

# Preventing Bullying in Rhode Island Schools



#PreventBullyRI    #EdChatRI

December 6, 2016

# Special thanks to



for its support of this *Issue Brief*

# Defining Bullying

Behavior that is aggressive, is carried out repeatedly and over time, and occurs in an interpersonal relationship where a power imbalance exists.

## The Spectrum of Bullying



# Statewide Bullying Policy

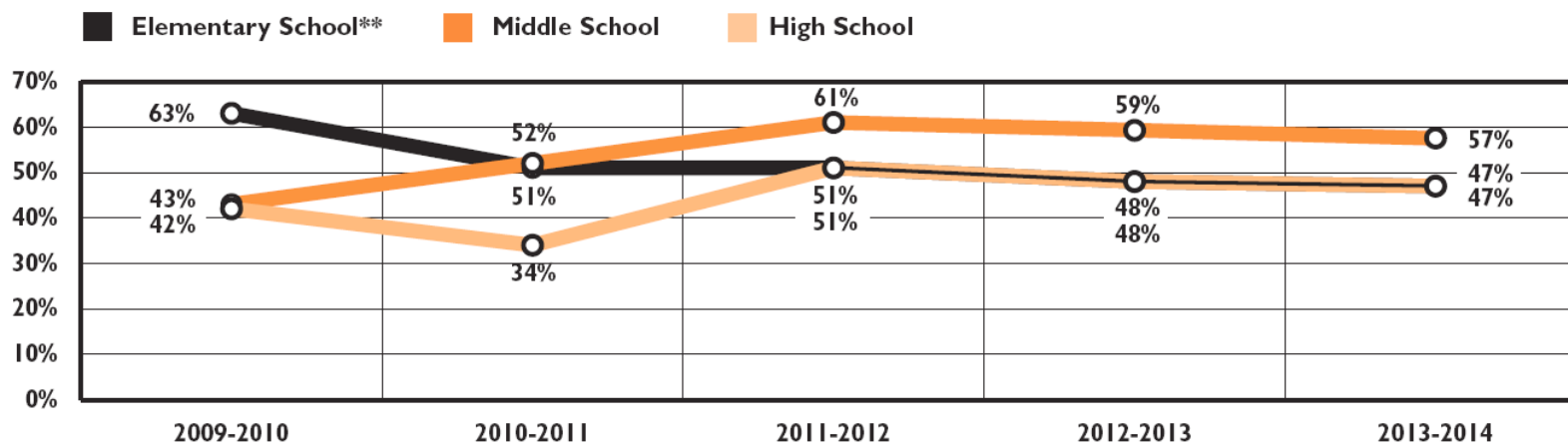
- In 2011, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed the *Safe Schools Act*.
- The Rhode Island Department of Education implemented the *Statewide Bullying Policy* on June 30, 2012.
- Reports of bullying and responses to bullying incidents are tracked at the school level.

# Who Experiences Bullying?

- Incidents of bullying can be experienced by children of any age group.
- Children can be involved in bullying incidents as a bully, victim, bystander, bully-victim or poly-victim.
- Consequences of involvement in bullying vary depending on how a child is involved.

# Students Who Report Being Bullied

Students Who Report Being Bullied\*, Rhode Island, by Grade Level, 2009-2014

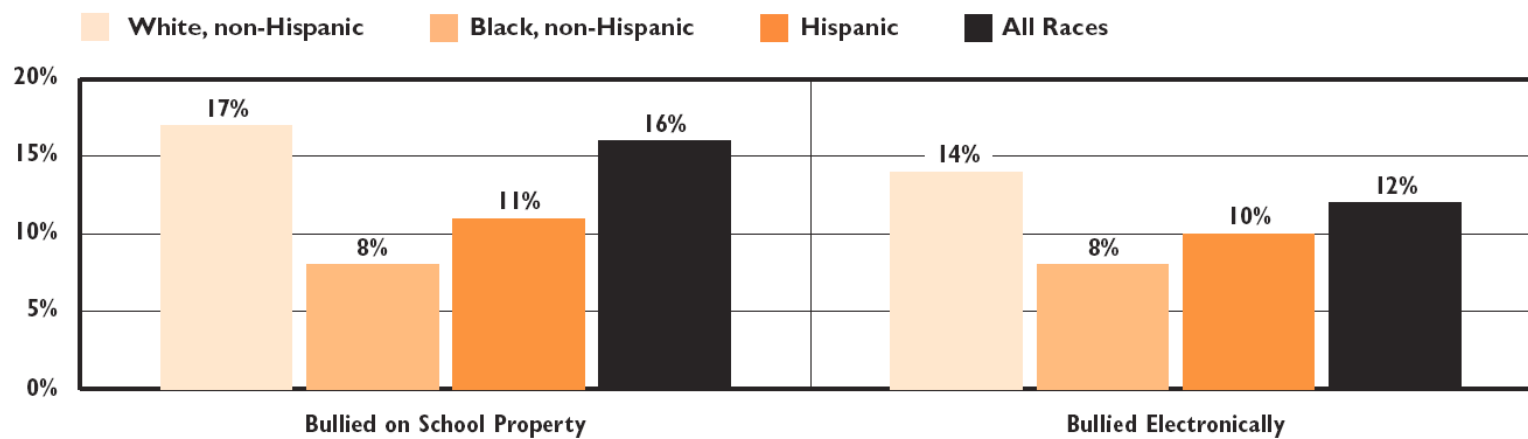


Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *SurveyWorks!*, 2009-2014.

*Note: \*In the SurveyWorks! survey, bullied is defined as experiencing one or more of the following in the past 12 months: purposeful exclusion from activities, being teased at school, being pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on, threatened with harm, having property destroyed on purpose, experiencing coercion, having rumors being spread about self, or experiencing cyberbullying. \*\*Elementary school is defined as students in the 4th or 5th grade.*

# Race and Ethnicity

**Rhode Island High School Students, Currently Bullied\*, by Race/Ethnicity, 2015**

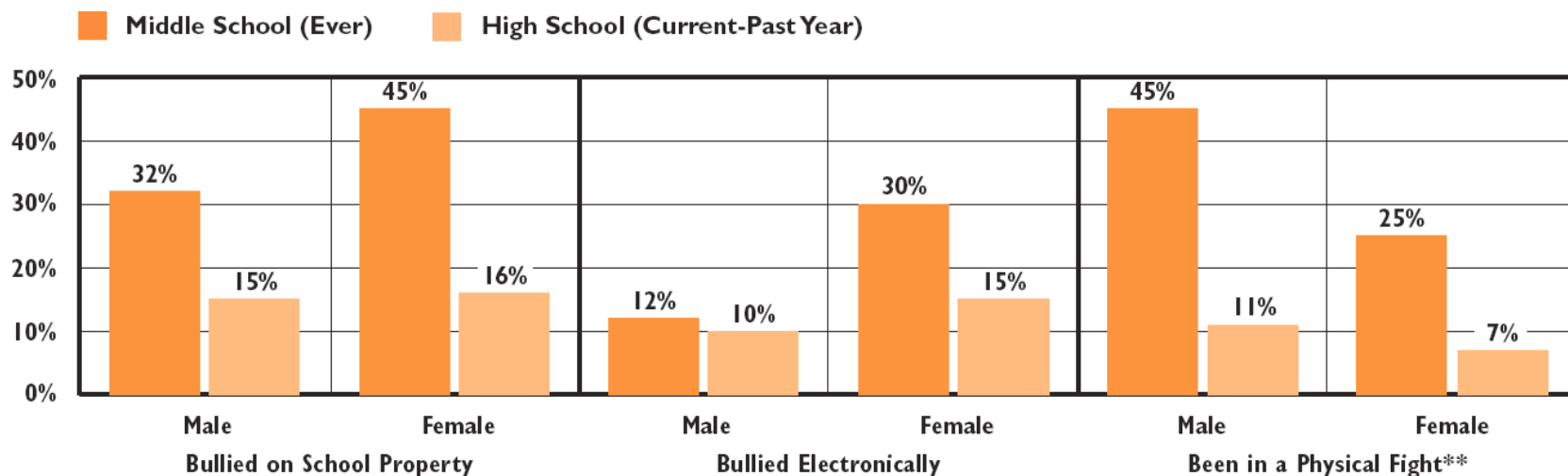


Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, 2015.

Note: \*In the YRBS, currently bullied is defined as within the past year.

# Gender

## Bully\* Status by Gender and Grade Level, Rhode Island, 2015



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, 2015.

Note: \*In the YRBS, middle school students self-reported ever being bullied and high school students self-reported current bullying. \*\*In the YRBS, physical fight is defined as occurring anywhere in middle school, but only on school property for high school respondents.



# LGBT

- In the U.S., LGBT youth report higher rates of bullying incidents than peers.
- Nationally, half (51%) of LGBT youth report having been verbally harassed in school, compared to 25% of their non-LGBT peers.
- In 2015, 20% of Rhode Island high school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) reported being bullied on school property.

# Youth with Disabilities

- Students with disabilities are overrepresented in the bullying dynamic.
- Nationally, students with disabilities are up to 1.5 times more likely to be bullied than youth without disabilities.
- In 2015 in Rhode Island, 25% of high school students who had been bullied on school property reported having a long term emotional problem or learning disability.

# Youth who are overweight

- Children who are overweight or obese are at risk for experiencing weight-based bullying, victimization and bias.
- In Rhode Island in 2013, 12% of middle school and 12% of high school students reported being bullied because of their weight.

# Reporting

## Bullied\* Rhode Island Students Who Reported Incident and Indicated It Stopped by District and Grade, 2013-2014

SCHOOL DISTRICT	REPORTED BULLYING**			BULLYING STOPPED AFTER REPORTING IT**		
	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	72%	37%	24%	39%	45%	33%
<i>Remainder of State</i>	73%	36%	19%	40%	47%	27%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	73%	36%	20%	40%	46%	28%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *SurveyWorks!*, 2013-2014. NA indicates that community has no school at that level.

- ◆ In Rhode Island in 2015, 8% (1,212) of in-school suspensions and 30% (3,906) of out-of-school suspensions were associated with student bullying infractions, including acts of assault, harassment, hazing, sexual misconducts, threats, and intimidation.<sup>85</sup>

# School Climate

## School Climate Factors, Rhode Island, 2013-2014

	FEEL SAFE INSIDE SCHOOL/HALLWAYS	STUDENTS RESPECT EACH OTHER	STUDENTS RESPECT TEACHERS	TEACHERS TREAT STUDENTS WITH RESPECT
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b>				
Four Core Cities	81%	NA	63%	NA
Remainder of State	91%	NA	84%	NA
Rhode Island	89%	NA	78%	NA
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL</b>				
Four Core Cities	79%	47%	44%	72%
Remainder of State	90%	61%	66%	84%
Rhode Island	87%	58%	60%	81%
<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>				
Four Core Cities	78%	50%	46%	70%
Remainder of State	85%	53%	53%	75%
Rhode Island	84%	52%	52%	74%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *SurveyWorks!*, 2013-2014.

*Four Core Cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. NA indicates that no question was asked.*

# Bullying Prevention Programming and Best Practices

- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- No Bully
- Restorative Justice

# Recommendations

- **Policies and Data Collection:**
  - Continue to implement and publicly track evidence-based anti-bullying laws and policies at all levels.
  - Choose school climate as an accountability measure under the federal *2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*.

# Recommendations

- **Best Practices for Schools:**
  - School districts should implement evidence-based bullying prevention training for all staff who regularly work with students and develop benchmarks to evaluate effectiveness.
  - School social workers should assess students for PTSD, depression, and suicidal ideation/behaviors when students are involved in bullying situations.
  - Adopt trauma-informed positive school climate practices rooted in national research.



# Recommendations

- **Targeted Interventions:**
  - Schools and communities should explore programmatic opportunities for more specific vulnerable populations.
  - Schools and communities should implement evidence-based programs to address stigma- and bias-based bullying behavior.

# Recommendations

- **School and Community Engagement:**
  - Ensure that all adults who interact with students are involved in bullying prevention and intervention efforts.
  - Explore opportunities for peer-led bullying prevention programming at the school and community levels.

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# Pawtucket School District *No Bully* Examples

**Pawtucket School Department**  
Administration Building  
286 Main Street, PO Box 388  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02862-0388  
Phone: (401) 729-6300 Fax: (401) 729-6334 TDD (401) 729-6338

**NO BULLY** Workshop for parents & guardians



**JOIN US AT ONE OF THE 3 LOCATIONS:**  
**Monday, November 2, 2015 from 6:30PM to 8:30 PM**  
**WHERE: Goff Jr. High Auditorium**  
**Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 6:30PM to 8:30 PM**  
**WHERE: Slater Jr. High Auditorium**  
**Wednesday, November 4, 2015 from 6:30PM to 8:30 PM**  
**WHERE: Tolman High School Auditorium**

**How to bully-proof your kid**  
"Free acceptance in play, partnership and teams is what matters most to any child . . . . Rejection hurts more than anything else that happens at school." Vivian Paley, the only teacher to have received a MacArthur Genius Award

Student bullying and conflict are persistent challenges in every school, causing students untold suffering, marginalizing diverse youth and impacting the ability our children to succeed in their careers and future relationships.

**At this workshop you will:**

- Get up to speed on the new face of bullying in our schools.
- Learn how to bully-proof your child to succeed in their friendships so that they are neither a bully or a target.
- Develop skills to coach your child through the inevitable conflicts and bullying of childhood and adolescence.

No Bully ([www.nobully.org](http://www.nobully.org)) is a San Francisco based non-profit organization that partners with schools nationwide to implement a non-punitive and highly effective solution to end bullying and harassment. Research studies show that teachers and staff trained in the No Bully System® succeed in stopping student bullying in over 90% of cases. No Bully is helping schools transform into learning communities that are truly inclusive.

Thanks to the generous support of Hasbro, Inc. ([www.Hasbro.com/learning](http://www.Hasbro.com/learning)), the No Bully solution will be implemented throughout the 2015-2016 school year in all 17 schools across the Pawtucket School Department. Pawtucket is the first city in New England to adopt the No Bully program district wide.



*No Bully* workshop



Cunningham ES *No Bully* Peace Summit

# ***Bullying Prevention in Washington County***



**Thomas DiPaola, PhD**

*Washington County Coalition for Children;  
Johnson & Wales University, Educational Leadership Program*

**Patrick Cozzolino, LICSW**

*Westerly Middle School*

# 1. Raise Community Awareness

- ➔ Conduct trainings for parents, community groups, and area after-school/camp staff
- ➔ Use literature to promote/reinforce positive responses of peers and adults





Distributed toolkits to 9 middle schools  
& 11 public libraries with recommended  
books and reading lists funded by the  
Women's Club of South County





# The Narragansett Times OPINION

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## WRITE TO US!

YOU MUST INCLUDE YOUR  
NAME AND TELEPHONE NUM-  
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E-MAIL: MGREEN@  
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187 MAIN ST.,  
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E-MAIL SUBJECT  
LINE SHOULD REFER TO  
LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

## Pink Day a big success at CCMS

*To the Editor,*

I am currently a 7th grader at Curtis Corner Middle School and I am pleased and shocked at the effect Pink Day has had on the school's community. Pink Day has brought a clarity to bullying that was not there before, allowing kids to fully understand how much words hurt.

Bullying can effect everyone, even the most seemingly put together people; it hurts. Walking through the school doors... there was a different atmosphere in the air. It tingled with new beginnings and fresh starts. Throughout the course of the day, we took part in multiple activities that made people realize that they are not the only victim. My favorite activity was

when we wrote all the names we had ever been called on a sticky note, which was hard enough. We then had to stick it on our shirts, letting the rest of the class see what we don't even want to face ourselves. There was a vulnerability that came with the realization that we are not alone in this. Bullying is, unfortunately, a part of adolescence and it shouldn't be. Our school stood by Pink Day's saying "NO!" we won't just let bullying happen.

Pink Day was started in 2007 when two Canadian high school seniors stood up for a boy who was being bullied for wearing a pink shirt. The next day, they got the entire school to wear pink, letting everyone know that bullying is unacceptable. Our years later, Pink Day is a national event.

Many think that bullying is a part of life and that it will pass; but they're wrong. Kids shouldn't be afraid of coming to school or not being themselves. Kids have to take their problems to a trusted adult or someone that can help. Parents need to be more aware of what's going on in their child's life, talk to them about their day, and ask how they are doing. This can make a world of difference for the victim. I look forward to the day when kids can go about their day without having to worry or be scared that they're going to be harassed. Just remember that words can affect everyone, and that for everyone, words hurt.

*Abby Dodd  
South Kingstown*

- ➡ Encourage publication of student editorials
- ➡ Organize community awareness events like **Chalk It Up Against Bullying**











## 2. Start Young

- ➔ Start early promoting social emotional skills
  1. Created ***Planting the Seeds of Kindness in Preschoolers: Lessons & Activities Using Picture Books***
  2. Conducted a 2-part training for area early care & education providers



### 3. Encourage Evidence-Based Bullying Prevention Programming in Schools



➔ Partner with schools to implement the  
**Olweus Bullying Prevention Program**  
(OBPP)



# 4 Key OBPP Components

- ➡ **Individual** – On the Spot Interventions
- ➡ **Classroom** – Regular classroom meetings
- ➡ **School** – School Rules/Protocols
- ➡ **Community** – Moving efforts beyond school walls

## **Our School's Anti-Bullying Rules**

**Rule 1: We Will Not Bully Others.**

**Rule 2: We Will Try to Help Students Who Are Bullied.**

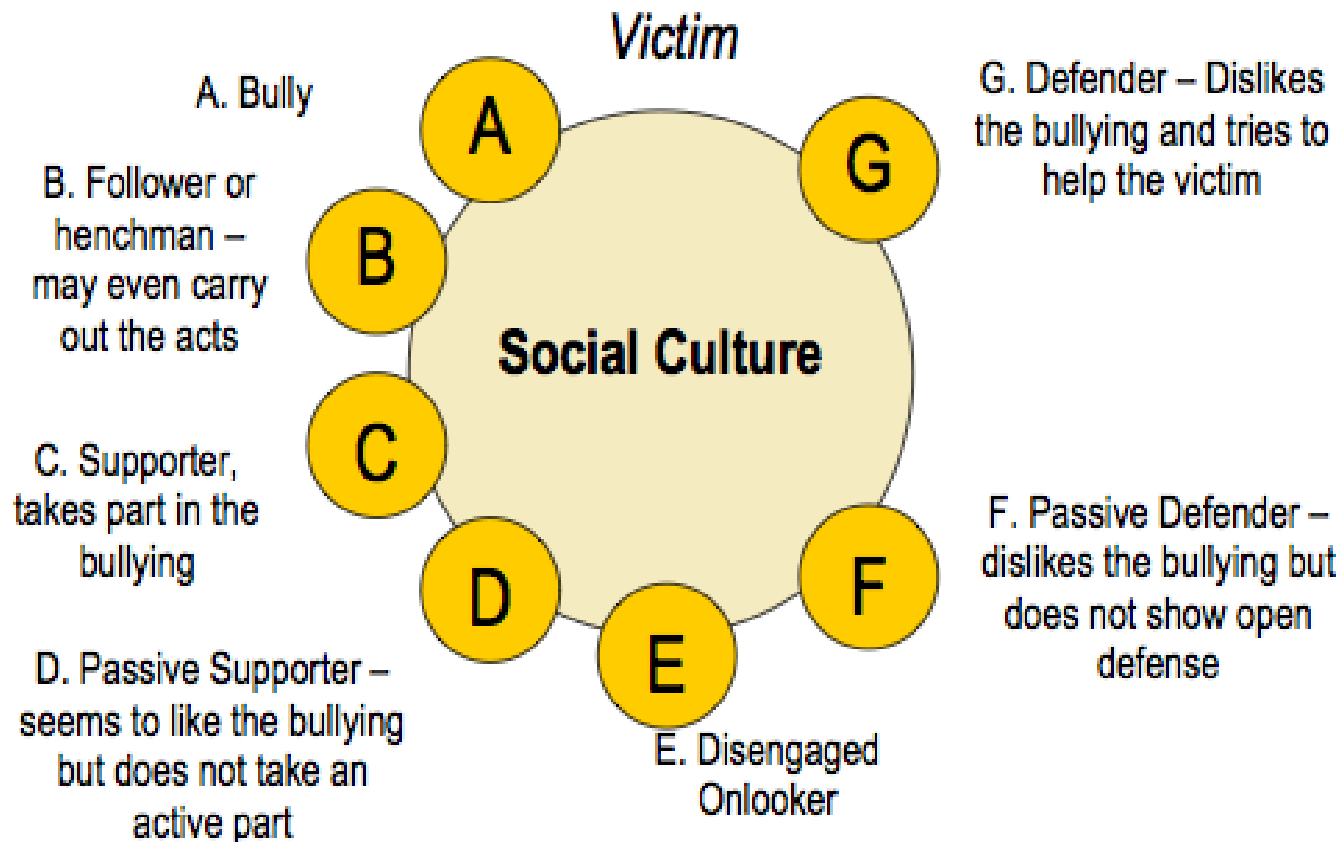
**Rule 3: We Will Try to Include Students Who Are Left Out.**

**Rule 4: If We Know That Somebody Is Being Bullied,  
We Will Tell an Adult at School and an  
Adult at Home.**



# Empowering Peers

## The Cycle of Bullying



# Creative Ways to Engage Youth

- ➔ Themes: Hero, Random Acts of Kindness, etc.
- ➔ Storytelling Assembly and Writing Workshop
- ➔ Contests: Chant, Poster, Editorial, Video
- ➔ One Book/One School – “Wonder”
- ➔ Pink Shirt Day Celebrations
- ➔ Mix It Up at Lunch





# ➡ Wall of Intolerance

I Was called a  
GIRL  
girl When I'm not

I got bullied  
because the color  
of my skin.

I witnessed a  
kid being EXCLUDED  
because of their  
size and style.

ne tease another

I saw a kid get bullied for being  
fat and slow in gym class.

I saw someone being  
Bullied because they wore glasses.

I ha  
bullied  
on  
bus

Seen Someone being  
Cyber bullied.

I was bullied  
because of my  
size

I Heard somone  
get bullied.

Been Called Swears, and  
Saw someone getting making fun  
of because of their size.

I've X Seen X Somone X  
Call Somone names X  
because they didn't X  
agree with them! X

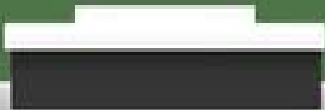
Saw ar  
attacked  
he

Being near kids when  
they are

# Final Thought

*“It is vital that when educating our children’s brains that we do not neglect to educate their hearts.”*

~Dalai Lama





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