- *Both years the majority said they were not bullied at all.*

Table 3a. Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who have been bullied "2-3 times per month" or more in the past couple of months by grade (Q4 dichotomized)

	7th	8th	Total
Girls	15.8% (27)	10.3% (18)	13.0% (45)
Boys	12.3% (19)	15.3% (22)	13.7% (41)
Girls and Boys	14.1% (46)	12.6% (40)	13.4% (86)
Girls (National Comparison)	14.7%	15.0%	14.8%
Boys (National Comparison)	16.5%	15.0%	15.8%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	15.6%	15.0%	15.3%

Table 3a shows the percent of high frequency bullying incidents as a compilation of data from students reporting peer aggression from 2-3 times a month, once a week and several times a week in comparison to the national average. The data shows that girls in both grades are equally reporting slightly less high frequency bullying at 13%, than the national average which is 14.8%. Boys however, are reporting a bit higher at 13.7%, in comparison with the national average which is 15.8%. Overall, the boys are reporting slightly higher bullying incidents than

the girls, but Sunshine Intermediate School is lower than the national average which is 15.3% for boys and girls in both 7th and 8th grade, where as the population of the school site ranks at an overall 13.4%.

- Overall bullying cases declined from last year. Sunshine Intermediate was right in line with the national average for Year 1 and now it is below the national average. The decline is due mostly to boys reporting.

Bullying Others

Table 4a. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months? (Q24) Percentage (and number) of girls by grade

	7th	8th	Total
have not bullied another student	68.6% (116)	66.9% (117)	67.7% (233)
Once or twice	21.3% (36)	28.6% (50)	25.0% (86)
2 or 3 times per month	3.6% (6)	3.4% (6)	3.5% (12)
About once a week	3.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	1.5% (5)
Several times a week	3.6% (6)	1.1% (2)	2.3% (8)

Table 4b. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months? (Q24) Percentage (and number) of boys by grade

	7th	8th	Total
I have not bullied another student	65.6% (103)	69.2% (99)	67.3% (202)
Once or twice	21.0% (33)	18.2% (26)	19.7% (59)
2 or 3 times per month	5.7% (9)	4.2% (6)	5.0% (15)
About once a week	1.9% (3)	3.5% (5)	2.7% (8)
Several times a week	5.7% (9)	4.9% (7)	5.3% (16)

Table 4a and 4b show how often girls and boys in 7th and 8th grade have reported bullying others in the past couple of months. Again, we see that the majority of students overall reported not having bullied another student at all with 67.7% for total girls and 67.3% for total boys. For those who reported bullying others once or twice a month, it is significantly higher for girls at 25% whereas for boys they reported 19.7%. Of the 27.5% of girls who reported bullying others once or twice a month, the majority of girls are 8th graders reporting at 28.6.

Reporting participants claiming to bully others more frequently at 2-3 times per month, boys take the lead again at 5% in both grades, the majority being 7th grade boys. Girls in 7th and 8th grade almost equally reported bullying others 2-3 times a month at 3.5%. The highest frequency incidents of once a week to several times a week are also predominantly boys with 2.7% total boys claiming to bully once a week and 5.3% total boys claiming to bully several times a week.

- *Most said they did not bully others at all. Girls were the majority in this.*
- *Consistent with Year 1, Boys had higher frequency bullying cases than girls.*

Table 5a. Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who have bullied another student s. "2-3 times per month" or more in the past couple of months by grade (C24 dichotomized)

	7th	8th	Total
Girls	10.1% (17)	4.6% (8)	7.3% (25)
Boys	13.4% (21)	12.6% (18)	13.0% (39)
Girls and Boys	11.7% (38)	8.2% (26)	9.9% (64)
Girls (National Comparison)	7.5%	8.0%	7.7%
Boys (National Comparison)	10.5%	11.4%	10.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	8.9%	9.5%	9.2%

Table 5b. Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who have bullied another student(s) "2-3 times per month" or more in the past couple of months by grade groupings (Q24 dichotomized)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	7.3% (25)	7.3% (25)
Boys	13.0% (39)	13.0% (39)
Girls and Boys	9.9% (64)	9.9% (64)
Girls (National Comparison)	7.7%	7.7%
Boys (National Comparison)	10.9%	10.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	9.2%	9.2%

Table 5a shows the percentage of students who bully others 2-3 times a month, once a week, or several times a week at Sunshine Intermediate School in comparison to the national average. In this case, we see that the girls are more or less aligned with the national average but the boys are higher than the national average. Girls total report 7.3% in comparison to the national average which is 7.7%. Boys total report bullying others 13.0% whereas the national average is 10.9%. The total population of participants at Sunshine Intermediate School report bullying others at 9.4% which is very close to the national average of all participants in grades 7 and 8, both boys and girls is 9.2%. Therefore, we can conclude from this information that boys participate in bullying others frequently more than girls at Sunshine Intermediate School, but the overall population is more or less aligned with the national average.

- *Boys have higher frequency bullying than national average.*
- *In Year 1 reportings boys were less than the national average, now they are above.*
- *Overall bullying reporting is lower at Sunshine Intermediate than the rest of the country.*

Table 5a. Percentage (and number) of girls who are not involved, victim only, bully-victim, and bully only (combination of Table 3a and Table 5a)

	7 th	8 th	Total
Not involved	79.2% (133)	86.8% (151)	83.0% (284)
Victim only	10.7% (18)	8.6% (15)	9.6% (33)
Bully victim	4.8% (8)	1.7% (3)	3.2% (11)
Bully only	5.4% (9)	2.9% (5)	4.1% (14)
Not involved (National Comparison)	80.2%	79.4%	79.8%
Victim only (National Comparison)	12.3%	12.6%	12.4%
Bully victim (National Comparison)	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%
Bully only (National Comparison)	5.1%	5.6%	5.4%

Table 5b. Percentage (and number) of boys who are not involved, victim only, bully-victim, and bully only (combination of Table 3a and Table 5a)

	7 th	8 th	Total
Not involved	76.8% (119)	76.8% (109)	76.8% (228)
Victim only	9.7% (15)	10.6% (15)	10.1% (30)
Bully victim	2.6% (4)	4.9% (7)	3.7% (11)
Bully only	11.0% (17)	7.7% (11)	9.4% (28)
Not involved (National Comparison)	76.4%	77.2%	76.8%
Victim only (National Comparison)	13.2%	11.4%	12.3%
Bully victim (National Comparison)	3.4%	3.6%	3.5%
Bully only (National Comparison)	7.1%	7.8%	7.4%

Table 6a and 6b shows how often boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade report their roles in negative peer interactions as being not involved at all, always the victim, sometimes the bully and sometimes the victim, or always the bully. The vast majority of students claim that they are not involved in peer aggression situations at all, with 83% of girls and 76.8% of boys in both 7th

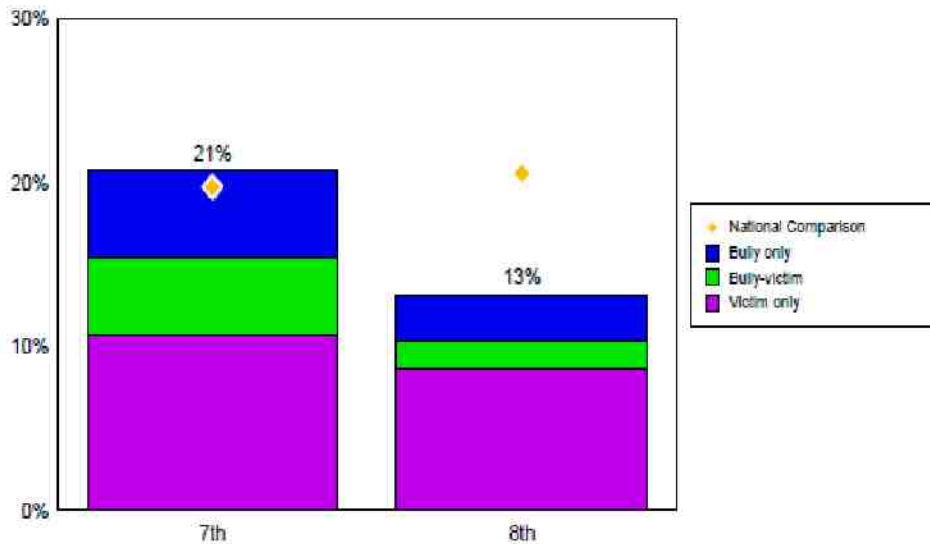
and 3rd grade. Boys claim that they are always the victim at 10.1% total. This is close to what girls report at Sunshine Intermediate School, claiming that they are always the victim 9.6% of the time. Boys also report that they are both the bully and victim 3.7% of the time, which is low overall and also close to what girls report at 3.2%. Boys have almost double the rate of claiming to always be the bully at 9.4% over both grade levels, compared to girls who claim to always be the bully at 4.1%.

In comparison with the national average, the majority of girls claiming not to be involved in bullying interactions at all for Sunshine Intermediate School is slightly higher at 83% than the rest of the girls in 7th and 3rd grade across the country at 79.8%. The rest of the data for girls indicates a lower involvement in the category of always the bully than boys at the school site and the national average for girls.

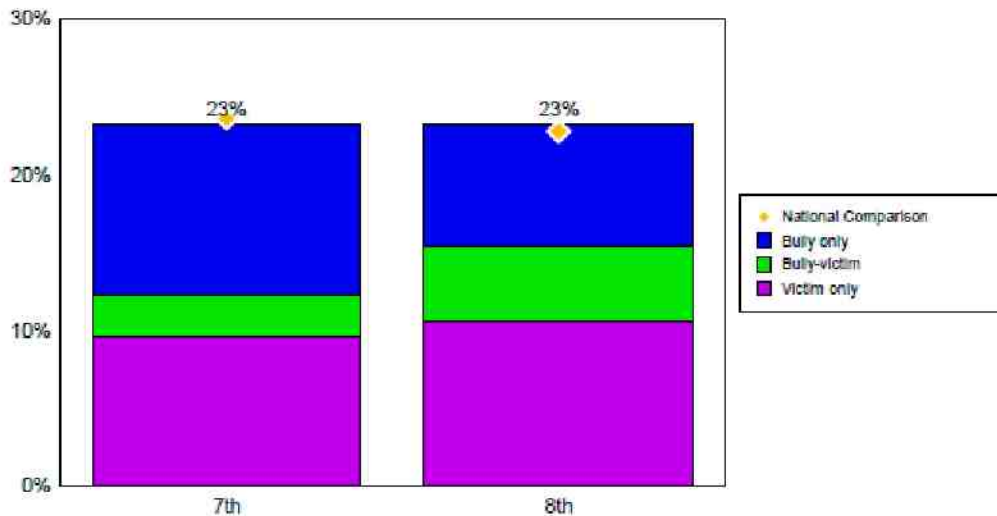
In conclusion, it appears as though boys are more involved in bullying scenarios in general, admitting to bullying others more frequently and taking on the role of bullying. The girls are less involved than the boys but appear to feel more victimized. These trends can be seen clearly not only with the data in the Tables 6a and 6b, but also Graphs 6a and 6c which show the data visibly comparing Sunshine Intermediate School's data to the rest of the country.

- *Boys claim they are the victim this year twice as much as they did in Year 1*
- *Girls increased reporting they are both the bully and victim since Year 1*
- *Girls numbers are lower than boys in all categories, but their reporting numbers have risen since Year 1 in the "always victim" and "sometimes bully, sometimes victim" category.*

Graph 6a. Percentage of girls involved in bullying



Graph 6c. Percentage of boys involved in bullying



How and where is bullying taking place?

In order to get a better understanding of how bullying occurs at Sunshine Intermediate School, it is important to analyze the student reports on the various ways that they have experienced peer aggression. Table 7 shows the total number of boys and girls in both grade levels who are bullied 2-3 times a month, once a week and several times a week, and what types of incidents they have been involved in. The different types of bullying that are indicated in the table are verbal bullying, social exclusion, physical attacks, spreading rumors and gossip, damage to

property, receiving threats, racial comments, sexual comments or aggression, cyber bullying, or other ways.

Table 7. Ways of being bullied, for students who reported being bullied "2-3 times a month" or more (Q4). Percentage (and number) of students who reported being bullied in various ways by other students (Q5 to Q13)

	Verbal	Exclusion	Physical	Rumors	Damage	Threat	Racial	Sexual	Cyber	Another way
Girls	16.5% (57)	8.7% (30)	5.2% (18)	11.3% (39)	3.5% (12)	3.5% (12)	7.8% (27)	8.7% (30)	6.1% (21)	6.1% (21)
Boys	15.2% (46)	6.0% (18)	7.3% (22)	9.7% (29)	9.3% (28)	6.0% (18)	8.6% (26)	7.6% (23)	5.1% (15)	7.1% (21)
Girls and Boys	15.9% (103)	7.4% (48)	6.2% (40)	10.5% (63)	6.2% (40)	4.6% (30)	8.2% (53)	8.2% (53)	5.7% (36)	6.5% (42)

The highest claimed type of bullying for Sunshine Intermediate School is verbal attacks, reported mostly by boys at 15.2% and girls at 16.5%. The total verbal attacks between boys and girls over both grade levels is 15.9% which is significantly higher than the rest of the categories. The next highest claimed category of bullying is spreading rumors and gossip which is at 10.5% for both boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade. Girls tend to be higher in this area at 11.3% than boys at 9.7%. After that is racial bullying at 8.2% for the total population of the school, and boys at 8.6% and girls at 7.8%. Sexual bullying follows closely behind at 8.2% for the total population with boys at 7.6% and girls at 8.7%. Social exclusion, physical attacks, threats, other ways, and damage to one's property are all present amongst Sunshine Intermediate's population, but they are less predominant than the aforementioned categories. Again, cyber bullying came in as a very uncommon like last year's data. The data shows clearly that verbal attacks are the most common method of peer aggression, followed by rumors and gossip.

- Verbal attacks are the most common form of bullying for both Year 1 and Year 2.
- Rumors and gossip are the next most common form of bullying for both years.
- Cyber bullying is surprisingly low for both school years.

Table 8. Ways of being bullied. for students who reported being bullied "2-3 times per month" or more (Q4). Percentage (and number) of girls and boys who reported being bullied in various ways by other students (Q5 to Q13). Girls mainly bullied by girls, girls mainly bullied by boys, and boys mainly bullied by boys according to Q15 (See appendix)

	Verbal	Exclusion	Physical	Rumors	Damage	Threat	Racial	Sexual	Cyber	Another way
Girls bullied by girls	3.8% (13)	1.7% (6)	0.9% (3)	4.6% (16)	0.3% (1)	0.6% (2)	0.9% (3)	1.2% (4)	1.5% (5)	1.2% (4)
Girls bullied by boys	2.3% (8)	1.4% (5)	1.2% (4)	0.9% (3)	0.6% (2)	0.9% (3)	1.7% (6)	1.5% (5)	0.3% (1)	1.2% (4)
Boys bullied by boys	7.6% (23)	2.0% (6)	3.7% (11)	3.3% (10)	3.3% (10)	2.0% (6)	2.3% (7)	3.3% (10)	1.7% (5)	3.7% (11)

Table 8 breaks down who is targeting whom among the school site’s population according to gender. In the highest category of reported incidents on campus, the verbal attacks shown to be 15.9% in table 7, boys are the ones attacking each other most at 7.6% as seen in table 8. By examining every category, it appears that boys are bullying each other most across the board and more frequently than girls bullying girls, or boys bullying girls. The only category where girls take the lead in bullying one another is the spreading of rumors and gossip category which is not a surprise, although boys are not far behind in that area either. It can also be concluded that the amount of bullying taking place on the part of one gender to another gender is not very prevalent, but rather girls attack girls and boys attack boys.

- Boys attack each other the most in most categories.
- Girls are only in the lead for rumors and gossip category.
- Results consistent in Year 1 and Year 2

Table 10: Where the bullying occurred, for students who reported being bullied "once or twice" or more (Q4). Percentage (and number) of students who reported being bullied in various places

	On playground (during recess or breaks)	In hallways / stairwells	In class (teacher in the room)	In class (teacher not in room)	In the bathroom	In gym class or locker room / shower	In the lunchroom	On the way to and from school	At the school bus stop	On the school bus	Somewhere else at school
Girls	25.2% (34)	21.5% (29)	35.6% (48)	8.9% (12)	14.1% (19)	14.8% (20)	8.9% (12)	12.6% (17)	3.0% (4)	2.2% (3)	28.9% (39)
Boys	25.0% (27)	21.3% (23)	19.4% (21)	10.2% (11)	12.0% (13)	19.4% (21)	9.3% (10)	12.0% (13)	1.9% (2)	0.9% (1)	26.9% (29)
Girls and Boys	25.1% (61)	21.4% (52)	28.4% (69)	9.5% (23)	13.2% (32)	16.9% (41)	9.1% (22)	12.3% (30)	2.5% (6)	1.6% (4)	28.0% (68)

Table 10 shows the possible places that bullying incidents take place for all students reporting at least one bullying incident up to those being frequently bullied. It includes various places on the school campus as well as a few places that are frequently traveled on the way to and from school. Some of these are the bus stop, school bus, or possible walking routes between the school and residences. The highest number of incidents are shown to take place in class with the teacher present at 28.4% for both boys and girls total in both grades. The next most common place incidents take place is somewhere else at school ranking at 28% for both genders and grades. The next most common locations are the playground, or in the case of Sunshine Intermediate School the lunch quad or common gathering areas during breaks like nutrition and lunch. The data was relatively even for both genders at 25.2% for girls and 25% for boys. The hallways were next, again very even between boys and girls, ranking at 21.4% overall. The gym was also reported to be a common location at 16.9% overall, the majority of the reports being boys rather than girls.

This data tells us that students are experiencing bullying most commonly in class with the teacher present which is alarming. However, the top locations where incidents take place

rank in a different order than last year, but are all more or less in the same top reported most common places where bullying situations take place. This is an indication that adult supervision is not adequate enough to monitor peer aggression because all of these locations are places that do or should have high levels of supervision.

- *Most incidents this year happened in the classroom with the teacher present.*
- *Year 1 data showed the most frequent place was the playground / quad.*
- *Data is consistent for both years that most incidents happen in highly supervised areas where the majority of students are highly concentrated in a small area.*

Table 12. Joining in bullying. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "yes" or "yes maybe" to Q36: Do you think you could join in bullying a student whom you do not like?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	25.7% (88)	25.7% (88)
Boys	27.1% (81)	27.1% (81)
Girls and Boys	26.3% (169)	26.3% (169)
Girls (National Comparison)	14.9%	14.9%
Boys (National Comparison)	22.0%	22.0%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	18.2%	18.2%

The results of table 12 show that overall 26.3% of boys and girls in both grade levels report “yes” or “maybe” to joining in on bullying behavior if they didn’t like the target. Boys were reported at 27.1% whereas 25.7% of girls responded “yes” or “maybe”. Sunshine Intermediate’s total percent of students willing to join in on peer aggression for disliked targets is higher at 26.3% than the national average which is 18.2%. The same is true for both boys and girls, as both percentages are much higher than those reported for the national average.

- Higher number of students willing to join in on bullying than the national average.
- The majority of these students are the boys rather than girls.
- Results consistent over both Year 1 and Year 2.

Table 21. Reactions from peer group (The Bullying Circle). Percentage (and number) of students who responded that "I just watch what goes on" to Q37: How do you usually react if you see or learn that a student your age is being bullied by another student(s)?

	7-8.h	Total
Girls	24.0% (59)	24.0% (59)
Boys	26.6% (51)	26.6% (51)
Girls and Boys	25.1% (110)	25.1% (110)
Girls (National Comparison)	14.9%	14.9%
Boys (National Comparison)	22.6%	22.6%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	18.2%	18.2%

Table 21 shows how many students are passive bystanders when they observe a person becoming a victim of peer aggression. Unfortunately, the data for Sunshine Intermediate School's population is significantly higher for all groups than the national average. 26.6% of total boys and girls in both 7th and 8th grade reported that they "just watch what goes on" if they observe someone being bullied. The national average for this category is 22.6%, which is lower than the reports for Sunshine Intermediate. Further, by looking closer at the data for each group, the national average for girls who are passive bystanders is 14.9% as opposed to 24% at the school site. That is a significant difference that is more pronounced than the boys whose reports in the rest of the country are 22.6%, but at Sunshine Intermediate school report 26.6%.

- *Passive bystanders have declined since Year 1, especially girls.*
- *Possible heightened awareness has encouraged students to intervene.*

Table 13. Empathy with victims. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "feel a bit sorry" or "feel sorry and want to help" to Q23: When you see a student your age being bullied at school, what do you feel or think?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	84.9% (293)	84.9% (293)
Boys	67.8% (204)	67.8% (204)
Girls and Boys	76.9% (497)	76.9% (497)
Girls (National Comparison)	91.2%	91.2%
Boys (National Comparison)	74.9%	74.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	83.7%	83.7%

Table 13 addresses the sentiments of students who may be passive bystanders that watch bully scenarios unfold or those who see an incident occurring and continue to move past it without taking action. The total number of boys and girls in the 7th and 3rd grade reporting that they "feel sorry" or "feel sorry and want to help" are 76.9% for Sunshine Intermediate. Girls tend to show more empathy at 84.9% feeling sorry for bully targets and boys less empathetic at 67.8%. This is more or less in line with the national averages of girls reporting empathy at 91.2% and boys at 74.9%. The overall national average is 83.7%, confirming that the rest of 7th and 3rd grade boys and girls across the country tend to be more compassionate than this school site's population.

Table 14. Feeling afraid of being bullied. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "sometimes," "fairly often," "often," or "very often" to Q38: How often are you afraid of being bullied by other students in your school?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	34.7% (119)	34.7% (119)
Boys	22.1% (66)	22.1% (66)
Girls and Boys	28.9% (185)	28.9% (185)
Girls (National Comparison)	31.3%	31.3%
Boys (National Comparison)	19.8%	19.8%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	26.0%	26.0%

Table 14 displays how many students claimed that they were sometimes, fairly often, often or very often afraid of becoming a victim. Again, it appears that the reports of fear are higher for the school site at 28.9% than the rest of the country which is at 26%. Girls are at 34.7% for Sunshine Intermediate School compared to 31.3% across the United States, and boys are at 22.1% at the site in contrast to only 19.8% for the rest of the nation.

Through the analysis of the data so far, it is conclusive that boys generally engage in more bullying behavior than girls and are less empathetic to those who are victims. Both nationwide and school specific data confirm that boys are more likely to join in on bullying behavior than girls are when they witness a student being targeted. Sunshine Intermediate school tends to be above the nationwide averages in the area of passive bystanders, joining in on aggression and fear of becoming targets. The area where they are not above the nationwide averages are in the category pertaining to the feelings of empathy and compassion towards those who are targeted. This may suggest a more aggressive school environment than originally thought.

- *Boys generally engage in more bullying incidents than girls and feel less empathy towards victims.*
- *Pattern is true for Year 1 and Year 2.*

Reporting Bullying

The Olweus program places a large amount of emphasis on students reporting bullying behavior to adults at school and at home so that proper action can be taken to protect students from future attacks. Table 11d. shows the number of students who have not told anyone at all about the bullying they have experienced.

Table 11d. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have not told anyone about the bullying

	7-Eth	Total
Girls	35.6% (16)	35.6% (16)
Boys	41.5% (17)	41.5% (17)
Girls and Boys	38.4% (33)	38.4% (33)

Overall, 38.4% of students at Sunshine Intermediate have not told anyone about negative peer interactions. The data shows that 41.5% of boys in 7th and 3th grade have not told anyone, and 35.6% of girls in both grade levels have also not told anyone about bullying situations they have been part of. This shows that girls are more likely to report bullying to another person than boys are.

- *Increase in students who did not tell anyone from Year 1 to Year 2, especially in girls who increased by more than 10%.*

Table 11c. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have told a brother, sister, or friend about the bullying (Q19d and Q19e combined)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	48.9% (22)	48.9% (22)
Boys	36.6% (15)	36.6% (15)
Girls and Boys	43.0% (37)	43.0% (37)

Table 11c. shows the number of boys and girls in both grade levels that have told a sibling or friend about the bullying they have experienced. Again, in the data it is clear that girls are more likely to tell someone at 48.9% than boys at 36.6%. Overall, 43% of students told a sibling or friend.

- *Girls declined in this category since Year 1, but they are still more likely than boys to tell a sibling or a friend about bullying.*

Table 11b. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have told a parent/guardian about the bullying (Q19c)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	26.7% (12)	26.7% (12)
Boys	26.8% (11)	26.8% (11)
Girls and Boys	26.7% (23)	26.7% (23)

Table 11b. shows the number of boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade who have told a parent about the bullying they have experienced. The data confirms the pattern that girls are more

likely at 26.7% than boys at 26.8% to report bullying to a parent or guardian. Overall, 26.7% of students have reported one or more incidents to their parents.

- *Girls are telling their parents less than last year by about 7.8%.*

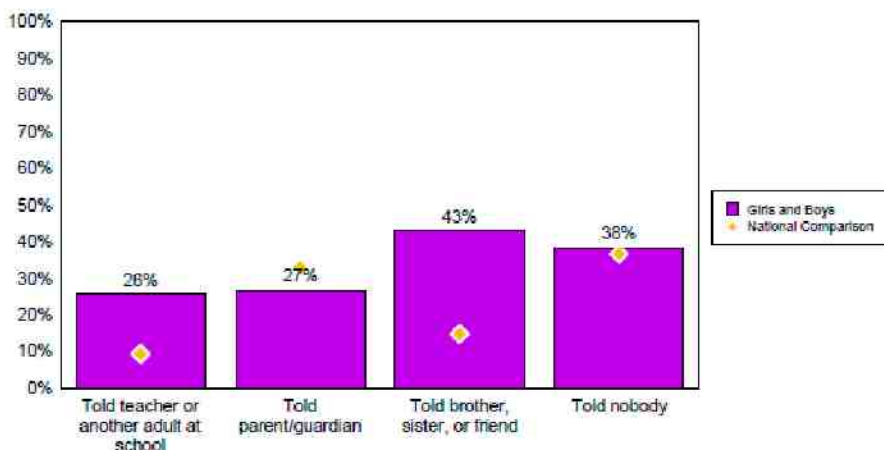
Table 11a. Percentage (and number) of bullied students (according to Table 3b) who have told a teacher or another adult at school about the bullying (Q19a and Q19b combined)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	22.2% (10)	22.2% (10)
Boys	29.3% (12)	29.3% (12)
Girls and Boys	25.6% (22)	25.6% (22)

Table 11a. shows the percent of boys and girls in the 7th and 8th grade who have reported bullying to a teacher or another adult on school campus. Interestingly, there is a deviance in the data where boys are significantly more likely to tell an adult at school at 29.3% than girls at 22.2%. Overall, 25.6% of students are likely to tell an adult at school.

- *Boys and girls are reporting more than they did in Year 1 to adults at school.*
- *Are boys reluctant to tell at adults at home and more comfortable telling adults at school?*

Graph 11c. Percentage of bullied girls and boys (according to Table 3b) who have told/not told anybody about the bullying



After analyzing all categories of student reporting, it can be concluded that students are most likely to tell a brother, sister or friend about their bullying experiences at 43%. The next most likely scenario is for students not to tell anyone at all at 38.4%. Students who are bullied are less likely to tell parents at 26.7% and least likely to tell an adult at school at 25.6%. It should be noted that they boys were significantly more likely to tell an adult at school rather than a parent.

Intervention: Peers and Adults

Table 16. Interventions by other students. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "often" or "almost always" to Q21: How often do other students try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	8.2% (28)	8.2% (28)
Boys	10.4% (31)	10.4% (31)
Girls and Boys	9.2% (59)	9.2% (59)
Girls (National Comparison)	14.5%	14.5%
Boys (National Comparison)	12.3%	12.3%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	13.5%	13.5%

Table 16 shows the percentage of 7th and 8th grade boys and girls who report that other students attempt to put a stop to bullying when they see a student being victimized at school. The data pertaining to Sunshine Intermediate School is significantly lower than the national averages, showing that students may not be compassionate or empathetic enough to stand up

for one another. Boys and girls were more or less even for the school site, averaging at 9.2% overall. The national average for boys and girls in both grades is 13.5%, with a higher ratio of boys in the United States intervening at 12.3% compared to girls across the country at 14.5%.

- *Girls had a decline in peer intervention.*
- *Boys had an increase in peer intervention.*
- *There should be an increase in this category since the motto of Olweus is to stand up for those who are being bullied.*

Table 17. Contact with school from adults at home. Percentage (and number) of students (out of those who have been bullied according to Table 3a) who responded that an adult at home has contacted the school "once" or more in the past couple months in order to stop their being bullied at school Q22)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	36.4% (16)	36.4% (16)
Boys	29.3% (12)	29.3% (12)
Girls and Boys	32.9% (28)	32.9% (28)
Girls (National Comparison)	31.5%	31.5%
Boys (National Comparison)	29.9%	29.9%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	30.7%	30.7%

Table 17 shows the number of adults at home that have made contact with the school once or more in the past few months in an effort to take action to protect students from bullying incidents. Sunshine Intermediate School shows a higher percentage at 32.9% overall than the national average at 30.7%. It should be noted that the parents of girls are higher at 36.4% at the school site, whereas the parents of boys across the United States report more frequently than

boys and the national average of girls' parents reporting at 31.5%. This shows that not only are girls at the school site reporting to parents at home more often than boys, but that the families in the community appear to be more concerned and involved than those in the rest of the country.

- *Parents of girls are reporting higher than boys for both years.*
- *Parents of the school site are more proactive about contacting the school than the national average.*

Table 19. Interventions from adult[s] at home with bullying students. Percentage (and number) of students (out of those who have bullied other students according to Table 5a) who responded that an adult at home has talked with them "once" or more in the past couple months about their bullying other students at school (Q35)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	28.0% (7)	28.0% (7)
Boys	31.6% (12)	31.6% (12)
Girls and Boys	30.2% (19)	30.2% (19)
Girls (National Comparison)	30.0%	30.0%
Boys (National Comparison)	24.2%	24.2%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	26.8%	26.8%

Table 19 shows the number of adults who have spoken to their children at home about bullying other students at school once or more in the past few months. 30.2% of boys and girls in the 7th and 8th grade have reported that there has been interventions from adults at home.

Surprisingly, boys at Sunshine Intermediate School take the lead in this category ranking at 31.6%. They are higher than the girls at 28%, and significantly higher than the national average

for boys which is 24.2%. This could mean that the parents of boys are taking a pro-active role in counseling their children on the importance of positive peer interactions.

- *Parents have improved in counseling their children regarding bullying since last year by about 10%.*
- *The parents of boys have improved most, with double the numbers of Year 1.*

Table 15. Interventions by teachers or other adults at school. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "often" or "almost always" to Q20: How often do the teachers or other adults at school try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	40.2% (138)	40.2% (138)
Boys	40.4% (118)	40.4% (118)
Girls and Boys	40.3% (256)	40.3% (256)
Girls (National Comparison)	38.8%	38.8%
Boys (National Comparison)	40.4%	40.4%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	39.6%	39.6%

Table 15 shows how often teachers put a stop to bullying situations that they see taking place at school. 7th and 8th grade boys and girls at Sunshine Intermediate School who reported that teachers “often” or “almost always” intervene in negative peer interactions ranked at 40.3%. This is more or less in line with the national average at 39.6%. The reports from boys and girls are very similar with 40.2% from girls and 40.4% from boys. This could be an indicator that teachers have a higher awareness since last year and are taking steps to intervene when they see negative peer interactions occurring.

- *Teacher interventions have increased by about 3%.*
- *Data for boys and girls are very close which may indicate teachers are paying closer attention.*

Table 18. Interventions from teacher[s] at school with bullying students. Percentage (and number) of students (out of those who have bullied other students according to Table 5a) who responded that the class (homeroom) teacher or any other teacher has talked with them "once" or more in the past couple months about their bullying other students at school (Q34)

	7-8th	Total
Girls	48.0% (12)	48.0% (12)
Boys	23.1% (9)	23.1% (9)
Girls and Boys	32.8% (21)	32.8% (21)
Girls (National Comparison)	17.2%	17.2%
Boys (National Comparison)	28.5%	28.5%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	23.3%	23.3%

Table 18 shows the number of students who reported that teachers spoke with them once or more in the past few months in regards to bullying situations observed or brought to the attention of the teacher. Overall, 32.8% of 7th and 8th grade boys and girls reported one or more conversations with their teachers at Sunshine Intermediate School in contrast to the national average which is 23.3%.

- *Sunshine Intermediate appears to be higher than the national average in teachers intervening once or more.*
- *May suggest teachers are more proactive, or may also suggest they aren't intervening enough.*

Table 22. Evaluation of class (homeroom) teacher's effort to counteract bullying in the classroom. Percentage (and number) of students who responded "little or nothing" or "fairly little" to Q39: Overall, how much do you think your class or homeroom teacher has done to cut down on bullying in your classroom in the past couple of months?

	7-8th	Total
Girls	44.3% (152)	44.3% (152)
Boys	48.0% (143)	48.0% (143)
Girls and Boys	46.0% (295)	46.0% (295)
Girls (National Comparison)	47.3%	47.3%
Boys (National Comparison)	51.1%	51.1%
Girls and Boys (National Comparison)	49.0%	49.0%

Table 22 shows the degree to which teachers are working to reduce bullying behavior in their classes. The number of students who reported that their teachers take "little to no action" or "fairly little action" at Sunshine Intermediate school is 46% overall in comparison to the national average which is 49%. Boys at the school site have a relatively higher rate of feeling that their teachers do not intervene as much as they should at 48% compared to the girls at 44.3%.

- *Teachers who did "little" or "nothing" to address bullying decreased since Year 1.*
- *Boys still want teachers to intervene more.*

Patterns and Problems (2011-2012)

The patterns present in the data are represented by participants from Sunshine Intermediate School in comparison to the national averages for the second year of the Olweus program implementation. This allows researchers to gauge how close or far off the school site is

from the nationwide norm and to identify issues that are particular to the population of the school. The majority of students participating in the survey reported that they had not been bullied at all, at 60.9% for 7th and 8th grade girls and 63.9% for 7th and 8th grade boys. Bullying incidents from once or twice in the past few months are at 26.1% for girls and 22.4% for boys, with much lower percentages for students reporting higher frequency bullying incidents. The good news is that more than half of the student population feels safe and respected by their peers at school. The number of students involved in higher frequency bullying scenarios has declined slightly since last year, but not as much as one would hope.

The majority of students claim not to be involved in showing aggression towards their peers. Those who claim to bully occasionally are mostly girls in both grades. Students who claim to bully others frequently are a low proportion of students overall in comparison to the national average. The students who report engaging in frequent peer aggression show a majority in boys over girls. This was consistent in both Year 1 data analysis and Year 2 with very little changes in data.

Students were asked about their roles in bullying incidents as either victims, bullies, sometimes both, or not involved at all. Not surprisingly, 60-70% of students at Sunshine Intermediate School in both grade levels and genders claimed to not be involved at all, with slightly higher numbers than Year 1 data. For Year 2 data, girls are reporting being victims twice as much as last year, and boys reporting of victimization has decreased. Also, boys are reporting that they are bullies more than they did for Year 1. Are girls feeling empowered through the Olweus program to identify themselves as victims of bullying due to heightened awareness?

Boys are also slightly higher than the national average in the bullying only category which shows evidence that this is particular to the school site as well as their age and gender.

Students in Year 1 and Year 2 reported that the most common form of bullying to take place was verbal attacks for both boys and girls, although boys showed higher levels than girls. Rumors and gossip was the next most common form of peer aggression, which was mostly done by girls about other girls. Racial and sexual attacks were also significant, although still much lower than generalized verbal attacks. The least common is cyber bullying which was a bit unexpected considering the amount of time that students spend on social media. Bullying is mostly targeted to members of the same sex rather than between the two sexes. These findings were consistent for both years.

In Year 1 data, the most prevalent places where bullying occurs are in the commonly used and highly supervised areas such as the “playground” and hallways. Sunshine Intermediate is a middle school so the “playground” translates to the lunch quad and Physical Education areas that are open for students to roam during breaks. Year 2 data indicates that the most common place is in the classroom with the teacher present. This is definitely an alarming find. Year 1 also indicated that bullying in class with the teacher present was very common, but it did not rank in the first place as it does in Year 2. Either way, it is not surprising data that bullying takes place in supervised environments because there is a large number of students gathering together in these areas which would make it reasonable for all kinds of peer interactions to occur, including negative ones. The question is, are adults on campus able to

really able to recognize bullying when it occurs? Are they overlooking vital warning signs, or do they need training to learn what these signs are?

Boys are more likely to join in on bullying behavior than girls are when they see that a student is being bullied. This is true for both the school site and nationwide which suggests that the behavior is likely gender and age specific. Boys engage in bullying behavior more overall than girls do and are less empathetic or compassionate to those they see being victimized. Girls are more likely to be bystanders than boys, simply watching scenarios unfold without taking any action. Girls are also more compassionate and empathetic to those they see being victimized, but won't necessarily report it or stop what they are witnessing out of fear of becoming a target themselves. Boys did show fear of becoming targets, but less than girls whose fear was higher. This pattern was evident in both Year 1 and Year 2 data.

Students were asked about how often and to whom they communicate about bullying incidents they experience. After analyzing the data for Year 2, there was a significant jump in the number of students for both boys and girls that did not tell anyone at all about the bullying. This is likely due to a fear of becoming a target or making the situation worse by telling an adult to intervene. The consistent finding in Year 1 was that girls are much more likely than boys to tell someone about bullying experiences. In Year 2, girls are consistently reporting less in most categories, suggesting that they feel less secure reporting bullying incidents. Boys showed an increase in reporting to adults at school, which may confirm that they are reluctant to speak with their families and feel more comfortable confiding in adults that are at the school site and not at home.

Sunshine Intermediate data shows that both boys and girls were most comfortable telling a brother, sister or friend about aggressive peer interactions for both Year 1 and Year 2. Again, the girls had lower numbers in this category this year versus the prior year. The next most common category was for students to tell nobody at all about experiences, possibly because they feel that nothing would result or benefit them, fear that others may find out and cause them to become targets, or they feel it is not important to them. The last two categories showed that students did tell their parents and possibly an adult at school, but less often than one would hope. Boys did show an improvement in their reporting, particularly to adults at school

Students are the least likely to intervene and report bullying scenarios, even less than the national average. This suggests that there is a low level of student support for one another on campus. Family concern and contact with the school at Sunshine Intermediate School is higher than the nationwide average which suggests close family involvement in the community. However, it is mostly the families of girls who are contacting the school to seek help for their children who are being bullied, or help in counseling their children in respecting and maintaining courteous interactions with others. The parents of boys in Year 2 made a significant jump in the data in comparison to Year 1 which shows that parents of boys are becoming more proactive in counseling their children about positive peer interactions. This could be attributed to parent education through the Olweus initiative encouraging the parents of boys to be more supportive of their child's emotional and mental health.

Teacher involvement and intervention shows an increase since Year 1 which could mean that teachers are paying closer attention to student interactions. However, since the data showed also that the majority of cases in Year 2 were reported to take place in the classroom with the teacher present, that teachers are still missing a lot of signs. Reports from students that teachers do “little” to “nothing” to stop bullying interactions has decreased from last year which is positive progress. However, many boys in particular say that teachers still don’t intervene as much as they should which means that boys may be a group that teachers need to pay more attention to.

Chapter IV

Discussion and Implications

Discussion

In general, most students reported that they have little to no interaction in bullying scenarios. The majority of students at Sunshine Intermediate and the rest of the country say that they have not been bullied and do not bully others. The numbers of students who engage in, or are victims of infrequent bullying instances are moderate in comparison to the whole school population. This trend is evident nationwide and is consistent for both school years that are analyzed in this study.

Bullying case reportings appear to have increased slightly at Sunshine Intermediate in Year 2 findings compared to Year 1 findings. The school's bullying case numbers were higher than the national average for boys in Year 1, indicating that more negative interactions are taking place at our school site in contrast to schools in the rest of the country. However, Year 2 shows that the reported bullying cases declined to a lower number than the national average which indicates a slight improvement in the behavior of boys, whereas the girls remained the same. Ideally, an improvement for both sexes would become more and more significant as the years go on and the program is strengthened at its various weak points. This decline of bullying interactions in boys may be a simple effect of bringing awareness of bullying to students through the Olweus program. The increase in bullying behavior in general from Year 1 to Year 2 may not necessarily be an actual indicator of increased behavior, but rather an increased awareness of aggression leading to higher numbers of students who recognize negative peer interactions and report it as bullying when asked through the survey method.

The low number of students who consistently confirmed frequent peer aggression tend to be more boys than girls. The moderate number of students who report infrequent bullying scenarios are girls more than boys. We can conclude from this data that girls exhibit aggression towards each other less frequently than boys do. When boys show aggression towards each other, they are more likely to do it persistently and frequently. At the school site level, we saw that there was a higher reporting number in both grade levels and for both genders for Year 2 in comparison to Year 1. Again, the reason for this may again be because an increased awareness of bullying has caused students to identify aggression as bullying behavior and recognize that it is taking place when they are asked about it.

The data has also shown that boys and girls do not only differ in the frequency with which they bully each other, but also the methods they use. Year 1 and Year 2 are consistent in that there is a very strong correlation in gender targeted aggression. Boys are extremely more likely to engage in bullying with another boy rather than target a girl. The same is true for girls targeting members of the same sex rather than the opposite. This is due to the fact that the sexes are aggressive towards members of their own group, the methods they use are particular to their gender. As one may predict, girls are shown to use verbal attacks, gossip and rumors to bully each other. Boys are less likely to use rumors and gossip as a method of aggression but they do use verbal attacks. They are also more likely than girls to engage in physical attacks, social exclusion, damage to property, racial or sexual remarks, make threats, and to use cyber aggression.

The places where bullying takes place have been shown to surprise us consistently in both school years. It is in places that are highly supervised by adults such as the playground and in the classroom with the teacher present. The next most common locations are also places with supervision including the hallways, somewhere else on campus and the locker room. The reason for this is most likely not that students prefer to be aggressive towards each other in the presence of adults, but rather that highly supervised places are also where the largest number of students are, therefore the peer interaction is much greater overall.

Both years, boys and girls at Sunshine Intermediate reported that they are significantly more likely to join in on bullying someone they didn't like in comparison to others their age across the country. The girls increased in joining in on bullying behavior from Year 1 to Year 2 which is an undesirable outcome after one year of Olweus program launch. It leads us to ask what the reason for this may be, considering that the number reported at the school site is noticeably larger than the national average. The same is true for students who claim that they are passive bystanders in bullying scenarios. They see everything that is happening but do nothing to stop it and passively observe the aggression. In year 2, the girls inactive participation did decline, however, it was still higher than the national average. Why are students at Sunshine Intermediate so much more likely to take the side of the bully or watch and do nothing rather than intervene to help the victim? According to the literature (Thornberg, 2010), there could be a number of reasons pertaining to social status. Students may side with the bully as an attempt to gain status in the social hierarchy and to elevate their current social position. They may also feel angry or threatened by the current victim and seize the opportunity to release their negative sentiments. What can be said for those who do nothing? They are likely

afraid to become a victim themselves and remain passive in order to protect their own social positioning. This theory can be confirmed by referencing the data for Year 1 and Year 2 which consistently shows that students at the school site are more fearful of being bullied than the rest of students their age across the nation. In addition, students at Sunshine Intermediate did report that they felt empathy towards victims whom they witnessed getting bullied, however it was less than the national average consistently both years. There was an improvement of feelings of empathy in the rest of the country during Year 2, but not at Sunshine Intermediate. There was even a slight decline in the number of students claiming they felt empathy towards their victimized peers. This is an indicator that students need to learn to be more compassionate towards one another because it does not come naturally to everyone. These are learned emotions in contrast to hardwired emotions according to Jensen (2009).

The fear of not becoming a victim by staying removed from interactions pertains also to reporting witnessed scenarios or experiences. Many students are fearful to report bullying instances because they fear that word may get out that they were the one who told an adult and then they would become fresh targets. There are other reasons students may not feel comfortable reporting peer aggression as well. In Year 1, boys were very unlikely to tell anyone at all about their bullying experiences, particularly members of their family. The majority of students do not tell anyone at all about their negative interactions with peers. Interestingly, girls were more likely to tell someone they trusted such as a sibling, friend, or adult in Year 1 versus Year 2. In fact, there was a very large gap statistically in the data between girls who had told someone in the first year rather than the second. Boys also showed a decline in telling someone from Year 1 to Year 2, although less significant, but still revealing nonetheless. This

leads us to inquire why this could possibly be since the Olweus program urges students so strongly to confide in someone they trust to help them process and buffer their emotions. As Ledwell and King (2013) state, students who buffer their emotions by discussing it with others, particularly trusted adults, develop emotional processing and stronger coping mechanisms for negative encounters. The reason could be attributed to the fact that students have a very high level of anxiety about others finding out that they told someone and becoming victims themselves. Another reason may be that students do not feel hopeful for a positive outcome by telling someone like an adult. They may think that the consequences would be minimal, and that it would cause problems for their own social positioning (Thornberg, 2010).

Parents at Sunshine Intermediate appeared to be very concerned about their children being bullied at school and did not hesitate to make contact with the school in order to put a stop to it. This was consistent for both school years, and was also higher than the national average of parent contact with a school site. The majority of these parents were the families of girls in Year 1, with the parents of boys making less contact. Interestingly, in Year 2 the parents of both genders still made higher reportings than those in the rest of the country, but this time it was the parents of boys calling in more frequently than the parents of girls. It should also be mentioned that the reporting from parents of girls at Sunshine Intermediate had significantly declined since Year 1. Could this be due to the fact that the increased awareness of parents due to the Olweus anti-bullying program has caused the parents of girls to begin counseling their daughters on how to deal with negative peer interactions? More research would need to be conducted to know for sure. Further, the parents of boys calling more frequently than during Year 1 suggests parental concern for their child's safety at school through heightened

awareness due to the Olweus program. The parents of Sunshine Intermediate do seem to be genuinely concerned about the welfare of their students' emotional and mental health while at school since their contact with the administration regarding the bullying of their child is at a significantly higher percentage than the national average. Further, the parents of boys seem to be getting more proactively involved in counseling their sons about peer interactions since a minimal amount of boys in Year 1 reported that someone at home had spoken to them about bullying others. In Year 2 the number of boys reporting that someone at home had spoken to them about bullying others had jumped to more than double what it was the year before. This is positive progress that can likely be attributed to a higher awareness, particularly regarding boys. The low reporting may have been due to cultural factors (Shapka and Law, 2013) in which boys of Hispanic culture may not be as emotionally nurtured as girls are, because they are expected to be more emotionally independent than girls.

Over half of students at Sunshine Intermediate claimed that teachers did little to nothing to address bullying while it was taking place in their class, which is alarming news. In Year 2, there was an improvement in the numbers, but now just under 50% of students claim this is true, which is still a large, undesirable number of students. Adults, including teachers and staff at Sunshine Intermediate, are reported by students as frequently intervening in peer aggression about the same amount as the rest of the country for both years. The number of adults who are counseling students in regards to maintaining more positive interactions with each other nearly doubled in the girls' category from Year 1 to Year 2. The boys' category remained the same over the two year period, indicating that more attention and intervention is being given to girls' behavior rather than boys. This is a conflicting statistic given that the

frequent bullying interactions are predominantly boys instead of girls, so why is so much more intervention taking place for girls and not the boys?

Implications for Future Implementation

The most successful bullying prevention program implementation models do have factors that would strengthen the program for Sunshine Intermediate when analyzing the site's data. However, it is almost impossible to provide a "cookie cutter" model that would be a recipe to success at every school site across the country since the demographics and site specifics are so vastly diverse. According to the literature, the most decisive factor in making a program a highly effective model was teacher and staff support and development as outlined by Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Voeten (2005) as well as Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004).

Implications for Teachers

In the case of Sunshine Intermediate School, there is a high reporting of bullying scenarios taking place in the classroom with the teacher present. This is indicative of a need to train teachers further in identifying the signs that bullying is taking place. Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Voeten (2005) and Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) discussed how the most effective anti-bully program implementation developed teacher awareness and supported them in delivering the program. First, teachers in high implementation schools were reported to have very frequent conversations with individual students about being bullies, victims, or witnessing incidents. Not only should frequent conversations be taking place with students on a one to one basis, but there should also be follow-up with students about the discussions that took place in order to re-enforce the advisement of appropriate social interactions and the buffering

of emotional damage. In low implementation schools, only half or less than half of teachers had frequent conversations and follow up with students. Teachers are also held accountable for these conversations by program mentors and site administrators, documenting what problems students were facing and the steps they took in guiding them through it. Currently, Sunshine Intermediate is not following such a model, and doing so would greatly strengthen teacher accountability and involvement.

Teachers in high implementation schools also had frequent trainings throughout the year with program mentors present. During these trainings teachers discussed their challenges in guiding students through peer interactions, and shared their experiences. Mentors were available to provide real advisement. Teachers would go back to their groups with new tools, encounter new situations and return back to the next training with more developed strengths as well as more concerns to address. They also were required to follow up on the progress of their challenges and the action steps they took to address them. Such a model is a highly effective professional learning community where teachers walk away with tools to continue delivering an effective program. There have been no such trainings for Sunshine Intermediate, and according to the site data, teachers seem to be overlooking a significant amount of red flags, resulting in bullying taking place right in front of them without recognizing it. A high quality professional learning community with program officials and site administrators would be extremely beneficial in establishing a successful program.

Lesson preparation and materials should not be an obstacle to an effective program delivery. At Sunshine Intermediate, teachers initially complained that they did not have enough

preparation time for lesson development and timelines, and they did not know where to go for materials to support their lessons. This lack of support influences teachers' seriousness and commitment to delivery of the program. Since teachers are such a highly deciding factor in the success of the program, it is essential that they be supported as much as possible. Site administrators or program coordinators should do everything possible to provide meaningful lessons and materials for the teachers to use with their groups. Also, there should be uniformity in the lessons and standards that all the teachers are delivering to students. Without uniformity among the staff, there is less accountability because it is harder for management to assess benchmarks of progress for each teacher's unique lesson and curriculum. Standardizing the lessons and providing materials creates a structure that is equal for all students and staff, and that is more manageable for administrators and program coordinators to assess.

Implications for Administrators and Program Coordinators

As mentioned above, it is imperative that administrators provide support for lesson delivery and curriculum, materials, and establish uniformity with the staff in order to maintain an effective program delivery and the ability to assess its progress with precision. It is also necessary for highly effective professional learning communities to be developed with program mentors present to guide teachers through their challenges. These meetings must be frequent and teachers must be held accountable for all their pursuits to maximize effectiveness. The follow up of teacher action steps, benchmark progress and assessment lies with the school site administrators. Management must set up the framework for professional learning communities, training sessions and follow ups often enough to maintain the momentum of the

program delivery, keep teachers supported and maintain their commitment to the vision.

Currently, these factors are not in place at Sunshine Intermediate School, and doing so would greatly enhance the quality of the bully prevention program's results.

Another responsibility of the administration is to create a school culture that is not tolerant of peer aggression and promotes mutual respect among all students. School assemblies, banners, rules and discipline, and letters home to families are ways to infiltrate the principles of bully prevention to the school community. Disciplinary guidelines pertaining to peer interactions that are centralized to the premises of the program would enforce the vision of the school's aspiring culture. These aspects are currently in place at Sunshine Intermediate School, however there is still room for improvement particularly on disciplinary consequences of negative peer interactions.

Thornberg (2010) mentions how one of the reasons students bully each other is due to emotional disturbance. At risk youth, many of whom are emotionally disturbed, substance abusers, or come from troubling circumstances outside of school, are also more likely to engage in peer aggression,. These students should be identified by school staff and counseled in their relationships with their peers. Many students are not aware of emotions that are learned such as compassion, empathy, or guilt according to Jensen (2009). They are only aware of emotions that are hardwired in human nature such as anger, sadness, happiness, and fear, which may result in the individual projecting these feelings onto others without consciousness of the aforementioned learned emotions. Monitoring and counseling these students is an intervention that administrators can enforce and carry out in order to benefit the peer environment of the

school campus. At Sunshine Intermediate School, there is an awareness of these students, but they are not counseled specifically regarding appropriate peer interactions, nor is much follow up conducted on the issues they deal with in the social hierarchy of the school site.

Implications for Parents

According to Ledwell and King (2013), students who have frequent conversations with their parents about peer interactions become more strongly equipped with coping mechanisms to help them through negative experiences. At Sunshine Intermediate, the data showed a pattern in the boys being less likely to speak to adults at home regarding bullying experiences. A speculated reason for this may be due to cultural factors which impact family dynamics and ultimately social behavior as indicated by Shapka and Law (2013). Traditionally, it is speculated that Hispanic culture embraces the idea of emotional nurturing for females and less so for males. This may be one reason that boys are not opening up to their parents. Regardless of what the reason is, they aren't speaking to their parents about it at home, which means that parents need to be more proactive in monitoring emotional or behavioral changes in their children. In order for this to happen, awareness needs to be heightened, which means that school staff and administrators should reach out to families, provide them with information, resources and support in order to support their children. Parent education nights and committee meetings would be a beneficial way to create a higher degree of involvement and recognition for families. Parents would be able to discuss their concerns, and teachers, administrators, counselors, and program coordinators could be made available to guide parents on how to counsel their children. Obviously, this applies to the families of girls as well as boys.

However, the trend in the data should be addressed so that the parents of boys start to look deeper for behavioral or emotional changes so they can intervene. Meetings like this will also allow parents of various students to collaborate together and get to know each other in order to best support their students when interacting at school. At Sunshine Intermediate, parent education is available, and families are advised on the interactions of their students, but more targeted action steps, frequent meetings throughout the school year, and establishing a collaborative community with families should be applied for best results.

Implications for Students

It is known that students bully each other for a vast number of reasons, and it is also known how much damage it can do to a person. School is not just about instilling academic achievement and college or career readiness for our children, but also teaching social skills that will prepare them for every day interactions. Some students are aware of the damage they cause, some are not. Other students who are victims may misperceive an interaction as a targeted attack, when it was not intended to be. The possibilities regarding the dynamics of peer interactions can be very complex and complicated. At Sunshine Intermediate School, the data showed that students were likely to join in on bullying, and least likely to help victims. There is a lower amount of empathy and compassion for one another at the school site in comparison to the rest of the country. Students need to develop their emotional intelligence in order to understand the interactions they have with others. Emotional intelligence is not natural to everyone, and many emotions such as guilt, compassion, and empathy need to be learned, as outlined by Jensen (2009). Clearly, the adults at school and at home play a huge role

in instilling this in students. It is something that is just as necessary as teaching academic content.

The data for Sunshine Intermediate showed a significant and unfortunate trend, which is that the majority of students are unlikely to talk to anyone about their bad experiences at school. Students do not have trust in adults to protect them sufficiently so that they do not become targets of bullying if the word gets out that the student confided in an adult or peer and wanted help. More research needs to be conducted as to what methods have been used effectively to protect students to the degree that they are comfortable speaking to adults at school, at home or even to their friends or siblings. The current literature is fairly limited in addressing this issue which makes it difficult to find solutions that have worked for other sites. This is currently a big challenge for Sunshine Intermediate School, even though measures have been taken to protect students to the highest degree possible.

In conclusion, teachers are the most decisive factor in an effective bully prevention program. Administrators and program coordinators should do everything possible to provide materials, lessons, progress monitoring, assessments, high quality professional learning communities, and any other support necessary to teachers in order to deliver an effective program and make significant changes in the school culture. Administrators should provide the framework for teacher growth, parent awareness and action plans, and student support in order to transform the entire school culture into high awareness of bullying and its warning signs. Parents need to be educated to look for these signs, and to counsel their children on appropriate peer interactions. They also need to feel comfortable to come to school for

guidance on how to address challenges they are facing with their children's behavioral or emotional state. Students need to learn the emotions that may not come naturally to them, causing them to hurt others (Jensen, 2009). They also need a trusting environment where they do not feel they are at risk of becoming targets of aggression if they ask for help. Bullying is preventable, but it requires the commitment of all stakeholders who are on a journey to an effective program implementation that brings beneficial results for everyone involved in the school community.

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