

Prevention of School Bullying Task Force

Student Impact: Data Sources

Data sources to assess levels of bullying

Schools wishing to assess the climate of the school and the amount of bullying and other harmful behaviors can use a variety data sources, both quantitative and qualitative. Using both kinds of data helps to provide a more complete picture, as bullying can occur out of sight of adults and therefore some harmful behaviors will not be reported to the office. Students may report bullying to family members or to staff other than teachers. The severity of the harm can be most accurately described by the student who is the target and not by observation by others. Finally, bystanders are also affected by bullying behaviors, and the extent of that is not caught in counting the number of referrals to the principal.

Quantitative data in schools include office discipline referrals and the written or verbal reports of harassment or bullying. In addition, reviewing student attendance patterns, excused or unexcused, may offer clues to difficulties that students may be experiencing.

Qualitative data include annual (or more frequent) school-wide climate or bullying surveys to staff, students, and family. For instance, The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (DHHS) offers a 177 page compendium of assessment tools: *Measuring Bullying, Victimization Perpetration and Bystanders Experiences*. In addition, focus groups with students can provide further insight into specific survey responses. Finally, the whole child review by school-based teams such as the chemical health pre-assessment team or a child study team can also identify behaviors of concern.

Minnesota state-wide data

Minnesota has two sources of data regarding bullying and cyber bullying. One is the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) which for two iterations has included two questions regarding relational bullying. In addition there are questions about physical harm in school and different forms of harassment. For information on the MSS Bullying Analysis go to <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SafeSch/BullyiCyberBullyPrev/index.html> .

The Dangerous Weapons and Disciplinary Incident Report to the Legislature provide numbers and rates for incidents of suspension for among other things, bullying and harassment. In 2010-11 school year, the number of suspensions for bullying was 1,052 (1%) and for cyberbullying, 99 (0%), out of 62,269 total incidents.