

**WHAT CONDITIONS DO MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS BELIEVE MUST  
BE IN PLACE TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN A SUCCESSFUL BULLYING  
PREVENTION PROGRAM IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL?**

---

A Dissertation  
Submitted to  
the Temple University Graduate Board

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

---

by  
Monica Ouly-Uhl  
August 2020

Thesis Approvals:

Dr. Christopher W. McGinley, Advisor, Temple University Department of Policy,  
Organizational and Leadership Studies

Dr. Sarah A. Cordes, Temple University Department of Policy, Organizational and Leadership  
Studies

Dr. Joseph Haviland, Temple University Department of teaching and learning

Dr. Lori Shorr, External Member, Temple University Department of Policy, Organizational and  
Leadership Studies

## ABSTRACT

Bullying is recognized as a serious problem affecting children and adolescents in the U.S. and around the world. Recent school shootings and media attention surrounding them has thrust bullying into the forefront of our attention and has created a sense of resolve around the issue. As a result of the increased media attention around bullying, there has been a call for action and demands for schools to do what they can to decrease bullying. In an effort to deter students from participating in bullying behaviors many schools have been implementing bullying prevention programs to educate students about the negative impacts of bullying and to promote positive behaviors. As with any change, it is not uncommon for the implementation of a bullying prevention program to be met with some resistance by staff, and unfortunately, like many educational innovations they are short-lived. It appears that in order for the implementation of a bullying prevention program to see success and be sustainable within a school, there must be certain conditions in place at the time of the implementation. This study is designed to investigate why the same bullying prevention programs that are perceived to be successful and sustainable in some schools, are not successful nor sustainable in other schools. The goal is to determine what conditions, if any, are present in the schools with perceived successful and sustainable bullying prevention programs, that were not present in schools where the bullying prevention programs were unsuccessful and unsustainable.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	8
Bullying and Cyberbullying .....	8
Impacts of Bullying .....	13
Bullying in Middle School.....	17
Pennsylvania School Law and Policy.....	20
Whole-School Bullying Prevention Programs.....	23
Organizational Change and the Role of the School Principal.....	27
Effectiveness of Bullying Prevention Programs.....	32
School Conditions That Support Bullying Prevention Programs.....	40
School Conditions That Do Not Support Bullying Prevention Programs.....	43
3. METHODOLOGY .....	46
Introduction.....	46
Purpose.....	47
Participants.....	48

Research Design.....	49
Procedures.....	52
Analyzing Data.....	54
Role of the Researcher.....	57
Ethical Considerations.....	59
Limitations.....	60
4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.....	63
Results.....	66
5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....	81
Summary.....	81
Conclusion.....	85
Need For Future Research.....	88
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	90
APPENDICES	
A. BULLYING PREVENTION SURVEY.....	102
B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	106

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Frequency and percentage of responses to bullying prevention program information/duration.....	67
2. Bullying prevention programs represented .....	67
3. Descriptive and Reliability Statistics for Overall Bully Prevention Survey.....	71
4. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (and significance value) between length of bullying prevention program and "condition" items .....	73
5. Results from series of independent-samples t-tests.....	75

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Type of bullying prevention program implemented in schools.....	68
2. Number of years each type of bullying prevention program was in place .....	69
3. Number of years bullying prevention programs were in place in each type of school .....	69
4. Average overall scores on the bullying prevention scale by the length of bullying program prevention duration .....	74
5. Difference between suburban and rural schools on how involved building administration was/is .....	76

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study is designed to assess why bullying prevention programs that have been sustainable and perceived to be successful in some schools, have not been sustainable nor perceived to be successful in other schools. Middle school principals within the state of Pennsylvania, that have implemented a bullying prevention program in an effort to educate and discourage students from participating in bullying behaviors, were surveyed and interviewed to determine whether or not they believe that the presence of specific conditions, contribute to the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program. After gathering information from middle school principals that have experienced what they perceive to be either a successful or unsuccessful bullying prevention program, the information was analyzed in order to address the core question: **What conditions do middle school administrators believe must be in place to create and sustain a successful bullying prevention program in a middle school?**

Bullying, a form of aggression in which one or more children repeatedly and intentionally intimidate, harass, or physically harm a victim that is perceived by their peers as physically or psychologically weaker than the aggressor(s) and unable to retaliate (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007), is commonly recognized as a serious public health problem affecting children and adolescents in the U.S. and around the world (Masiello & Schroeder, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016). Although bullying can take many forms, the key elements of this behavior are aggression, repetition, and the context of a relationship with an imbalance of power. Traditionally, bullying may include overt physical acts (hitting, shoving, and destroying property), verbal abuse (taunting, name calling, and mocking), or more subtle or indirect actions such as social exclusion and spreading rumors (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Bullying is not a new

issue for middle schools to deal with. In fact, bullying is an age-old problem that has been occurring during and after school hours, within school buildings, on school busses, and in neighborhoods for a long time (American Psychological Association, 2004). What is new, is cyberbullying, the electronic form of bullying. Just like anything else, the advancement of technology has allowed bullying to evolve. The shift from face-to-face communication to online communication has created a unique and potentially harmful dynamic for social relationships among adolescents. Advancements in technology have provided adolescents the ability to use the internet, online gaming through Xbox and Play Station systems, cell phones, and social networking sites, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TicToc, to harass, impersonate, embarrass, exclude, and bully others (Magid, 2009). There was a time when going home from school was a way to escape from bullies and to feel safe. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. Technology combined with new and improved social media sites has allowed bullies to follow students everywhere they go, even within the confines of their own homes.

In the past, one might expect that the biggest meanest kid in the school might be a bully. Thanks to social media and cyberbullying, size, age, gender, or social standing does not matter; anyone can be a bully. The ability to harass, embarrass, and exclude others without face-to-face communication, has contributed to an increase in the amount of bullying that occurs among middle school students (KidsHealth.org, 2014). Adolescents who would not be comfortable making rude comments or excluding others face-to-face, may be more inclined to do so when they can simply post a video or type a comment on a social media app, such as Instagram or Snapchat. Even though bullying in schools has been a problem for decades, cyberbullying has expanded the issue greatly. Unfortunately, more and more middle school students are reporting bullying that initiates from being teased, called names, or being shunned through social media



apps or while playing online video games (StopBullying.Gov, 2018). Even though much of the bullying that occurs among today's adolescents happens outside of school hours and on personal electronic devices, the consequences of cyberbullying often have a negative effect on the school environment and continues to be a problem for many middle schools.

Recent school shootings and the media attention surrounding them has thrust bullying and cyberbullying into the forefront of our attention and has created a sense of resolve around the issue. As a result of the increased media attention around bullying, there has been a call for action and demands for schools to do what they can to decrease bullying. In an effort to reduce bullying in schools, most states require schools to implement bullying prevention policies and procedures to investigate and respond to bullying when it occurs (stopbullying.gov). It has become evident, that it is often necessary for school administrators to deal with reports of bullying, whether it occurs within the confines of the school or not, in order to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of their students and to maintain an environment conducive to learning. In an effort to deter students from participating in bullying behaviors, many schools have been educating students about the negative impacts of bullying and promoting positive behaviors and kindness toward others, often with the help of bullying prevention programs.

In an effort to reduce bullying nationwide, there have been a variety of bullying prevention programs developed that are intended to be used in schools. Some programs encourage students to empathize with victims, intervene as bystanders, or to mediate peer conflicts (Brackett, 2018). These bullying prevention programs can be a huge undertaking for school personnel, including school administration, who are typically responsible for facilitating the implementation of the program. Not only can they be costly to the school district but bullying prevention programs often require a significant amount of time and buy-in from all staff within

the building. As with any change, it is not uncommon for the implementation of a bullying prevention program to be met with some resistance by staff, and unfortunately, like many educational innovations they are short-lived (Marzano, et al., 2005). Most schools that have seen success with bullying prevention programs, have adopted programs that use a whole-school approach. These programs assess the frequency of bullying through a survey; impose consequences for bullying; incorporate an informational campaign through assemblies, posters and rules; and monitor bullying "hot spots" (Brackett, 2018).

It appears that in order for the implementation of a bullying prevention program to see success and be sustainable within a school, there must be certain conditions in place at the time of implementation. According to experts in the field of educational change, such as Fullan (2010), school leaders who are usually responsible for facilitating the implementation of the bullying prevention program need to be invested, and take an active role showing students and staff that the program is important. Maintaining a safe, nurturing school environment for students, and preventing students from being bullied is, or should be, a school leader's top priority. Implementing a whole-school bullying prevention program simply requires everyone in the school to be on board, and actively involved. Unfortunately, it is not always simple to make that happen. In order to get staff to understand the need for the program and be invested in its success, they should be involved in the planning phase for implementation of the program. Open communication prior to and during implementation is important and concerns of staff should be heard. It is important for school leaders to recognize the strengths of people within the organization and those strengths should be utilized. Creating a sense of teamwork will help to create a positive culture within the school, where everyone feels valued, and this is no different when being applied to the implementation of a bullying prevention program. Staff members who

are invested in the success of the program will assist to get those who are more resistant on board. And as with most school programs, it is always crucial to keep parents informed and get them involved as much as possible.

As an educator and school administrator for the past twenty seven years, I have witnessed bullying, addressed bullies, consoled victims of bullying, and have actively participated in bullying prevention at the middle school level. I have been around long enough to experience the emergence of cyberbullying, as cell phones and social media apps such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TicToc became the most common mode of communication among adolescents. Almost daily, I experience the detrimental effects of bullying and cyberbullying, and how it can greatly influence the welfare of students and the educational environment. As a middle school assistant principal and the person responsible for overseeing bullying prevention within a school for the past 15 years, I have had an active role in the creation and implementation of both successful and unsuccessful bullying prevention programs. Through trial and error, experiencing the disappointment of failed bullying prevention programs, and opportunities to reflect on reasons for the lack of success, I have learned that in order for a bullying prevention program to work, particular conditions must be present within the school prior to and during implementation. The hard work has paid off, as we have seen a great deal of success with our current bullying prevention program which incorporates aspects of the Olweus bullying prevention program, school-wide positive behavior, and a focus on kindness. All staff, including administration, professional, and support staff have bought into the idea that bullying prevention and the promotion of positive behavior needs to be a priority within the school, and everyone has an active role in bullying prevention within the building. As a result, we were recently recognized for the success of our bullying prevention program by the International Bullying Prevention

Association and awarded \$5,000 by the Ford Motor Company. While reveling in the success of our bullying prevention program, a neighboring middle school that does not have the same conditions in place, continues to struggle to get their bullying prevention program to be as effective, signifying even further the importance of these conditions.

Although it's fairly new, the increased attention around bullying, has resulted in more research on the topic. The inquiry has allowed us to see that bullying occurs more among middle school students, or adolescents, than other ages (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000) and we now understand why that is. Research has shown that some groups of adolescents, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ), those with disabilities, or whom are socially isolated, are more likely to be bullied (StopBullying.Gov, 2018). We have learned a great deal about the effects that bullying has on its victims, and know that they can be quite drastic, including depression, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, chronic illness, and school problems such as tardiness and truancy (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). Today educators understand that bullying is a serious and more common problem than previously recognized; one that can leave emotional wounds long after the physical wounds have healed, and well into adulthood (apa.org, 2004). But, after significant research, it does not appear that there is much scholarly literature that discusses bullying prevention programs and more specifically, what conditions need to be present in order for a bullying prevention program to be successful and sustainable in a school setting. This information would be a great resource for school leaders planning to implement a bullying prevention program. Knowing what conditions should be present in a school in order for a bullying prevention program to be successful and sustainable, may help school leaders to plan ahead and ensure that those conditions will be present prior to and during the implementation of the program. This study, which focuses on specific conditions required for the success and

sustainability of bullying prevention programs, will clearly contribute to and fill the gap in research that currently exists in this area. Even though bullying and cyberbullying are significant issues that have an effect on the school environment, they are not specifically being examined in this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Information about bullying and cyberbullying was researched, since both are known to have a negative effect on the health, safety, and welfare of students and to the school environment. When students are being bullied, whether inside or outside of school, they may not be in the frame of mind necessary for learning. Bullying may trigger increased levels of anxiety among students, be a catalyst for tardiness or truancy, and can lead to physical altercations as students come face to face in school. This information can be linked to this study as the reasons why bullying prevention programs have been created and implemented into schools. Bullying has been acknowledged as a problem in schools for many years, but recent media attention involving school shootings has thrust bullying into the forefront of many legislators', educators', and parents' minds. In response to the media attention and heightened concern on the part of lawmakers, educators, and families, research in this field has been burgeoning as well. Results of studies have taught us not only about the rates of bullying, but a great deal about the characteristics of both children who bully and those who are targeted. Tragic school shootings and highly publicized suicides have highlighted the serious and sometimes deadly consequences of bullying behavior. In response, some educators and politicians are turning to the work of psychologists such as Dan Olweus, of Norway for information about how to prevent adolescents from participating in bullying behavior. Olweus is recognized as a pioneer and "founding father" of research on bullying and victimization (Nansel et al., 2001). Olweus defines bullying as "aggressive, intentional acts carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time

against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (Olweus, 1993). According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, 21 percent of students ages 12-18 reported being bullied at school in 2015. Of students ages 12–18, about 13 percent reported that they were made fun of, called names, or insulted; 12 percent reported being the subject of rumors; 5 percent reported that they were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; and 5 percent reported being excluded from activities on purpose. Additionally, 4 percent of students reported being threatened with harm, 3 percent reported that others tried to make them do things they did not want to do, and 2 percent reported that their property was destroyed by others on purpose (nces.ed.gov, 2019).

Bullying is a significant public health problem. Bullying is prevalent and harmful, since between 20 and 56 percent of young people are involved in bullying annually (Kowalski, R. & Limber, S., 2013). According to cyberbullying statistics from the i-SAFE foundation, over half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyberbullying (iSAFE.com, 2018). The emergence of this new mode of bullying, known as cyberbullying, which is defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text has attracted increased attention from scholars and practitioners (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Only in the past several years have researchers examined the nature and prevalence of cyberbullying among children and youth (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Research involving the specific phenomenon, as well as Internet harassment in general, is still in its infancy (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008) and considerable variability exists in reports of rates of cyberbullying victimization, which range from a low of 4 percent (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004) to a high of 72 percent (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Some researchers argue that cyberbullying is a logical extension of traditional bullying and that we can apply our knowledge of traditional bullying to electronic bullying. Others suggest that, although sharing certain features in common,

electronic bullying and traditional bullying are somewhat unique types of bullying. The present data suggests that there is a clear overlap between involvement in traditional forms of bullying and cyberbullying (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). For some, cyberbullying may simply be another method by which to bully; it may be a means of retaliating for being bullied at school, although the present data suggest this is not a primary motive; and for others, cyberbullying may provide a mechanism for saying and doing things to others that one would never say or do in face-to-face interactions (Kowalski & Limber, 2013).

The research of Hinduja & Patchin (2008) served as a foundation in understanding the substance and salience of cyberbullying. On-line survey data from 1,378 adolescent Internet-users under the age of 18 were analyzed for the purposes of identifying characteristics of typical cyberbullying victims and offenders. Respondents were questioned about their experiences with electronic bullying as a victim, offender, and witness. Because there does not exist a sampling frame with contact information of possible cyberbullying offenders and victims, the survey instrument was linked to several websites that targeted adolescent boys and girls. It is clear from this study that youth are computer literate, spending an average of 18 hours per week on-line. Gender and race did not significantly differentiate respondent victimization or offending. Over 32 percent of boys and over 36 percent of girls reported that they have been victims of cyberbullying, and about 18 percent of boys and 16 percent of girls reported harassing others while on-line. Computer proficiency and time spent on-line were positively related to both cyberbullying victimization and offending. Additionally, cyberbullying experiences both as an offender and victim were linked to respondents who reported school problems (including traditional bullying), assaultive behavior, and substance use (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).



Cell phones continue to be the most popular technology utilized by adolescents, and social media apps such as Instagram and Snapchat are among the most popular platforms through which they communicate (cyberbullying.org). In a recent study, Hinduaja & Patchin (2016) surveyed a nationally-representative sample of 5,700 middle and high school students between the ages of 12 and 17 in the United States. Data were collected between July and October of 2016. All students were asked questions about experiences with bullying and cyberbullying, digital dating abuse or violence, digital self-harm, sexting, and sextortion. In this study, Hinduaja & Patchin (2016) defined cyberbullying as: “when someone repeatedly and intentionally harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic devices” (Hinduaja & Patchin, 2016). The study examined bullying and cyberbullying victimization within 30 days prior to taking the survey, for three characteristics: race, sex, and age. Approximately 34 percent of the students reported experiencing cyberbullying in their lifetimes. When asked about specific types of cyberbullying experienced in the previous 30 days, mean or hurtful comments (22.5%) and rumors spread (20.1%) online were among the most commonly-cited. Twenty-six percent of the sample reported being cyberbullied in one or more ways, two or more times over the course of the previous 30 days. The results suggest that multiracial females, both in high school (209.5 out of 1,000) and middle school (186 out of 1,000) are most at risk for experiencing cyberbullying compared to other demographic subgroups. While females occupied the top three spots for victimization risk, males weren’t far behind with the next five spots. Asian and Hispanic students were near the bottom for risk. Approximately 12 percent of the students in the sample admitted to cyberbullying others at some point in their lifetime. Posting mean comments online was the most commonly reported type of cyberbullying reported during the previous 30 days (7.1%). About 8 percent of the sample

reported to cyberbullying others in one or more ways, two or more times over the course of the previous 30 days (Hinduaja & Patchin, 2016).

While acceptance of the LGBTQ community has grown over recent decades, this trend cannot be applied to the climate found in many of America's schools, where LGBTQ students are bullied daily (Lindemulder et al., 2017). Recent studies show that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth, and those perceived as LGBTQ, are at an increased risk of being bullied (Stopbullying.gov, 2017). Results from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, show that nationwide, more students who self-identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) report having been bullied on school property (33%) and cyberbullied (27.1%) in the past year, than their heterosexual peers (17.1% and 13.3%, respectively). The study also showed that more LGB students (10%) than heterosexual students (6.1%) reported not going to school because of safety concerns. Students who identified as "not sure" of their sexual orientation, also reported being bullied on school property (24.3%), being cyberbullied (22%), and not going to school because of safety concerns (10.7%) (Stopbullying.gov, 2017). Results from a separate study conducted by The Human Rights Campaign Foundation and the University of Connecticut, revealed in disturbing detail persistent and serious challenges for LGBTQ youth. More than 12,000 LGBTQ teenagers from across the nation participated in the 2017 Youth Survey, making it the largest of its kind. The respondents, ranging in age from 13 to 17, and from all 50 states and Washington D.C., participated in the online survey for LGBTQ teens. The survey found that these teenagers are not only more likely to be bullied, but are experiencing heartbreaking levels of stress, anxiety and rejection, and overwhelmingly feel unsafe in their own school classrooms (Human Rights Campaign, 2018). While estimates of bullying LGBTQ students in schools vary across

communities and states, many show rates at least double those found for other student groups, resulting in harmful psychological effects and lower levels of academic achievement (Lindemulder et al., 2017).

## **Impacts of Bullying**

Bullying has long been present in schools, although awareness of the harm that bullying may cause is fairly recent (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005). Increased awareness and advances in research have allowed us to learn more about the negative impacts of bullying and emphasized the need to educate students about bullying as a way of preventing them from participating in those behaviors. This information was researched and can be linked to this study, since the negative impacts of bullying is the catalyst for the creation of many different bullying prevention programs, and their implementation into schools.

Due to the amount of youth who fall victim to bullying, and the vast array of negative outcomes that have been linked to bullying behavior, we know that bullying poses one of the greatest health risks to youth, and young adults today (aera.net, 2019). There have been many adverse impacts linked to bullying including effects on both physical and mental health, substance use, and suicide (stopbullying.gov). These negative impacts have been found to affect both bullies and victims and have even affected bystanders (Wolke & Lereya, 2015). The vast number of negative ramifications that have been linked to bullying victimization include depression, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, chronic illness, and school problems such as tardiness and truancy (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). Researchers have recognized that depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem may be both consequences of and precursors to bullying (Reijntjes, et al., 2010). Thus, children who are bullied may be more likely than others to develop problems

with depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. In other cases, these symptoms may signal to others that a child may be an “easy target” (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009).

Research on bullying shows that children who are bullied may experience problems associated with their academic work in addition to their health and emotional well-being. Children who are bullied are more likely than nonbullied peers to indicate that they want to avoid attending school (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997), have higher absenteeism rates (Smith, et al., 2004), dislike school, and receive poorer grades and lower standardized test scores (Lacey & Cornell, 2011). A longitudinal study conducted by Juvonen and colleagues (2011) examined the relation between victimization and academic achievement across the three years of middle school. Academic adjustment was measured by both year-end grades and teacher reports of engagement. The results of the study found that more self-reported victimization was related to lower school achievement from sixth to eighth grade. For every 1-unit increase in victimization (on a 1-4 scale), GPA declined by 0.3 points (Juvonen et al., 2011). Research has also shown that victims of bullying experience difficulties with social-emotional functioning and adjustment. In particular, they tend to have greater difficulty making friends, have poorer relationships with classmates, and experience loneliness (Nansel et al., 2001). The prevalence of bullying on the schoolwide level is correlated with increased high school dropout rates (Cornell et al., 2013) as well as decreased schoolwide academic performance (Lacey & Cornell, 2013). A meta-analysis of 33 studies found a significant negative association between peer victimization and academic achievement, as measured by grades, student achievement scores, or teacher ratings of academic achievement (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2009).

Kowalski & Limber (2013) examined the relationship between children's and adolescents' experiences with cyberbullying and traditional bullying to their psychological health, physical

health, and academic performance. This study included 931 students in grades 6 through 12 who completed an anonymous survey examining their experiences with cyberbullying and traditional bullying. Also included were measures of anxiety, depression, self-esteem, physical well-being, school attendance, and academic performance. Participants were categorized as belonging to one of four groups: cyber victims, cyberbullies, cyber bully/victims, and those not involved in cyberbullying. A similar categorization was done with traditional bullying. Those in the bully/victim groups (and particularly the cyber bully/victim group) had the most negative scores on most measures of psychological health, physical, health, and academic performance. There was a substantial, although not perfect, overlap between involvement in traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Additionally, the physical, psychological, and academic correlates of the two types of bullying resembled one another (Kowalski & Limber, 2013).

The afore mentioned negative ramifications all underscore the nontrivial impact that the experience of being bullied can have on one's developmental trajectory, as well as one's psychosocial well-being. A significant effort has been put forth by researchers to analyze the effects of bullying on physical, psychological, relational and general health. In addition to bullied adolescents being more likely than their non-bullied peers to report feelings of anxiety, depression (Craig, 1998), and low self-esteem (Olweus, 1993), research by Fekkes and colleagues (2006) found that bullied children were more likely than nonbullied peers to develop stomach pain, sleep problems, headaches, tension, bedwetting, fatigue, and poor appetite after having been bullied (Fekkes, et al., 2006). In analyzing and describing two separate random effects meta-analyses on 6 longitudinal studies, Gini and Pazzoli found that bullied children and adolescents have a significantly higher risk for psychosomatic problems, defined as experiencing

psychological distress in the form of physical symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, headache, insomnia, weight loss, etc. (Lickerman, 2010), than non-bullied peers (Gini & Pozzoli, 2013).

In one of the few longitudinal studies on the physical and mental effects of bullying, Bogart and colleagues (2014) studied 4,297 children and their parents from three urban locales: Birmingham, Alabama; 25 contiguous school districts in Los Angeles County, California; and one of the largest school districts in Houston, Texas. They collected data when the cohort was in fifth grade (2004 to 2006), seventh grade (2006 to 2008), and tenth grade (2008 to 2010). Data consisted of responses to the Peer Experience Questionnaire, the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory with its Psychosocial Subscale and Physical Health Subscale, and a Self-Perception Profile. The study found that children who were bullied experienced negative physical health compared to non-involved peers. Among seventh grade students with the worst-decile physical health, 6.4 percent were not bullied, 14.8 percent had been bullied in the past only, 23.9 percent had been bullied in the present only, and nearly a third (30.2 percent) had been bullied in both the past and present. These effects were not as strong when students were in tenth grade (National Academies of Sciences, 2016).

Experiencing bullying may produce negative outcomes related to physical health, psychological health, academic outcomes, and social-emotional skills, both at the time of bullying and longitudinally (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015). In a 50-year longitudinal study, it was found that those who had been bullied in childhood between the ages of 7 and 11 experienced a variety of diminished quality-of-life outcomes well into adulthood up to the age of 50, including suicidal ideations, depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol dependence, psychological distress, poorer general health, decreased cognitive functioning, lower socioeconomic circumstances, fewer social relationships, and diminished well-being (Takizawa,

Maughan, & Arseneault, 2014). Cross-sectional and longitudinal research shows that victims of bullying have a variety of poor mental health, academic, and life outcomes compared with those who have not been involved in bullying. In extreme cases, victims of bullying have engaged in violence toward themselves or other individuals (National Academies of Sciences, 2016). Ttofi, Farrington, and Losel (2012), in a meta-analysis of 28 longitudinal studies, found that experiencing victimization in school predicted increased likelihood of engaging in aggressive and violent acts later in life by about one-third. There are associations with internalizing behaviors related to being bullied, including depression and suicidal ideation (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Johnson, 2015). Among the school shootings prior to 2002, 79 percent of the attackers had histories of suicide attempts or thoughts, 61 percent had serious depression, and two-thirds were victims of bullying, highlighting the need to address depression as it relates to being bullied, (Vossekuil, et al., 2001). Research by the Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education involving 37 school shootings, including Columbine, found that about two-thirds of student shooters felt bullied, harassed, threatened or injured by others. Most school bullying cases do not lead to school shootings, but bullying is a serious and more common problem than previously recognized that can leave emotional wounds long after the physical wounds have healed (apa.org, 2004).

### **Bullying in Middle School**

The middle school grades (sixth, seventh, and eighth) are widely regarded as a difficult period for students due to hormonal changes, amplified social pressures, and increased bullying (Poiner, 2015). This is the reason why this information was researched and why only middle schools that contain grades 6,7 & 8 were included in this study. One third of middle school

students reported being bullied in 2017, according to a report released by the non-profit group *Youth Truth* (Cantone et al., 2015). That's an increase from two years prior, when just over one in four students reported being bullied (McClellan, 2018). Researchers have suggested that bullying behaviors tend to peak in middle school, and decrease with age (Hoover et al., 1992; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000). Although bullying can start as early as preschool, by the time kids reach middle school, it has often become an accepted behavior. In fact, bullying increases around fifth and sixth grade and continues to get worse until around ninth grade, when it begins to decline. Bullying often occurs more in middle school and early teen years because kids are transitioning from being a child to an adolescent. They have a strong desire to be accepted, to make friends and be part of a group (Gordon, 2018). Pellegrini and Bartini note that an increase in bullying behavior occurs when students make the transition into middle school, suggesting that bullying behaviors reflect the needs of students to establish social status as they transition into a new peer group (Hoover et al., 1992; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000). During the early teen years, bullying is a form of social power. Kids in middle school bully others to protect their image and improve their social status. As a result, they often take advantage of peers that are more socially vulnerable in order to feel accepted (Gordon, 2018).

After studying 1,895 ethnically diverse students from 99 classes at 11 Los Angeles middle schools, UCLA psychologists reported that bullying, whether it is physical aggression or spreading rumors, does in fact boost the social status and popularity of middle school students. Surveys were conducted at three points: during the spring of seventh grade, the fall of eighth grade and the spring of eighth grade. Throughout the study, students were asked to name the students who were considered the "coolest," the students who "start fights or push other kids around", and the ones who "spread nasty rumors about other kids." Results showed that those



students who were named the coolest at one time, were largely named the most aggressive the next time; and those considered the most aggressive were significantly more likely to be named the coolest the next time. The results indicated that bullying behaviors, such as physical aggression and spreading rumors, are rewarded by middle school peers (Wolpert, 2013).

Cyberbullying is a problem affecting a meaningful proportion of youth as they embrace online communication and interaction (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013). It is believed that cyberbullying rises drastically after elementary school, and is most prevalent in middle school (King, 2018). Data from 2009-2010 comparing primary, middle, and high schoolers indicate 1.5% of primary school students, 18.6% of middle schoolers, and 17.6% of high schoolers reported being cyberbullied. Increases are associated with their increased access to Smartphones, social networking sites such as Instagram and Snapchat, and online gaming (Lenhart, Duggan, Perrin, et al., 2015).

Kowalski & Limber (2007) surveyed 3,767 middle school students in grades 6,7, and 8 and concluded that among middle school students, cyberbullying is a problem of significant magnitude. According to their results, 11% had been cyberbullied at least once within a few months prior to the survey, 7% indicated that they were victims of bullying; and 4% had electronically bullied someone else at least once during the months leading up to the survey (Kowalski & Limber 2007).

Cyberbullying has features that make it more appealing to some individuals over traditional bullying. The ability to bully at any time and from anywhere, is extremely convenient. It allows the bully to be able to hide behind fake screen names so that the victim doesn't really know who is bullying them, and it provides people with the opportunity to communicate things they would be reluctant to say to another person's face. Unfortunately, the venue of cyber space,

where victim and perpetrator cannot see each other, may lead some perpetrators to remain unconvinced that they are actually harming their target (Kowalski & Limber 2007).

### **Pennsylvania School Law and Policy**

School safety, including the prevention of bullying, is a top national priority and a key area of academic research (aera.net, 2019). We know that all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, may have a negative impact on students in school. One of the more complicated sides of the equation is how schools should get involved. Since most cyberbullying actually takes place outside of school, the issue comes down to the question: What can schools do to protect students who are being cyberbullied? Technology has complicated a reasonably clear set of policy directions set by the United States Supreme Court in two landmark cases. In the 1968 case *Tinker et al. v. Des Moines*, it was decided that the Constitution does not permit officials of the State to deny students their form of expression if they are not causing a substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities. In the 1983 case *Bethel School District v. Fraser*, the Supreme Court placed some limits on student speech, ruling that it is appropriate for a school to take action when a student is not taking into consideration the sensibilities of others (Magid, 2009). In both rulings, case law refers to activities that specifically took place on school property. As a result, schools officials have been following that precedence by only punishing students for offenses taking place on school property (Magid, 2009). This information was researched as part of this study since it clearly addresses why school administrators cannot punish a student who is bullying or cyberbullying another student, when the bullying takes place outside of school. This is a reason why many schools choose to use bullying prevention programs to educate students and encourage them not to engage in bullying behavior.

These landmark cases were decided long before students started using cell phones and social media. Since most cases of cyberbullying take place off of school property and with personal electronic devices, the authority of school officials to deal with it is very limited and very unclear. Kids no longer need to be in school to impact what happens in school. For example, if a student creates a post on Instagram stating that “James is gay”, James might have grounds for a civil lawsuit based on defamation, but the student’s statement is clearly not a violation of any criminal law. But what happens if, on the next day at school, other kids start laughing at James or making lewd or mean comments? Suddenly the student’s off-campus behavior is having an impact at school and could even jeopardize James’ ability to obtain an education. Are school administrators responsible for monitoring this disruptive student behavior that took place outside of school? There has been a lot of debate about this issue. Currently principals do not have the ability to punish students who are guilty of cyberbullying if the offense actually happens outside of school. While schools can help get conversations started between parents and students, they cannot force students to take down content that may be offensive or harmful to another student. Basically, they can act as moderators, but their hands are tied when it comes to taking action (Magid, 2009).

In Pennsylvania, school administrators can intervene when bullying occurs on school grounds or when cyberbullying results from using school district computers or websites. However, it is unclear to what extent schools are responsible to intervene when bullying occurs off school grounds, in cyber-space, and with the use of personal electronic devices. In an effort to deter students from participating in bullying behaviors, both inside and outside of school, many schools have been educating students about the negative impact of bullying behavior and promoting positive behaviors and kindness, often with the help of bullying prevention programs.

In an effort to reduce bullying in schools, the State of Pennsylvania requires school systems to develop policies prohibiting bullying, including through electronic means. According to House Bill 1067, 2008:24 Pennsylvania Statutes 1303.1-(A); no later than January 1, 2009:

a. each school entity shall adopt a policy or amend its existing policy relating to bullying and incorporate the policy into the school's code of conduct.

b. The policy needs to include disciplinary consequences and identify the appropriate school staff person to receive reports of incidents of alleged bullying.

c. The policy must be publicly accessible through their internet website, if available, be posted in each classroom and prominently displayed in main areas where important notices are also posted.

d. The policy must be reviewed with students annually and reviewed/updated by administration every three years.

e. The law does not prohibit schools from defining bullying that occurs outside of the school setting provided that it meets the following criteria:

1). It is directed at another student or students;

2). Is severe, persistent or pervasive; and

3). Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's education; creating a threatening environment; or substantially interrupting orderly operation of the school.

f. School districts can be held liable if they are aware of an act of cyber bullying occurring off school grounds and they do nothing as they are in violation of a student's right to safety but can also be held liable for pursuing action towards these individuals by violating their freedom of speech.

g. When bullying occurs off school grounds, school administrators must walk a fine line between a student's 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Right to freedom of speech and the right of students to receive an education without suffering harassment or bullying.

### **Whole-School Bullying Prevention Programs**

As incidents of bullying rise among adolescents, bullying prevention has become a major focal point for school districts across the United States. In an effort to reduce bullying and keep their students safe, schools have been adopting and implementing formal bullying prevention programs. There are numerous bullying prevention programs available to schools, that can be utilized to guide school personnel in their effort to reduce the bullying problems that they face. Many of the programs use a whole-school approach (Smith et al., 2005), where intervention is directed at the entire school rather than just the individual bully or victim (Smith, Pepler & Rigby, 2004). The whole-school approach is predicated on the assumption that bullying is a systematic problem, and, by implication, an intervention must be directed at the entire school context rather than just at individual bullies and victims. A whole-school approach covers all aspects of the school experience, including policies, culture and classroom practice, and is integrated into a broad range of activities that promote a positive, inclusive learning environment. Strong leadership and staff who model these positive values and behaviors are essential. In a whole-school approach, bullying prevention is everyone's business. It involves all staff, students, board members, parents and the wider community, making sure everyone knows and supports their school's strategies and approach to bullying (New Zealand Ministry of Education). The approach involves educating everyone who comes into contact with the students, including teachers, custodians, bus drivers, and parents. Most of these programs focus

on increased awareness, developing clear rules against bullying, providing support for those being bullied, is consistently enforced, and is implemented throughout the entire school year (McManis, 2012). One advantage of the whole-school approach is that it avoids the potentially problematic stigmatization of either bullies or victims (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999). This information was researched as part of this study since, most of the bullying prevention programs that are being implemented by schools are whole-school bullying prevention programs, such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. It is important for the reader to understand what a whole-school bullying prevention program is.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports are two common schoolwide frameworks used in Pennsylvania to improve school climate and address bullying. Both frameworks are supported by research and engage school district and/or school-based leadership teams in designing and implementing strategies to improve school climate through school level procedures and systems, classroom level practices, and targeted interventions for individual students. Both frameworks also share a common emphasis on engaging parent and community partners in activities that promote effective prevention, intervention and youth support. While the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports both provide a framework for organizing efforts to improve school climate, they are distinct in focus and offer different benefits to schools. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program's behavioral expectations focus on bullying behavior specifically, while Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports calls for behavioral expectations that can be applied more generally across contexts. Similarly, both programs require a leadership team to oversee schoolwide implementation and both require educators to spend class time teaching positive behaviors to students (Center for Safe Schools, 2018).

The most well-known bullying prevention program that exists today, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, was the first comprehensive whole-school intervention implemented on a large scale and systematically evaluated (Olweus, 1993). The main goals of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are to reduce existing bullying problems among students at school, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and more generally, achieve better peer relations at school. In addition to improving peer relations, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed to make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop (Olweus, 1993). Within this approach, it is considered essential that all members of the school community, including school staff, students, and parents, be sensitized with basic information about what bullying is and how they should respond to it. A clear, consistent policy involving nonphysical consequences for bullying needs to be developed and implemented. This entails communication among the adults in the victims' lives and among the adults in the school, who must supervise children's interactions actively and react as a team. Curricular activities are designed to instill antibullying attitudes in all children and assist them in developing prosocial conflict resolution skills. Finally, individualized interventions are developed for children directly involved in bullying as either victims or bullies (Smith et al, 2004).

In an effort to respond to the epidemic proportions of bullying in American schools, Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Support was designed, blending school wide positive behavior support, explicit instruction regarding a three step response to problem behavior, and a reconceptualization of the bullying construct. Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (BP-PBIS) gives students the tools necessary to remove the social rewards maintaining inappropriate behavior, thereby decreasing the likelihood of problem

behavior occurring in the future. Bullying Prevention Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports not only decreases incidents of bullying behavior, but also increases appropriate recipient responses to bullying behavior and appropriate bystander responses to bullying behavior. In addition, because the program is designed to fit within a larger system of positive behavior support, it is far less resource intensive and far more likely to be implemented over consecutive years (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network, 2018).

The Allan L. Beane Bullying Prevention Program, Bully Free, is the most comprehensive school-wide, and system-wide, bullying prevention program being adopted by schools and districts around the world. The mission of the Bully Free program is to promote a sense of belonging and acceptance of all individuals and to promote the Golden Rule through quality materials, workshops, presentations, and Web resources. It is based on research and includes administrative strategies, teacher strategies, lesson plans for each grade level (preschool through high school), classroom meetings, student involvement, and bystander empowerment. The program also includes parent involvement, community involvement, and all of the elements and components that must be present in effective bullying prevention programs, such as a program implementation team and coordinator, an implementation manual, suggested strategies, staff development, curriculum, brochures, etc. Implementation is a simple step-by-step process, but its flexibility allows each school to shape it according to the culture, climate and needs of the school. The program includes a strong summative and formative evaluation component, including surveys and focus group meetings. The involvement of parents may be what sets the Bully Free program apart from the others. “Parent Chat” information is provided to schools to be sent home to parents. This information will provide parents with suggested topics and



information to discuss with their children. The parent chats are designed to reinforce the student's learning of bullying prevention concepts and to impact the home (Bullyfree.com).

The Stories of Us, Promoting Positive Peer Relationships (P3R) bullying prevention program is composed of a unique series of educational resources for supporting students, educators and the broader community in addressing the problem of bullying in schools. The P3R resources provide schools with extensive curricula, films that focus on bullying, and educational materials which are centered around the included films. The uncommonly realistic films were built from the ground up by groups of students who collaborated in brainstorming the subjects and developing the scripts. They performed all the young roles in the dramatized films and worked in supporting positions on the film crew. Every word of dialogue is their own, and every detail was approved by the students. The films are compelling as they draw upon the collective experiences of the students, holding a mirror to the reality of bullying with such authenticity that some students watching the films are convinced they are real. The resources center on the films, however the key to their effectiveness is how the films are applied. Designed with psychologists, the resources take students through a structured program which has proven to be uncommonly effective in the classroom (storiesofus.com).

### **Organizational Change and the Role of the School Principal**

Educational leaders have many responsibilities, and one of the most difficult of them all, may be creating and sustaining change within a school environment. The role of change agent typically falls squarely on the shoulders of building principals (Andrews & Rothman, 2002). It is not uncommon for schools to keep certain practices in place and unchallenged for years and even decades simply because of their historical status. In K-12 education someone is always trying to

make changes, proposing a new program or a new practice. Many of these programs and practices are well thought out, well-articulated, and even well-researched. Yet, some, maybe even most, educational innovations are short-lived (Marzano, et al., 2005) or never fully achieved.

Why do changes in schools often fail? A factor analysis done by Marzano, et al., (2005). indicates that the leadership supporting a change must be consistent with the order of magnitude of the change represented by that innovation. If leadership techniques do not match the order of change required by an innovation, the innovation will probably fail regardless of its merits. Major change is often said to be impossible unless the head of the organization is an active supporter (Kotter, 1996). Educational leaders are expected to be change agents, with the disposition to challenge the status quo and willingness to temporarily upset a school's equilibrium (Marzano et al., 2005). Fullan (2001) explains that an effective leader has the ability to disturb staff in a manner that approximates the desired outcome. He further comments that change agents don't "live more peacefully, but...they can handle more uncertainty and conflict, and are better at working through complex issues in ways that energize rather than deplete the commitment of the organizational members" (Fullan, 2001). Silins, Mulford, and Zarins (2002) provide a different perspective on the responsibility of a change agent. They note that effective change agents are leaders who "protect those who take risks". They further explain that effective leadership involves "the extent to which staff feel empowered to make decisions and feel free to experiment and take risks" (Silins, Mulford, and Zarins, 2002).

The goal of all change leaders must be to get movement in an improved direction and take the fear out of change (Fullan, 2010). Implementing change in schools is often met with resistance by staff. Unwillingness to change can affect whether or not an initiative is successful;

therefore, when embarking on any reform effort, school leaders should consider the possibility of facing resistance (Zimmerman, 2006). Fullan (2010) identifies leadership as a mixture of authority and democracy, stressing the importance of solid relationships and understanding the learning process, which builds capacity in others. Getting staff invested in the process of change is not easy. There are times when people within an organization, or the organization itself, needs a wake-up call (Fullan, 2010). One of many barriers to both individual and organizational change that has been documented in literature, is a failure to recognize the need for change (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Unless staff understand and appreciate the need for change in their school, their interest in maintaining the status quo will undoubtedly take precedence over their willingness to accept change. Habit is a related barrier to staff changing their practices. Rather than working to develop new skills or strategies, it is simply easier to continue doing things in the same way (Greenberg & Baron, 2000).

A leader's role is to facilitate change by being involved but not dominating the situation (Fullan, 2010). Top-down change typically does not work (Fullan, 2010). Change savvy leaders know that you cannot directly make people change. Instead, utilizing transformational leadership to create a system where positive change is virtually inevitable and developing the organization's capacity to innovate is much more successful (Fullan, 2010). Transformational leadership may be viewed as distributed in that it focuses on developing a shared vision and shared commitment to school change (Hallinger, 2003). During times of change, we often create a picture of what we think should be, then work hard to make reality fit that picture. Transformational change, however, focuses on a more strategic approach. Rather than simply inserting new demands or practices into existing systems, transformational change requires changing the system itself (Dryer & Thompson, 2018). Changing the system calls for building common understanding of

the need for change, assessing where capacity is needed, and then developing that capacity to sustain the change (Wright, 2018). Transformational change is a result of either organizational transformation or the implementation of a program, project, or initiative that impacts the structure and culture of the organization. For instance, in some schools, a bullying prevention program, implemented properly, requires changes in the structure (rules, roles, and relationships) and culture (beliefs, values, traditions) of the school (Dryer & Thompson, 2018).

Schools have their own unique culture that is shaped around a particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings that emphasize what is of paramount importance to them (Hanson, 2001). The school's culture dictates, in no uncertain terms, "the way we do things around here" (Hallinger, 2003). Although the culture of a school is not visible to the human eye, its artifacts and symbols reflect cultural priorities, and can be a positive or negative influence on a school's effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2005). A school's effectiveness is proportional to the extent to which teachers participate in all aspects of the school's functioning including decisions, share a coherent sense of direction, and acknowledge the wider school community (Silins et al., 2002). There are times when it may be necessary to alter the prevailing culture of the school in order for the school to move forward and improve. This is difficult for school leaders, because one person cannot change a school culture alone (Hallinger, 2003). Changing a school's internal culture demands that school leaders have or work to create real partners within the professional staff and that teachers want and exercise influence in areas outside the classroom (Kruse & Louis, 2009). This form of participative management guarantees that decisions will not be arbitrary, secret, or closed to questioning. Individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision suggest that the model is grounded in understanding the needs of individual staff rather than

coordinating and controlling them towards the organization's desired ends (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

Prior to the onset of change it is crucial that leaders have a well-developed plan to implement the change. It is effective, for all involved, if the plan is clear and concise, and communicated to everyone, allowing them to understand their role in the change process (Fullan, 2010). Good communication during implementation of any change is a critical feature (Marzano et al., 2005). The questions and concerns of staff should be listened to, allowing them to know that they are being heard. It is important for leaders to understand that discussing and debating the change can be healthy for an organization and there's nothing wrong with adapting or modifying the game plan. It is a way to gain support of staff and get everyone on board with the need for changes being implemented (Fullan, 2010). The building leader also has an important job of reinforcing communication throughout the struggles of change, developing effective means for teachers to communicate with one another, and being easily accessible to staff in order to maintain open and effective lines of communication (Fullan, 2010). Research shows that building principals can inspire others and maintain a climate of respect and inclusion. But a principal cannot do it alone. When parents are involved, they can support the schools' messages at home and in the community. Parents need to feel valued and be given opportunities to contribute their expertise. School staff should keep parents informed, make them feel welcome, and treat them as partners (stopbullying.gov).

It is also important to celebrate success with staff throughout the implementation of change. This will generate a sense of teamwork and authentic positive energy focused around the change (Fullan, 2010). Successful leaders understand that relationships are paramount, and little can be completed without trust and positive connections. As a result of their study involving

more than 1,200 K-12 teachers, Blasé and Kirby (2000) identified optimism as a critical characteristic of an effective school leader. They note that the principal commonly sets the emotional tone in a school. Kelehear (2003) explains that at appropriate times an effective leader is willing to bolster a change initiative with optimism and energy. Kaagan and Markle (1993) describe the benefit of a positive emotional tone as an environment where new ideas and innovation abound. The leader must be a part of the change process and learn from experiences along the way (Fullan, 2010). One of the most important things for a leader to keep in mind is that people respond according to how they are treated. Staff generally want to go the extra mile if they feel that their work is meaningful, and they feel supported by their leader. Building principals must be proactive in recognizing the varying abilities of staff members and utilize their strengths whenever possible (Nunneley, et al. 2003). One of the most important things for leaders to know is that trust is powerful (Fullan, 2010). Two major components of trust are: integrity (sincerity, reliability, honesty) and competence (skill & effectiveness). A savvy leader will have a balance of both attributes. The idea is to maximize trust and effectiveness during change in order to reduce resistance to a minimum (Fullan, 2010). Information pertaining to organizational change and the role of the school principal was researched as part of this study, because implementing a bullying prevention program in a school is a form of organizational change. The role of the building principal during the implementation of that change will be critical to the acceptance of that change among staff, and possibly the success of the program.

### **Effectiveness of Bullying Prevention Programs**

Bullying continues to be a concern in schools and communities across the United States and worldwide, yet there is uncertainty regarding the most effective approaches for preventing it

and addressing its impacts on children and youth (Bradshaw, 2015). There has been increased interest in the prevention of bullying and intervention efforts, particularly within school settings. In fact, the number of bullying prevention programs has increased substantially since the 1990s, and nearly all states have passed laws specifically related to bullying, many of which encourage the use of programs or strategies to prevent bullying (U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2011). The effectiveness of the various school-based prevention approaches remains unclear (Bradshaw, 2015). In fact, recent reviews of bullying prevention approaches produced mixed findings (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009). As a result, many researchers, policymakers, and practitioners remain unclear as to where the field stands in terms of the evidence base for bullying prevention (Bradshaw, 2015). Information pertaining to the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs was researched and included as part of this study, because the information collected clearly demonstrates the disparity in the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs. Results of this study may help to make it clear why some bullying prevention programs are effective or successful, while others are not.

Given the growing number of prevention programs available to schools, it is difficult for local decision makers to determine which strategies to adopt (Petrosino, 2003). Farrington and Ttofi's (2009) meta-analysis of controlled trials of 44 bullying interventions, suggests that overall, school-based bullying prevention programs are effective in decreasing bullying. In their review, Farrington and Ttofi focused only on programs that are specifically designed to reduce bullying and included outcome variables specifically to measure bullying, not aggression. Studies were included in this review if they evaluated the effects of a bullying prevention program by comparing an experimental group who received the intervention with a control group

who did not. Bullying and victimization were measured using self-report questionnaires, peer ratings, teacher ratings, or observational data. It was found that on average, bullying decreased by 20% to 23% as a result of implementing school-based bullying prevention programs (Farrington and Ttofi's, 2009).

Evans et al., (2014) extended Farrington and Ttofi's (2009) meta-analysis of bullying interventions, when they reviewed controlled trials of bullying interventions published from June, 2009 through April, 2013. The search yielded 32 articles that evaluated 24 distinct bullying interventions. In their meta-analysis, Evans et al (2014) compared 24 different school-based bullying prevention programs and discussed eleven bullying intervention characteristics, including a whole-school approach, a peer orientated approach, classroom rules against bullying and parent involvement. The articles reviewed, described a controlled trial of a bullying prevention program and measured perpetration and victimization (17 studies), victimization only (10 studies), or perpetration only (5 studies). Results were discussed in terms of changes in victimization or perpetration. Data were collected using a variety of reporting mechanisms: 19 studies used student self- reports only, 4 used student and teacher reports, 2 used teacher reports only, 2 used student and peer reports, 1 used student and parent reports, 1 used peer reports only, 1 used researcher observations only, 1 used student self-reports and observations, and 1 used peer, student, and teacher reports. According to Evans et al., (2014), overall findings of their meta-analysis of whether or not bullying programs are effective are mixed; 50% of the studies reported significant program effects on bullying behavior, 45% of studies showed no significant effects, and 5% of studies reported mixed results. Compared to other bullying prevention programs, the school-wide approach was found to be the most successful bullying prevention program (Evans et al., 2014).



Vreeman & Carroll (2007) reviewed 26 studies on bullying prevention strategies including curriculum programs, social skills groups, mentoring, social worker support, and whole-school approaches. Data were extracted regarding direct outcome measures of bullying (bullying, victimization, aggressive behavior, and school responses to violence) and outcomes indirectly related to bullying (school achievement, perceived school safety, self-esteem, and knowledge or attitudes toward bullying). The research found whole-school approaches to be the most effective. This type of approach addresses bullying as a systemic problem and applies interventions that involve everyone at the school. The goal of many whole school bullying prevention programs is to create a positive culture and climate within the school. Curriculum-targeted individual interventions and support were rarely effective in reducing bullying. Increasing the number of mental health staff to a school, seldom had effects in bullying reduction. Programs in which implementation was observed and evaluated were found to be more effective than those without set procedures (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

Bullying prevention programs with a whole-school approach, or a focus on changing the culture and climate of the school rather than individuals, and including everyone who comes in contact with students, have been found to be most effective (Smith et al., 2004). The most extensively studied and widely adopted whole-school bullying prevention program in the world is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus & Limber, 2007). Much of the research on this model was conducted in Norway (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999); however, some studies of this model have also been conducted within the United States (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007), but with less favorable outcomes. The goals of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are to “reduce existing bullying problems among students, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and achieve better peer relations at school” (Olweus & Limber, 2007).

This program addresses bullying by implementing components at multiple levels, including school-wide components, classroom activities and meetings, targeted interventions for individuals identified as bullies or victims, and activities aimed to increase involvement by parents, mental health workers, etc. Some studies of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program have reported significant reductions in students' reports of bullying and antisocial behaviors (e.g., fighting, truancy) and improvements in school climate (Olweus et al., 1999). However, some smaller scale studies of this model produced mixed results (Hanewinkel, 2004). Other derivations of Olweus's model also have demonstrated promise at reducing bullying in North America (Pepler, Craig, O'Connell, Atlas, & Charach, 2004). In fact, Farrington and Ttofi (2009) found that programs that were conceptually based on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program were the most effective.

A promising alternative to the stand-alone bullying prevention program is to include it as part of a broader systems-level approach to preventing and addressing problem behavior. One such approach is School Wide Positive Behavior Support (Sugai, Horner, & McIntosh, 2008; Sugai, Simonsen, & Horner, 2008). School Wide Positive Behavior Support is a proactive, systems-level approach that provides the tools and practices to help support students and staff and promote positive social and learning environments (Simonsen et al., 2008). Randomized control trials have consistently shown significantly improved academic and behavioral outcomes for students in schools implementing School Wide Positive Behavior Support compared to control schools (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, in press; Horner et al., 2009). A main feature of School Wide Positive Behavior Support is the focus on student outcomes; the fundamental goal of most systems is to provide supports to students to improve school achievement, social relations, and safety (Simonsen et al., 2008). Research studies have shown that implementing

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with fidelity is associated with reductions in problem behavior including aggression, fighting, and harassment; significant increases in the perception of school safety; and the promotion of pro-social behaviors that are intended to benefit another, are also noted (Horner, Sugai, Anderson, 2010). Thus, schools currently implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with fidelity are likely to experience a decrease in behaviors associated with bullying as an effect of their school wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports efforts (Illinois Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports Network, 2010).

Contributing to the effectiveness of School Wide Positive Behavior Support is the use of a three-tier approach to ensure the support of all students (Sugai, Simonsen, & Horner, 2008). In the primary tier, the focus is on simple preventative strategies, such as establishing clear, positively stated school rules, and ensuring that these rules are posted around the school. Previous research has shown that the majority of students, sometimes as many as 80%, will respond to primary tier interventions that are implemented with integrity (Simonsen et al., 2008). Secondary and tertiary intervention strategies target those students who do not respond to primary interventions, and need more targeted and intensive support (Fairbanks, Simonsen, & Sugai, 2008). There are numerous studies demonstrating the effectiveness of individualized secondary and tertiary interventions on improving students' academic and social behaviors (McIntosh, Brown, & Borgmeier, 2008). The demonstrated effectiveness of School Wide Positive Behavior Support provides a logical framework for the integration of strategies targeting bullying behavior. Bullying prevention programs within School Wide Positive Behavior Support focus on providing children and adults with clear guidelines regarding how to deal with a bullying situation. Teaching students specific skills and a plan when faced with a bully is more

likely to decrease incidences of bullying than policies solely targeted at punishing bullies (Rigby, 2002).

Mindfulness approaches are becoming more common in bullying prevention. Mindfulness is used to increase students' resiliency, well-being, self-regulation, and attention (Lawlor, 2014). Mindfulness programs aim to support students' wellbeing, social and relationship skills, concentration, anxiety and stress management, and performance in academic and activities. Mindfulness programs for children begin with lessons on how the brain works, followed by sensory experiences such as mindful listening, to cognitive experiences such as perspective-taking, ending with students reflecting on what they are grateful for in their own lives, and enacting random acts of kindness. Research has shown that mindfulness programs have decreased children's depression and aggression, and led to higher acceptance from their peers, all of which can be related to bullying prevention (Lawlor, 2014).

Many reviews of bullying prevention programs have generally been less favorable (Ferguson et al., 2007; Merrell et al., 2008). For example, Merrell et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 16 school-based bullying intervention studies and concluded that the interventions only produced a significant and "meaningful" impact on one third of the bullying related outcomes examined. Many programs to reduce bullying in primary and secondary schools have proven to be ineffective (Wolpert, 2016). Large scale analyses show that the effect of bullying prevention programs that address the effects of bullying and not the underlying causes are modest to none. Many of the bullying prevention programs, even though they are effective at raising awareness and giving educators a framework for responding to bullying, tend to be short-sighted (Brackett, 2018).

Some bullying prevention programs are effective with elementary aged students, but their effectiveness declines during the middle school years (Yeager, Fong, Lee, & Espelage 2015). Problems with bullying flare up in school because children are trying to get legitimate needs met such as belonging, competency, friendship, and control, but they go about it in unskilled ways. A recent analysis of social and emotional learning programs, which are rooted in emotional intelligence theory, showed that these programs reduce problem behaviors, increase academic success by an average of 11%, improve self-esteem, and enhance relationships (Brackett, 2018). It is believed that the best social and emotional learning programs demonstrate stronger effects than bullying prevention programs because they are more comprehensive, and importantly, they focus on developing specific emotion skills while building a positive school climate (Brackett & Divecha, 2018).

Once school personnel identify bullying behavior as a problem, a common response is to implement a stand-alone bullying prevention program. Such programs commonly include holding school assemblies with speakers who highlight the harmful effects of bullying and label students as bullies, then following up with a focus on catching such students in the act and providing increasingly severe punitive measures (Rigby, 2002). Additional components may include conflict resolution, peer support systems, or working with individuals identified as bullies. Unfortunately, these practices have not only been shown to be generally ineffective, they may be as likely to exacerbate problems as solve them (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Rigby, 2002). Stand-alone bullying prevention programs and curricula are often based on the premise that bullying can be reduced solely by increasing supervision, identifying perpetrators, and punishing them until they no longer bully other students. However, a program based on such an approach was shown to increase the number of students who reported being bullied by 20%

(Pepler et al., 1994). Students who engage in bullying may obtain social prestige or desired attention from their targets, and these rewards are often immediate and outweigh later consequences (Olweus, 1994). In addition, children who are labeled as bullies may draw self-confidence and self-identification from that label, which may in turn cause them to use such behavior more often. Moreover, school discipline programs that rely on zero tolerance policies and increasingly severe punishment procedures for offenders have been shown to increase instances of aggression (Mayer, 1995).

### **School Conditions That Support Bullying Prevention Programs**

School conditions that support bullying prevention programs was researched since this study will be specifically looking at specific conditions and whether their presence or absence has a positive or negative correlation, respectively, on the success or sustainability of a bullying prevention program.

In the last decade, research has revealed many lessons that are relevant to school-based bullying prevention. Much of what has been reported about what works in bullying prevention comes from randomized trials of programs and meta-analyses summarizing effective models, with limited post hoc exploration into programmatic elements associated with the greatest effect sizes. Although few studies were appropriately designed to discern particular effective components or elements of an entire model, separate from other elements, the following frameworks, core components and conditions are among the most promising within the extant research (Rivara, F. & Le Menestrel, S., 2016).

From their review, Farrington and Ttofi (2009) distilled elements of effective bullying prevention programs such as presence of parent and teacher training, use of classroom

disciplinary methods (i.e., strict rules for handling bullying), implementation of a whole-school anti-bullying policy, and the use of instructional videos. Studies also suggest that local participation in program selection, standardization, a focus on skills, supportive environments, effective training, and administrative support may contribute to the successful implementation of bullying prevention programs (Greenberg et al., 2003). It is essential to successful bullying prevention programs that there is school-wide involvement from all staff members, including administration. In order for staff members to buy into the program, bullying prevention should be viewed as a top priority by school leadership, not as an additional topic or curriculum (McIntosh, Horner, & Sugai, 2009). Implementation of a bullying prevention program can be viewed as a form of organizational change where an individual or group within the organization should champion the cause for change. Top-management support and commitment to change play an especially crucial role in success (Burke, 2002). Some studies of organizational change stress the importance of having a single change agent or “idea champion” lead the transformation. An idea champion is a highly respected individual who maintains momentum and commitment to change, often taking personal risks in the process (Kanter, 1983). Whether it occurs in the form of a single change agent or a guiding coalition, considerable evidence indicates that top-management support and commitment play an essential role in successful change in the public sector (Laurent, 2003).

According to Vreeman & Carroll (2007), the foundation of any bullying prevention program requires a school wide approach and commitment. There are many principles that are widely endorsed in bullying prevention systems that require school-wide support to be effective and sustainable (Ross, Horner, & Stiller, 2008). This requires changing the norms for social behavior and school climate. The school wide message needs to be: Bullying is wrong. It violates

school rules and will not be tolerated. The staff needs to be trained on how to intervene to stop bullying. Establish and enforce school rules and policies on bullying, aligned with state legislation and district bullying policies. Policies and consequences should be predetermined and clearly communicated. Intervention and Supervision is a key. Administration/teachers should be present in identified hot spots in which bullying occurs. Staff has to be willing to intervene consistently to observations of bullying behavior. Implement a classroom instructional component in which lessons and discussions on school environment keeps tabs on the bullying situation. A 20-40 minute weekly meeting with mini lessons and instruction on bullying prevention strategies is needed. It is best if an anti-bullying theme can be incorporated throughout the curriculum and school events. Continuous program with no end date. Revisit bullying prevention themes and intertwine them in classroom curriculum. Successful intervention programs assess bullying by administering an anonymous bullying questionnaire to students. This questionnaire should identify bullying “hot spots” on campus and also serve as a baseline for future reference and success indicators (peacefulplaygrounds.com, 2014).

Farrington and Ttofi (2009) also found that program duration and intensity were related to decreased bullying and victimization, and interventions inspired by the work of Dan Olweus appeared to be more successful. In addition to teaching the definition, examples and effects of bullying, it appears that programs that teach compassion, respect, kindness and other pro-social skills to stop behaviors of bullying before it begins, have been effective (Playworks, 2013). Generally, taking a proactive approach to bullying prevention, focusing on school-wide student engagement rather than targeted interventions, and changing the underlying environment promoting respect, kindness and inclusion, and shifting school culture shows positive results to thwart bullying (Playworks, 2013).



Schools must meet the real emotional and social developmental needs of students for bullying to decrease, Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize the expression of emotions in oneself and others, use emotions to enhance thinking and regulate emotions to promote personal growth (Brackett & Dineen, 2018). Research suggests that successful bullying prevention programs attend to the needs of individuals directly involved in bullying. Children who bully others and children who are bullied benefit from interventions that address their unique social, emotional and behavioral needs (Center for Safe Schools, 2014).

### **School Conditions That Do Not Support Bullying Prevention Programs**

School conditions that do not support bullying prevention programs was researched since this study will be specifically looking at specific conditions and whether their presence or absence has a positive or negative correlation, respectively, on the success or sustainability of a bullying prevention program.

Most bullying prevention programs are predicated on kids informing adults when bullying happens, and unfortunately, it is believed that instructing students to inform school staff when bullying happens is the leading cause of schools to fail when attempting to reduce bullying (Kalman, 2011). Meta-analyses suggest that lack of monitoring, ineffective consequences, and a failure to engage parents are associated with reductions in the impact of bullying prevention programs (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Although many programs have, individually, proven effective, Greenberg and colleagues (2003) argued that a lack of coordination among prevention initiatives and competing curriculum demands may limit their impact. There can be several implementation factors that limit the impact of bullying prevention programs, such as top-down selection and imposition of the program, lack of supporting evidence, insufficient training,

inadequate time to implement bullying prevention initiatives, and lack of long-term maintenance (Cunningham et al., 2016). Educators often argue that a lack of administrative support compromises the implementation of bullying prevention programs, claiming that if the principal doesn't buy into it, it is not possible to get everybody else on board. Principals must also provide important back-up to educators responding to bullying episodes and working with the parents of students involved in serious incidents (Cunningham et al., 2016). A study that focused on factors limiting the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs, that included a stratified random sample of 103 teachers selected from a moderate-sized central Canadian community, found that in 16 of the study's 19 focus groups, educators argued that a lack of administrative support compromised the implementation of anti-bullying programs. One participant was quoted as saying, "If the principal doesn't buy into it you're not going to get everybody on board, because you're always going to have reluctant people to start" (Cunningham et al., 2016). If bullying prevention is viewed as an add-on, or extra duty, to the heavy workloads of teachers, it is often difficult to get them on board with the program. Teacher adherence to bully-prevention programs is related to their attitudes regarding the usefulness of the program, and often teachers are not well-trained in the program, and therefore not as motivated to take part (Biggs, Vernberg, Twemlow, Fonagy, & Dill, 2008). As such, full implementation is challenging (Gersten & Dimino, 2001), and to be implemented, existing practices with proven effectiveness may be discontinued to accommodate the new tasks (Latham, 1988). Once in place, these programs are unlikely to sustain beyond a few years because they are rarely viewed as regular job responsibilities when the next stand-alone program comes along (McIntosh, Horner, & Sugai, 2009).

According to Johnathan Cohen, a psychologist at Columbia University, "Not all, but characteristically, the students who fall into the profile of a mean, bullying person, are in fact

people who are struggling with psychological issues” (Barshay, 2018). Brackett & Divecha (2018) believe that bullying prevention programs don't work because they address symptoms and not underlying causes of the bullying behaviors. Unfortunately, many of the students who struggle with psychological issues are not getting the assistance they need because many schools place more emphasis on reading and math than on social and emotional learning programs (Brackett & Divecha, 2018). The current consensus on how to reduce bullying is amorphous. Researchers talk about holistic and multi-faceted approaches that focus on improving both school climate and social emotional learning, building a strong, caring community where students learn to take personal responsibility for their own actions. Rather than targeting the bullies, the idea is to teach everyone to be a better person. If schools want to successfully target bullying, they need to be prepared and have the means to focus on school climate and social emotional learning (Barshay, 2018).

The success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs varies considerably. The effectiveness of the program and how long it is implemented in a school is dependent upon many different variables including support of school administration, training of staff, time allotted to implement the program, etc.

---

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Middle schools have been dealing with bullying and its effects for many years. In response to a call for action, many schools have been implementing formal bullying prevention programs as a way to educate students about bullying and prevent them from participating in bullying behavior. Even though most of the common bullying prevention programs come with detailed instruction for implementation and specific guidelines for schools to follow, there has been a great deal of disparity in the success and sustainability of these programs. This study was designed to investigate why the same bullying prevention program that is perceived to be successful by some middle school principals, and has been sustainable for three or more years, was not perceived to be successful by other middle school principals, or was not sustainable, lasting less than three years. The goal of this study was to determine what conditions, if any, were present in the schools with successful or sustainable bullying prevention programs that were not present in schools with unsuccessful or unsustainable bullying prevention programs. For the purpose of this study, a successful bullying prevention program is defined in two ways:

- One that has been sustainable, lasting three years or longer
- One that the building principal perceives to be successful

Bullying prevention programs are intended to be long term. Once implemented, the objective is for the program to remain in place, year after year, as a way to continually educate students about bullying and deter them from participating in bullying behaviors. The researcher in this study determined that three years is a copious amount of time for a school to continue to invest in

and implement a program, indicating the perception of school leaders pertaining to the program's success. Hence, a bullying prevention program that did not last for at least three years, may be viewed as an indication that the program was perceived as unsuccessful and was discontinued. Therefore, the length of three years was selected as the cutoff in this study to determine whether or not a bullying prevention program was successful. When considering the concept of sustainability in terms of bullying prevention programs, it is viewed as long term or lasting over time. For the purpose of this study, the number of years that a bullying prevention program was in place, was used as an indicator of success, meaning that the longer period of time a bullying prevention program was in place, the more successful the bullying prevention program is perceived to be.

For the purpose of this study, an unsuccessful bullying prevention program is defined in two ways:

- One that has been unsustainable, lasting less than three years
- One that the building principal perceives to be unsuccessful

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine why bullying prevention programs that have been sustainable and perceived to be successful in some schools, have not been sustainable nor perceived to be successful in other schools. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to determine whether the presence or absence of specific conditions affect the sustainability and success of a bullying prevention program. This information was gathered by surveying and interviewing middle school principals within the state of Pennsylvania, that implemented a bullying prevention program in an effort to educate and discourage students from participating in

bullying behaviors. After gathering information from middle school principals that have experienced what they perceive to be either a successful or unsuccessful bullying prevention program, and the specific conditions that were or were not present during the implementation of the bullying prevention program, the information was analyzed in order to address the core question: **What conditions do middle school administrators believe must be in place to create and sustain a successful bullying prevention program in a middle school?**

### **Participants**

This study was based on an opportunity participant sampling of middle school principals within the public school system of Pennsylvania. Since research has shown that students in grades 6,7, & 8 tend to bully or be bullied more than students in other grades, the target sample of this study were all principals, who are currently employed in the public school system within the State of Pennsylvania and working in a middle school that contains grades 6,7, & 8 only. School principals within the state of Pennsylvania working in public schools that contain any other grades were not included in this study. After reviewing the grades in each school within the public school system of Pennsylvania, it was determined that 325 middle school principals qualified, and would be contacted by email requesting their participation in the study and encouraged to complete the electronic survey. When the initial email was sent, 20 of those emails were undeliverable for various reasons, including increased security measures, changes in staff, etc. As a result, there were 305 middle school principals within the public school system of Pennsylvania that were contacted by email and provided with the electronic survey. Out of those 305 middle school principals, 55 participated in the study by completing the electronic survey. Out of those 55 participants, 16 stated that they would be willing to further participate in the

study and agreed to a possible follow-up interview. After the results of the surveys were analyzed, 6 of the 16 participants who agreed to be interviewed were contacted and participated in a follow-up interview. The 6 participants were selected for follow-up interviews based on their responses and optional additional information that they included as part of their survey, stating that they perceived their bullying prevention program to be either very successful or unsuccessful. It was determined that gathering additional information from participants that perceived their bullying prevention program to be very successful or unsuccessful would be more beneficial to the study than gathering additional information from participants who had programs that may not have been perceived to be either very successful or unsuccessful. The participants in this study represented all areas of the state of Pennsylvania and were not concentrated to any particular areas of the state. There were participants from all types of schools, including urban, suburban, and rural. The majority of the participants from urban schools were from the Pittsburgh area, most likely due to the fact that many middle schools in Philadelphia contain grades other than 6,7, & 8, and as a result, were not included in the study.

### **Research Design**

A mixed methods approach was used for this study. The quantitative data for this study was collected through an electronic survey that was sent by email to each middle school principal employed in the public school system within the State of Pennsylvania and working in a middle school that contains grades 6,7, & 8 only. This method of distribution was selected to allow the survey to be disseminated quickly to a large group of possible participants. An initial email was sent to possible participants introducing them to the study and encouraging them to participate by completing the electronic survey that would be sent to them in a separate email within 48 hours

from the initial email. 48 hours after the initial email was sent, another email containing the electronic survey was sent to all of the possible participants. Participants were given 2 weeks to complete the electronic survey. 1 week from the date that the electronic survey was sent, a follow-up email was sent urging possible participants to complete the survey and reminding them of the due date.

Survey research is defined as "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions". This type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods) (Check & Schutt, 2012). The goal of sampling strategies in survey research is to obtain a sufficient sample that is representative of the population of interest. It is often not feasible to collect data from an entire population of interest; therefore, a subset of the population or sample is used to estimate the population responses. A large random sample increases the likelihood that the responses from the sample will accurately reflect the entire population (Ponto, 2015).

The survey for this study was created in Google forms and began by gathering general demographic information about the participants and their school, including the type of school (urban, suburban, or rural). Even though demographic information was gathered, the identity of the participant and the school where they work will not be disclosed. Permission to conduct the electronic survey was obtained through the IRB (Institutional Review Board) at Temple University. The main portion of the survey consisted of 14 closed-ended questions that were able to be completed rather quickly. The survey employed a five point rating scale (Likert scale) format, allowing participants to answer questions from a list of choices rather than having to



provide open-ended answers. Responses for each item were scored from one (1) to five (5). A Likert scale is a type of rating scale used to measure attitudes or opinions (statisticshowto.com, 2018). The advantages of using such a scale are largely pragmatic; it is a convenient, easy, and natural-seeming scale to use for many applications. Whenever surveys are given, it is always advisable to make things as simple as possible for survey takers, and that is exactly what the five point Likert scale does (reference.com).

The survey consisted of questions that were able to determine whether or not the school currently has, or has ever had, a bullying prevention program in place, and how long that bullying prevention program has/had been in place. The survey also assessed the presence of several different conditions during the implementation of the bullying prevention program, such as to what extent were/are school administrators actively involved in the day to day success of the bullying prevention program, the involvement of staff members in the selection and implementation of the bullying prevention program, and to what degree bullying prevention was/is viewed as a priority within the school. The results of the survey were analyzed to determine which conditions were present in schools that have, or previously had, a sustainable and successful bullying prevention program. It was also determined from the survey results, whether or not those conditions were present in schools where a bullying prevention program was not sustainable nor perceived to be successful. A copy of the survey that was used is included in Appendix A.

After reviewing the survey results, some of the participants that volunteered to participate further in the study were contacted by email, to request an interview. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were contacted by phone at a scheduled time. The interview was intended to discuss participants' opinions as to why they believe the bullying prevention program in their

school was or was not successful. The interview was also an opportunity to gather specific information regarding some of the conditions that may or may not have been present in the school during the implementation of the bullying prevention program, and to gather opinions of building principals about whether or not those conditions contributed to the success and sustainability of the bullying prevention program. The interviews utilized a semi-structured format contingent upon the participants' responses to the pre-planned interview questions. The interview portion of the study consisted of 6 open-ended questions that may be referenced in Appendix B.

Conducting interviews is another approach to data collection used in survey research. Interviews may be conducted by phone, computer, or in person and have the benefit of visually identifying the nonverbal response(s) of the interviewee and subsequently being able to clarify the intended question. An interviewer can use probing comments to obtain more information about a question or topic and can request clarification of an unclear response (Singleton & Straits, 2009). Some authors advocate for using multiple techniques for survey research when no one method is adequate to address the planned research aims, to reduce the potential for measurement and non-response error, and to better tailor the study methods to the intended sample (Singleton & Straits, 2009). For example, a mixed methods survey research approach may begin with distributing a questionnaire and following up with telephone interviews to clarify unclear survey response.

### **Procedures**

After acquiring informed consent to proceed with the study and administer the survey from the Temple University IRB, an introductory e-mail was sent to the targeted group of middle

school principals providing them with an introduction to the research study and encouraging them to participate by completing the electronic survey. 48 hours later, following the introductory e-mail, a second e-mail containing a hyperlink to the survey, was sent to the targeted group. Included in the e-mail, was a brief note expressing the importance of the information the participant is providing to the study, and a statement thanking the participant for their time. The survey was created in an online format using Google forms. The online format was determined to be the most convenient way for participants to complete and submit the survey. When the participants opened the link to the survey, they were able to immediately answer the questions and submit the results within a few minutes.

The last question of the survey asked participants if they would consider further participation in the study, by agreeing to a follow-up interview. Participants who responded “yes” to this question, were instructed to provide their contact information, including a phone number. Upon reviewing the survey results, a list was created of participants who agreed to be interviewed. Details of the participants’ responses were closely examined, and participants who stated that they believed they have/had a very successful or unsuccessful bullying prevention program were invited to take part in an interview. Those participants were contacted through email thanking them for their participation, expressing the value of their insight to the study, and informing them that they were selected to participate in an interview. Through further email communication, times were scheduled for each of the interviews to take place by phone. Six phone interviews were conducted, providing an opportunity to gather more information pertaining to what were perceived by building principals to be either successful or unsuccessful bullying prevention programs, and the presence or absence of specific conditions that may have contributed to the success or failure of the bullying prevention program. 30 minutes was

allocated for each interview, and all were completed within the allotted time period. Prior to each interview, the participant was made aware of and granted approval for the Rev recorder app to be used to record and transcribe the interview.

Of the 325 public middle school principals within the State of Pennsylvania that work in middle schools consisting of grades 6,7, & 8 only, 55 principals completed the survey. Of those 55 participants, 16 agreed to participate in the interview portion of the study, and 6 were interviewed. Participants in this study represented rural, suburban, and urban schools from all areas of the state of Pennsylvania. The results of this study are based on trusting that the participants' responses to the survey and interview questions are truthful.

### **Analyzing Data**

Literature suggests that the presence of various conditions in a middle school during the implementation of a new program, may have a significant effect on its sustainability and success. Since the implementation of a bullying prevention program can be quite costly and time consuming for schools, it is important to appreciate the significance that those conditions play in the success and sustainability of the program. The opinions of middle school principals who experienced the implementation of a bullying prevention program, whether successful or unsuccessful, and their beliefs about whether the presence of certain conditions contributed to the success of the program, can also be beneficial.

Rating scales, in the form of Likert scales were utilized in this study. Participants indicated their feelings concerning each item on a five point bipolar scale such as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. Responses for each item were scored from one (1) to five (5) and the mean scores of the responses of each item were used so that the scale

scores fell in the same 1 to 5 range as the individual items. Rating scales, such as the ones used in this study, are used to capture subjective opinions with numbers. Rating scales are not designed to capture opinions, per se, but rather are designed to capture estimations of magnitude. Data from Likert scales assume equal intervals between points and are quantitative. Furthermore, they represent an ordering, from less of something to more of something, where that something may be ease-of-use or satisfaction or some other construct that can be represented in an incremental manner. In short, rating scale data approximate interval data and lend themselves to analysis by a range of statistical techniques. Qualitative data do not have these properties, and cannot be ordered along a continuum, or compared in terms of magnitude (Hodgson, 2010).

The results of the surveys that were administered to middle school principals within the State of Pennsylvania, were compiled automatically within Google Forms, where the survey was created. Once the data was retrieved from Google Forms, the results were analyzed in an attempt to find a rationale to support or reject the hypothesis that the presence, or lack of certain conditions within a middle school contribute, either positively or negatively, to the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program. There were several tests run to analyze the quantitative results. When the difference between two averages is being investigated, a t-test is used. t-tests are considered robust in terms of non-normality (i.e. ordinal variables compared to continuous variables). With a t-test there is one independent variable and one dependent variable. There was a series of t-tests, one for each condition. In this study the dependent variable was the number of years the bullying prevention program has been in place, and the independent variable was the presence or absence of each condition within the school.

Correlation, in the broadest sense, is a measure of an association between variables. In correlated data, the change in the magnitude of one variable is associated with a change in the

magnitude of another variable, either in the same (positive correlation) or in the opposite (negative correlation) direction. The analysis of data in this study was done using the Spearman's rank order correlation. This was used instead of the Pearson's correlation because the data for each item was ordinal, not continuous, and Pearson's correlation requires continuous data. In this study, correlation between the number of years that a bullying prevention program has been or was in place and each condition were evaluated. A positive correlations meant that as the number of years a program has been or was in place increased, there was an increase in the bullying score. If the correlation is around .3, it is considered a medium correlation, If the correlation is .5, it is considered a large correlation, meaning the relationship between the two variables is strong.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is used to see if there is a difference between two groups (datasciencecentral.com). In this study an ANOVA test was run to determine whether or not there were differences in the responses of principals from suburban schools as compared to principals from rural schools. Unfortunately, there were not enough participants from urban schools to do a comparison.

While quantitative studies are concerned with precise measurements, qualitative studies are concerned with verbal descriptions of people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Whereas a quantitative method typically requires some precise measuring instrument, the qualitative method itself is the measuring instrument. Qualitative data are less about attempting to prove something than about attempting to understand something. As with this study, quantitative and qualitative data can be, and often are, collected in the same study (Hodgson, 2010). Considering that we want to know participants' opinions about the conditions that were or were not present, and whether or not the presence of those conditions had an effect

on the success, or lack of success, of the bullying prevention program, we needed to ask questions, hear stories, and understand experiences. This information was gathered through interviews that were conducted with select participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed using the Rev recorder app. Upon the completion of all of the interviews, the data was read thoroughly. Notes were made and recurring words or phrases were highlighted to connect data and identify recurring themes, opinions, and beliefs of middle school principals and why they believe the bullying prevention program in their school was or was not successful and whether or not the presence, or lack of, certain conditions had an effect on that success.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Working as a middle school assistant principal for over 15 years and overseeing what is perceived to be a very successful middle school bullying prevention program, provides me with a unique perspective to carry out this research. I have witnessed bullying, addressed bullies, consoled victims of bullying, and have actively participated in bullying prevention at the middle school level for many years. I have been around long enough to experience the emergence of cyberbullying, as cell phones and social media apps such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Tic Toc became the most common mode of communication among adolescents. Almost daily, I experience the detrimental effects of bullying and cyberbullying, and how it can greatly influence the educational environment. I have had an active role in the creation and implementation of both successful and unsuccessful bullying prevention programs. Through trial and error, experiencing the disappointment of failed bullying prevention programs, and opportunities to reflect on reasons for the lack of success, I have questioned whether the presence of certain conditions are required for a bullying prevention program to work.

I have personally experienced a great deal of positive results with creating a unique bullying prevention program which incorporates a school-wide positive behavior aspect and a focus on kindness. I wholeheartedly believe that all staff, including administration, professional, and support staff, having an active role in bullying prevention has contributed to our program's success and shows that bullying prevention is a priority within the school. Our bullying prevention program was recently recognized by the International Bullying Prevention Association and honored with an award from the Ford Motor Company.

As a fellow middle school administrator, I know that all schools deal with the effects of bullying and have been required to implement bullying prevention policies. Even though policies have been created, middle schools across the country have been left to address the prevention of bullying on their own. Even though some schools have implemented the same bullying prevention programs, they have seen varying levels of success, and I believe there is a reason for that. My experience as a middle school administrator and the prevention of bullying, will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the responses given by the participants. Even though I don't know the participants personally, I hope my sincere interest in bullying prevention will allow them to trust me and the purpose of my research.

Every researcher comes into a study with their own opinions, and because of my personal involvement with bullying prevention programs, I am no different. My own biases will be managed through the design of the study. All participants will remain anonymous and will have an opportunity to respond freely to the online survey based on their own personal experiences and opinions. The participants who volunteer and are selected for a follow-up interview will be asked the same questions that are both impartial and unbiased. During the interview I will be approaching participants neutrally. I will not be conversing with the participants about my



feelings or experiences pertaining to bullying prevention. I will simply ask questions and allow them to respond. Analyzing the information gathered through the interview process will be done by simply reporting how the participants responded to the questions, using specific quotes to describe the results, and looking for similarities in responses by participants who perceived their bullying prevention program to be either successful and sustainable or unsuccessful and unsustainable.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Since this study involves people, it is fundamental to ensure that ethically sound research is conducted. As a result, the following ethical considerations were addressed:

- Research participants will not be subjected to harm in any way.
- Respect for the dignity of participants will be prioritized.
- Participation is voluntary and full informed consent will be obtained from the participants prior to the study.
- The privacy of participants will be ensured.
- Confidentiality of the research data will be ensured.
- Anonymity of individuals participating in the research will be ensured.
- Any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research will be avoided.
- Affiliations, sources of funding, and possible conflicts of interests do not exist in this study.
- Any communication in relation to the research will be done with honesty and transparency.
- All representation of primary data findings in a biased way will be avoided.

## Limitations

The limitations associated with this study are:

- Receiving a limited number of responses.

Limited participants can make it difficult to find significant relationships from the data, as statistical tests normally require a larger sample size to ensure a representative distribution of the population and to be considered representative of groups of people to whom results will be generalized or transferred.

- Bias due to voluntary response sampling. Only people who chose to participate in the study were included.

The main disadvantage of a voluntary response sampling is that it may be biased towards a certain type of person, particularly people with a personal interest in the research topic who will volunteer. In that case, the sample will not therefore be truly representative of the target population.

- Relying on self-reporting of participants. Trusting that participants are answering truthfully, and possibly being wanting to share information about successful programs from schools that they are proud of.

Self-reported data is limited by the fact that it rarely can be independently verified. What participants report in surveys or interviews is taken at face value. Self-reported data may contain several potential sources of bias such as attribution, the act of attributing positive events and outcomes to one's own agency but attributing negative events and outcomes to external forces, or exaggeration, the act of representing outcomes or embellishing events as more significant than is actually suggested from other data.

- Sampling bias due to the fact that many middle school principals were not included in the study because their schools contain grades other than 6,7, & 8.

Such limitations involve conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions made during the development of the study, which may represent a systematic bias intentionally introduced into the study design by the researcher. In this study specifically many urban middle schools in the state of Pennsylvania, primarily in Philadelphia, contain grades other than 6,7, & 8 and were therefore excluded from this study.

- The fact that whether or not a bullying prevention program was considered successful being dependent upon the opinion of the building principal.

Relying on the personal opinion of middle school principals who volunteered to participate in the study is a limitation very similar to that of self-reporting. The data is limited and not able to be verified objectively against the scenarios stated by the respondents.

- No data showing the number of bullying incidents being reported as a way to prove that a bullying prevention program is successful; showing that there was a decrease in reports of bullying incidents after the implementation of the bullying prevention program.

The data collected in this study was based primarily on opinions of the participants. Even though the participant may have reported that their bullying prevention program was successful there is no quantitative data showing that the number of bullying incidents being reported declined to support the claim that the program is successful.

- The fact that whether or not a bullying prevention program was considered successful being dependent upon how many years it was in place.

The data analysis in this study was based primarily the length of time that the bullying prevention program was in place. Even though the program may have been in place for 3 or more

years, there is no quantitative data showing that the number of bullying incidents being reported declined to support the claim that the program is successful.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Due to the noticeable disparity in the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs that have been implemented in middle schools, this study has been designed to investigate why the same bullying prevention programs that are perceived to be successful and sustainable in some schools, have not been successful nor sustainable in other schools. The goal of this study is to determine what conditions, if any, are present in the schools with perceived successful and sustainable bullying prevention programs, that were not present in schools with unsuccessful and unsustainable bullying prevention programs. This study was guided by the research question: What conditions do middle school administrators believe must be in place to create and sustain a successful bullying prevention program in a middle school? This mixed methods inquiry gathered information from middle school principals across the state of Pennsylvania through electronic surveys and follow-up interviews. The data gathered through this study was used to determine whether or not the presence or absence of specific conditions contributed to the sustainability and success of the bullying prevention programs. In addition to the data gathered from the electronic survey, the opinions shared during follow-up interviews helped to determine, more specifically, why middle school principals believe the bullying prevention programs have or have not been successful, and what conditions may be contributing factors.

Participants completed an electronic survey with 14 5-point Likert items. Before the results of the survey were analyzed, the data was coded and imputed into the Statistical Package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 24 software. Responses for each of the 14 Likert scale questions were scored from one (1) to five (5). The mean scores of the responses of each item

were used so that the scale scores will fall into the same 1 to 5 range as the individual items. Lower scores on the Likert items indicate lower or less conditions for a successful prevention program, whereas higher scores indicate agreeing with items/conditions in place for a successful prevention program. An overall “Bully Prevention” scale score was then calculated as the average of each of the 14 items.

Participants also provided some demographic information regarding their school. This information included, 1) what position they held at the school to make sure they were a principal, 2) whether that school was in an urban, suburban, or rural setting, 3) whether the school had an official bullying prevention program, 4) how long the bullying prevention program has been or was in place, and 5) the name of their bullying prevention program. Descriptive statistics regarding respondents’ demographic information and responses, as well as reliability statistics to the survey were reported, and the overall research question was addressed.

Most participants (89.1%) were employed by schools that implemented an official bullying prevention program; therefore, a comparison between those who had and had not implemented official bullying prevention programs could not be made. However, there was substantial variability in terms of how long the bullying prevention programs lasted at each location (ranging from less than one year to more than ten years). The correlation between the number of years of program implementation and each of the *conditions* necessary for successful bullying prevention programs were analyzed, with the assumption that bullying prevention programs with less years of implementation have not been as successful as those with more years of implementation.

Because the item asking how long the program lasted was ordinal, and Likert items are ordinal by nature, a series of Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient were calculated to

measure the relationship between years of program implementation, and each condition. Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient is a nonparametric statistic used to measure the strength and direction of a relationship that exists between two variables measured on ordinal scales (Laerd Statistics, 2018). Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient is similar to the parametric Pearson correlation coefficient in that scores range from -1 to 1, where zero indicates no association between the two variables, and the relationship gets stronger as they move further from zero in either direction (Schober, Boer, & Schwartz, 2018). Traditionally in the social sciences, correlations of .1, .3, and .5 are considered low, medium and high correlations in terms of the magnitude of the relationship (Cohen, 1988). Alpha was set to .05 to determine statistical significance for each correlation coefficient (i.e. if  $p < .05$ , the relationship is statistically significant).

Additionally, a comparison between suburban and rural schools was made on their ratings to each condition. The study was intended for comparisons between urban, suburban, and rural schools, however, too few urban schools participated in the study to conduct a true comparison. There were 55 respondents to the survey, all middle school principals ( $n = 55$ , 100.0%). Approximately half of the respondents were from Suburban schools ( $n = 31$ , 56.4%) and approximately a third of respondents were from rural schools ( $n = 20$ , 36.4%). Fewer respondents were from Urban schools ( $n = 4$ , 7.3%). A series of independent t-tests were conducted, treated the ratings for each condition as the dependent variables, and the school setting (rural or suburban) as the independent variable. In this way, differences in conditions at suburban and rural schools was assessed statistically. Alpha was set to .05 for statistical significance.

## Results

Descriptive Statistics - Of the 557 schools in the state of Pennsylvania that are considered middle schools because they house grades 6,7, and 8, many of them are actually junior high schools, junior-senior high schools, or schools that include kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Because this study was intended to gather information specifically from middle schools that house only grades 6,7, and 8, emails containing the electronic survey were sent only to principals of schools that identify as a “middle school” and consist of grades 6,7, and 8 only. The surveys were not sent to principals of schools that identify as “junior high schools”, “junior-senior high schools”, or “elementary-middle schools” and contain grades other than 6,7 and 8. In addition, the surveys were only sent to middle school principals of public middle schools in the state of Pennsylvania, and not to principals of charter schools or private schools. As a result, 325 emails containing the electronic survey were sent to principals of public middle schools within the state of Pennsylvania. Of those 325 emails, 20 were returned due to various reasons, such as a change in personnel or increased email security. 305 emails containing the bullying prevention survey were successfully sent. There were 55 respondents to the survey, all middle school principals ( $n = 55$ , 100.0%). Approximately half of the respondents were from Suburban schools ( $n = 31$ , 56.4%) and approximately a third of respondents were from rural schools ( $n = 20$ , 36.4%). Fewer respondents were from Urban schools ( $n = 4$ , 7.3%).

Almost all of the schools have or had implemented an official bullying prevention program ( $n = 49$ , 89.1%). Some implemented a program developed by their school or one consisting of a combination of programs. The length of those bullying prevention programs varied from less than one year ( $n = 11$ , 20.0%), to more than 10 years ( $n = 6$ , 10.6%). Table 1 displays the complete descriptive statistics for bullying prevention program durations.



Table 1.

*Frequency and percentage of responses to bullying prevention program information/duration*

	<i>n</i>	%
Has your school implemented an <u>official</u> bullying prevention program?		
Yes	49	89.1
No	6	10.9
How long did that bullying prevention program last?		
< 1 year	11	20.0
1 – 2 years	9	16.4
3 - 6 years	18	32.7
7 – 10 years	11	20.0
>10 years	6	10.9

Respondents were also asked what the name of their bullying prevention program was. The three most common bullying prevention programs being used were Olweus ( $n = 17, 30.9\%$ ) a form of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) ( $n = 16, 29.1\%$ ) and a locally developed program unique to the school ( $n = 10, 18.1\%$ ). Several of the participants reported that their school uses a combination of several bullying prevention programs ( $n = 7, 12.7\%$ ). The breakdown of bullying prevention programs represented in this study can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2.

*Bullying prevention programs represented*

	<i>n</i>	%
Olweus	17	30.9
PBIS	16	29.1
Locally Developed	10	18.1
Combination	7	12.7
Other	5	9.1

Figure 1 shows the type of schools (urban, suburban, and rural) and the bullying prevention programs that were implemented in each. A variety of bullying prevention programs, including

Olweus, PBIS, Locally Developed, & a combination of several of the afore mentioned were represented among rural, suburban, and urban schools. Combination programs represented in this study consisted of either a combination of Olweus & PBIS, Olweus & a locally developed program, or PBIS & a locally developed program. Many of the locally developed programs consisted of aspects of either the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, a Positive School Wide Behavior Program, or both. Considering the number of each type of school that was represented in this study, there was not enough of a difference to indicate that any particular type of school used any type of bullying prevention program more than others.

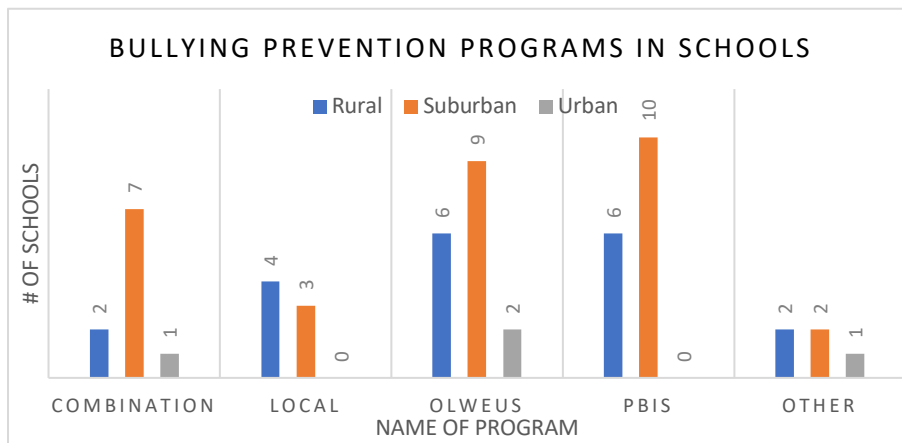


Figure 1. *Type of bullying prevention program implemented in schools*

In addition, there were no striking differences in program success or sustainability among the different bullying prevention programs. As seen in Figure 2, survey results show that all types of programs have been both sustainable/successful and unsustainable/unsuccessful. And Figure 3 shows that the type of school doesn't appear to affect the sustainability/success of a bullying prevention program. Urban schools were included in Figure 3, even though there were not enough participants from urban schools to do a true comparison.

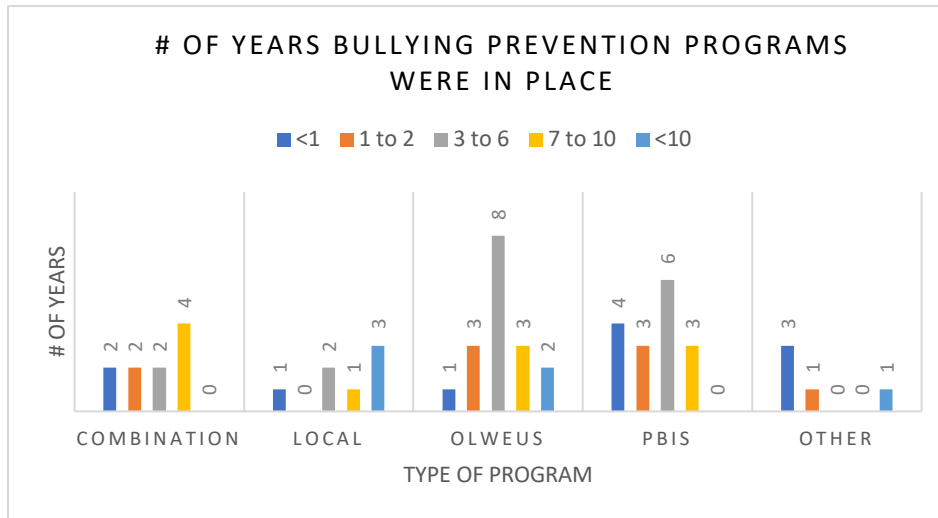


Figure 2. Number of years each type of bullying prevention program was in place

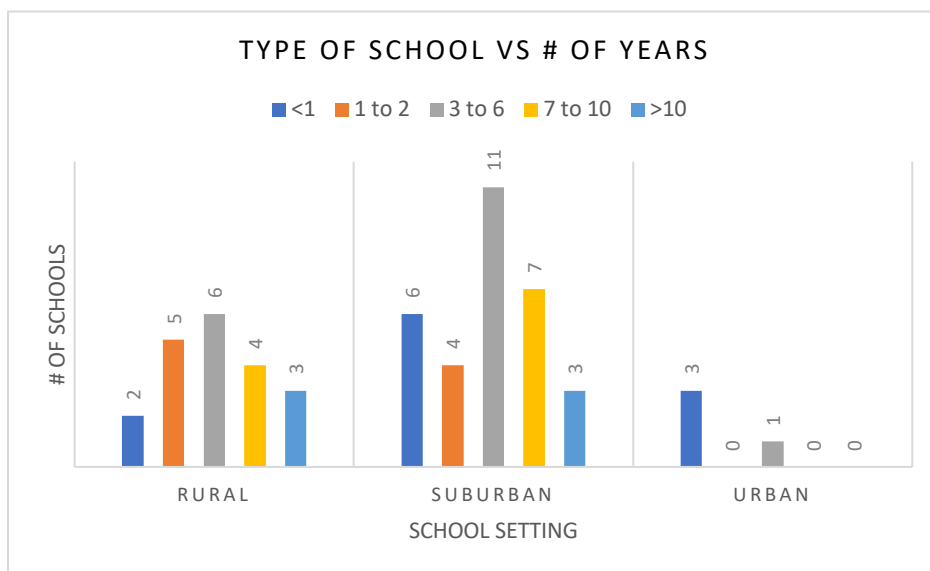


Figure 3. Number of years bullying prevention programs were in place in each type of school

**What conditions do middle school administrators believe must be in place to create and sustain a successful bullying prevention program in a middle school?**

There were 14 items on the bullying prevention survey related to conditions for bullying prevention (Items 8 through 21 on the Bullying Prevention Survey). These items were measured

on a 5-point Likert scale. There was high internal reliability on the bullying prevention survey (Cronbach's Alpha = .915). This means that participants who rated one item high, typically rated most items high (or those who rated one item lower rated most items lower). A general accepted rule for interpreting Cronbach's Alpha is that of 0.6 - 0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater a very good level (Hulin, Netemeyer, and Cudeck, 2001). The average overall bullying prevention score was 3.54 ( $sd = 0.82$ ). Since there are no similar studies and no normed results, we have concluded that higher scores mean more organizational effort, and lower scores mean less organizational effort. For the purpose of this study, an average overall Bullying Prevention score of 0.82 is very good. Table 3 displays the descriptive and reliability statistics for overall bully prevention survey. Running an overall scale score is very typical for research involving surveys and scales. Calculating the overall score of the scale is a way of measuring the reliability of the results, rather than simply concentrating on the individual items. Internal consistency of the reliability of summated scores derived from a Likert scale indicates the extent to which there is cohesiveness or inter-relatedness among the responses to the multiple items comprising the Likert scale. Cronbach (1951) developed this estimate of internal reliability and named the coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Based on the results of Cronbach's Alpha for this study, the measure of internal reliability is extremely high. This did not happen by accident. What this means is that each item in the survey is measuring the same construct or theory, which in this study, is an organizational effort toward bullying prevention. As the survey was designed, the single construct of demonstrating the effort a school put into a bullying prevention program or creating an environment conducive to a successful bullying prevention program was considered, and questions were carefully worded to make sure each item in the survey was pertaining to that construct. Furthermore, if examined closely, a common theme can

be seen among the survey questions. In this study, the presence of specific conditions is viewed as the school, or its leadership, putting forth effort toward bullying prevention.

Table 3

Scale	Mean (SD)	Median	Range	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Bully Prevention Survey</i>	3.54 (0.82)	3.57	1 – 5	.915

*Descriptive and Reliability Statistics for Overall Bully Prevention Survey*

Because most schools have implemented, for some length of time, an official bullying prevention program ( $n = 49$ ), a comparison between those who had and had not implemented official bullying prevention programs could not be made. However, there was substantial variability in terms of how long the bullying prevention programs lasted at each location (ranging from less than one year to more than ten years). As such, the relationship between the number of years of program implementation and the *conditions* necessary for successful bullying prevention programs, with the assumption that schools with less years of implementation have not been as successful as those with more years of implementation. Because the item asking how long the program lasted was ordinal, Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was the most appropriate correlation to measure to relationship between years, and each condition.

There were significant, positive associations between how long bullying prevention programs last and the following "condition" items: 1) How involved staff were in choosing the program, 2) How involved staff were in implementing that program, 3) How involved administration was in day-to-day success of the program, 4) All staff members were invested in the success of the program, 5) staff were provided with adequate training, 6) bullying prevention was a priority within the school, 7) staff regularly and actively were involved in bullying

prevention programs throughout the year, 8) The bullying prevention program is/was combined with promoting positive behaviors (e.g. kindness), 9) Time was allocated in the schedule for bullying prevention activities, 10) Strengths of staff members in my building are/were recognized through their involvement in the bullying prevention program, 11) Since the implementation of the bullying prevention program, there has been a decrease in bullying behaviors among students, and 12) My school continues to evaluate and upgrade the bullying prevention program to keep it current and effective? Most of these were moderate/medium sized correlations. Although, the item pertaining to adequate training for staff had the highest association with bullying prevention program length ( $r_s = .481, p < .001$ ), followed by noticing a decrease in bullying behaviors ( $r_s = .466, p < .001$ ) and continuous evaluation of bullying prevention program ( $r_s = .411, p = .002$ ). There were two items with no significant association with the length of implementation of an official bullying prevention program: 1) Having a bullying prevention committee made up of staff and administration, and 2) developing ways for students to report bullying, other than talking with an adult. This indicates that these two conditions were not necessary in a “successful” bullying prevention program. Table 4 displays specific Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient values and significance levels for each condition item and the item regarding the length of the bullying prevention program.

Table 4

*Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (and significance value) between length of bullying prevention program and “condition” items*

	How long did the bullying prevention program last?
How involved were school staff in choosing the bullying prevention program?	$r_s = .376, p = .005$
How involved were school staff in the implementation of the bullying prevention program?	$r_s = .307, p = .023$

---



---

How involved was/are building administration in the day-to-day success of the bullying prevention program?	$r_s = .283, p = .037$
All staff members are/were invested in the success of the bullying prevention program (buy-in among staff)?	$r_s = .390, p = .003$
Staff are/were provided with adequate training on the bullying prevention program prior to implementation?	$r_s = .481, p < .001$
Bullying prevention is/was promoted as a priority within the school?	$r_s = .312, p = .021$
Your school has a bullying prevention committee that consists of staff and administration?	$r_s = .004, p = .979$
The school developed ways for students to report bullying, other than reporting a person to an adult?	$r_s = .101, p = .465$
Staff are regularly and actively involved in bullying prevention activities throughout the school year?	$r_s = .327, p = .015$
The bullying prevention program is/was combined with promoting positive behaviors, such as kindness?	$r_s = .341, p = .011$
Time is/was allocated in the schedule at my school for bullying prevention activities/programs?	$r_s = .329, p = .014$
Strengths of staff members in my building are/were recognized through their involvement in the bullying prevention program?	$r_s = .365, p = .006$
Since the implementation of the bullying prevention program, there has been a decrease in bullying behaviors among students?	$r_s = .466, p < .001$
My school continues to evaluate and upgrade the bullying prevention program to keep it current and effective?	$r_s = .411, p = .002$

---

Note. Significant correlations bolded

Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between participants' overall *Bullying Prevention Scale* scores and the length of bullying prevention program durations at schools,  $r_s = .457, p < .001$ . This significant relationship indicates that the higher the overall bullying prevention scale score (the average of all 14 items on the survey), the longer the duration of successful bullying prevention programs, on average (see Figure 4). Overall, the correlation of overall Bullying Prevention Scale scores and length of bullying prevention programs, provide

more confirmation that the presence of the conditions listed in this study significantly contribute to the sustainability and success of a bullying prevention program.

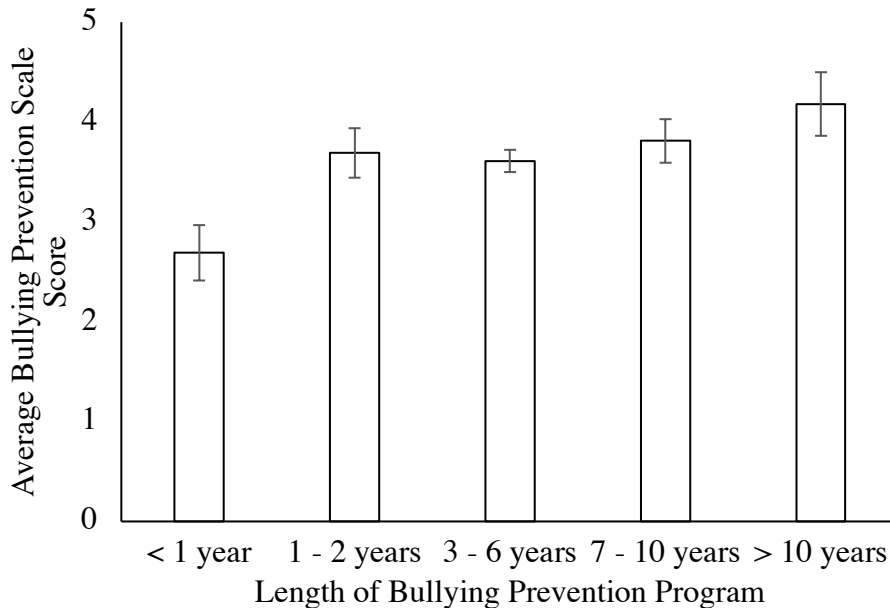


Figure 4. Average overall scores on the bullying prevention scale by the length of bullying program prevention duration

Differences by school setting - Participants also provided information as to whether their school was located in an urban, suburban, or rural setting. Therefore, as a follow-up analysis, a comparison of the items measuring *conditions* for successful bullying prevention programs by school setting was possible. However, only four of the respondents indicated an urban school setting. As such, a comparison between suburban ( $n = 31$ ) and rural ( $n = 20$ ) was conducted through a series of independent samples t-tests (Table 5). The only significant difference in condition scores between suburban and rural schools was for the question, “How involved was/are the building administration in the day-to-day success of the bullying prevention program,”  $p = .037$ .



Table 5.  
*Results from series of independent-samples t-tests*

	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
How involved were school staff in choosing the bullying prevention program?	2.84 (1.34)	3.15 (1.18)	-0.85	.402
How involved were school staff in the implementation of the bullying prevention program?	4.10 (0.94)	3.85 (0.93)	0.92	.364
<b>How involved was/are building administration in the day-to-day success of the bullying prevention program?</b>	<b>4.19 (0.95)</b>	<b>3.60 (1.00)</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>.037</b>
All staff members are/were invested in the success of the bullying prevention program (buy-in among staff)?	3.45 (1.10)	3.25 (0.97)	0.69	.496
Staff are/were provided with adequate training on the bullying prevention program prior to implementation?	3.68 (1.22)	3.30 (1.10)	1.13	.266
Bullying prevention is/was promoted as a priority within the school?	4.19 (0.83)	3.75 (1.10)	1.66	.104
Your school has a bullying prevention committee that consists of staff and administration?	3.48 (1.63)	2.90 (1.48)	1.29	.202
The school developed ways for students to report bullying, other than reporting a person to an adult?	4.32 (1.17)	4.05 (1.15)	0.82	.416
Staff are regularly and actively involved in bullying prevention activities throughout the school year?	3.77 (0.81)	3.70 (1.03)	0.29	.775
The bullying prevention program is/was combined with promoting positive behaviors, such as kindness?	4.06 (1.18)	4.05 (1.00)	0.05	.964
Time is/was allocated in the schedule at my school for bullying prevention activities/programs?	3.97 (1.02)	4.05 (0.95)	-0.29	.773
Strengths of staff members in my building are/were recognized through their involvement in the bullying prevention program?	3.48 (1.24)	3.05 (1.23)	1.23	.226
Since the implementation of the bullying prevention program, there has been a decrease in bullying behaviors among students?	2.87 (1.06)	3.05 (0.83)	-0.64	.524
My school continues to evaluate and upgrade the bullying prevention program to keep it current and effective?	3.32 (1.45)	3.20 (1.15)	0.32	.751

Note. Significant correlations bolded

Building administration were significantly more involved in day-to-day success in suburban schools compared to rural schools (Figure 5).

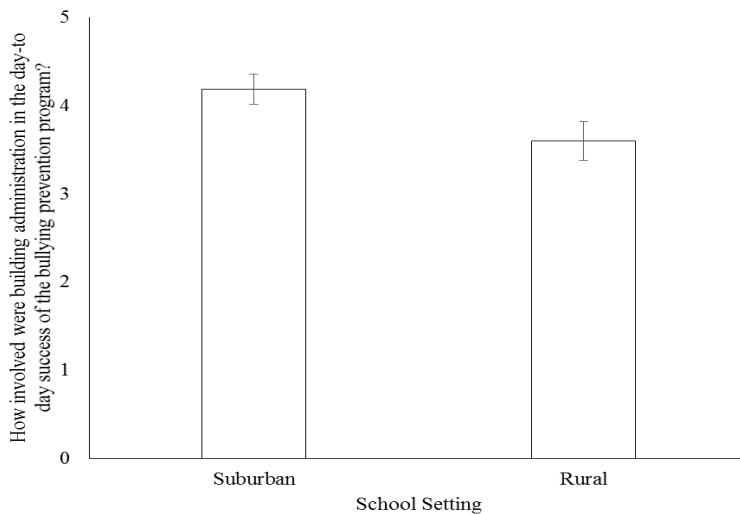


Figure 5. *Difference between suburban and rural schools on how involved building administration was/is*

In order to supplement the quantitative data that was gathered from the bullying prevention survey and gain a better understanding of participants' attitudes about the conditions that were or were not present, and reasons for the success, or lack of success, of the bullying prevention program at their school, a select group of participants were interviewed. Out of the 55 participants who completed the online survey, 16 of those participants agreed to be interviewed, and 6 interviews were conducted. Participants were chosen for an interview based on their responses to the survey; more specifically, having what they perceived to be either a very successful or unsuccessful bullying prevention program. Each participant was asked six open-ended questions about the success and sustainability of the bullying prevention program that currently exists or had existed in their school. Overall, the interviews bolstered the results of the survey, substantiating the fact that middle school principals believe that the presence or absence

of specific conditions have a positive or negative effect, respectively, on the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program.

When asked “Why do you believe that the bullying prevention program was or was not successful within your school?” the “importance of school administration making bullying prevention a priority” was mentioned by all participants. More specifically, some of them included examples such as, “providing bullying prevention training for staff”, and “setting aside time for bullying prevention lessons and activities.” Other items such as the “involvement and buy-in of staff”, and “letting students know that bullying prevention is a priority” were also mentioned. When asked the second question “Are there any specific conditions within your school that in your opinion contributed to the bullying prevention program being successful or unsuccessful?” every participant responded with an answer that included either “staff involvement” or “lack of staff involvement”, including “teacher buy-in”, and the “staff showing that they care when students are being bullied”. When discussing staff involvement in bullying prevention, several participants mentioned the “importance of showing staff that their efforts in the prevention of bullying are appreciated”.

When asked question #3 “What kind of bullying prevention activities take place within your school?” all participants who perceived their program to be successful were able to list specific examples of bullying prevention activities that take place at their school, including “beginning of the school year bullying prevention kick-off events”, “regular class meetings”, “guest speakers”, and “positive behavior rewards”. The participants who perceived their bullying prevention program to be unsuccessful commented on the “lack of time being devoted to bullying prevention activities”, “not holding activities that were specific to bullying prevention”, and “individual staff doing things, but no school-wide activities related to bullying prevention”.

There were several parts to question #4 including: “To what extent is bullying prevention seen as a priority within your school?”; “How do you know that bullying prevention is or is not a priority in your school?”; “Can you give specific examples that show bullying prevention is or is not a priority?” In response to question #4, participants who perceived their bullying prevention program to be successful gave clear examples of how bullying prevention is a priority in their school, including “the time and money that is devoted to bullying prevention”, “regular bullying prevention activities such as class meetings”, “expectations for staff in reference to bullying prevention”, and “giving students a voice in regards to bullying prevention during class meetings, surveys, and various methods to report bullying behavior”. Participants who perceived their program to be unsuccessful took this opportunity to mention how “devoting time to things such as preparation for standardized testing and remediation instead of bullying prevention portrays the message to staff, students, and the community that bullying prevention is not a priority”, “bullying prevention is not seen a priority of higher administration, who want building level administrators to focus on other things”, and “staff didn’t view bullying prevention as a priority”.

Question #5 addressed the involvement of building administrators by asking “How are building administrators involved in the day-to-day bullying prevention activities within your school?” Once again, this question was answered much differently by participants who perceived their bullying prevention program to be successful than the type of answer that was given by participants who perceived their bullying prevention program to be unsuccessful. The participants who perceive their bullying prevention program to be successful reported that they along with other building administrators are typically “very involved in the day-to-day bullying prevention”. Some of this involvement includes “supporting staff with the implementation of

bullying prevention requirements”, “meeting with staff and assisting with the planning of bullying prevention activities”, “being visible in areas where bullying may take place such as hallways and cafeteria”, “meeting with students to address bullying concerns”. On the other hand, participants who perceive their bullying prevention program to be unsuccessful, stated that they are “not involved in day-to-day bullying prevention”, “address bullying behavior, by dealing with a student when they are made aware of an issue”. One of those participants went on to elaborate that “as a result of not being involved in day-to-day bullying prevention”, they “end up being more involved in the daily reaction to bullying that takes place” within their school.

The final portion of the interview addressed the extent to which staff understands the importance of implementing bullying prevention. Surprisingly, all of the participants responded similarly regardless of having a successful or unsuccessful bullying prevention program. Some of the responses included “some staff are more dedicated than others”, “some go above and beyond to make the program successful”, “some buy-in while others don’t”, and “some are more comfortable with the topic than others.” Even though all participants acknowledged the fact that some staff will do a better job with bullying prevention than others, they all recognized that school staff generally follow the lead of their building principal. One participant made it clear by stating “if bullying prevention is a priority of the building principal, staff will put forth more effort to do their part in implementing bullying prevention.” Another participant stated, “some put more effort into it than others, but all do it”.

The results of this study clearly indicate that there are significant, positive associations between how long bullying prevention programs last and many of the conditions included in the survey such as making bullying prevention a priority, allocating time for bullying prevention, and having administration and staff actively involved in bullying prevention. In addition, the

responses to the follow-up interviews made it obvious that middle school principals believe that with the presence of specific underlying conditions, such as administration and staff being actively invested, making bullying prevention a priority, and providing regular bullying prevention training and activities, bullying prevention programs can be both successful and sustainable. The participants in this study experienced the implementation and success of various bullying prevention programs including Olweus, School Wide Positive Behavior, and their own version of a bullying prevention program, indicating that any bullying prevention program has the possibility of being successful and sustainable when the right conditions are present.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Summary**

This study examined the opinions of middle school principals throughout the state of Pennsylvania to answer the question: What conditions do middle school administrators believe must be in place to create and sustain a successful bullying prevention program in a middle school? Several key findings from the electronic survey, including the positive relationship between the number of years of program implementation and the presence of conditions listed helped to clearly answer that question. The data clearly shows that schools with the conditions in place have bullying prevention programs that last longer. The condition that had the highest association with bullying prevention program length is providing adequate training for staff, followed by continuing to evaluate and upgrade the bullying prevention program, and the third highest association is all staff members are/were invested in the success of the bullying prevention program or buy-in among staff.

The follow-up interviews which allowed middle school principals to clearly state their opinions about the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs, showed a clear correlation between their responses and the data from the electronic survey. The middle school principals that were interviewed had similar opinions pertaining to the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs, even though the schools in which they work vary in size and location. The information that was collected through the interviews, provided me with sufficient information to confidently answer the research question. Middle school principals clearly believe

that there are conditions that must be in place to create and sustain a successful bullying prevention program in a middle school.

Middle school principals that participated in this study believe that the success of a bullying prevention program depends greatly upon how invested and involved the staff is in the success of the program. Participants clearly expressed that if the staff does not buy into the bullying prevention program and actively work at promoting bullying prevention and/or positive behaviors, the program, in their opinion, will not be successful nor will it last. The participants stressed that in order to get staff actively involved in bullying prevention, they need to believe in it, need to know that bullying prevention is a priority among school administration, and they need to feel that their efforts in bullying prevention are appreciated by administration. In their opinion, it is also extremely important for students to know that bullying prevention is a priority within their school. This can be accomplished through regular bullying prevention activities and students having a voice as well as several ways to report bullying.

In addition to the top three conditions that had the highest association with bullying prevention program length, there were several conditions identified as being moderately related to longer durations of bullying prevention programs and were, in turn, viewed as contributing to the success and sustainability of the bullying prevention program. These conditions are: including staff in the selection of the bullying prevention program, involving staff in the implementation of the program, building administration being actively involved in bullying prevention on a day-to-day basis, staff members being invested in the success of the bullying prevention program, making bullying prevention a priority within the school, combining bullying prevention with promoting positive behaviors (e.g. kindness), allocating time in the schedule for



bullying prevention activities, and recognizing strengths of staff members through their involvement in the bullying prevention program.

Results of this study showed that building administration were significantly more involved in bullying prevention on a day-to-day basis in suburban schools as compared to rural schools. The results did not indicate that building administration was not involved in bullying prevention in rural schools, and there was no indication that the bullying prevention programs in rural schools were any less successful than those in suburban schools. Unfortunately, the lack of responses from administrators in urban schools prevented any comparison between the involvement of administration in urban schools as compared to those in suburban or rural schools.

The results of this study, and the belief that the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs is positively associated with the active day-to-day involvement of building administration, supports the findings of Kotter (1996), who stated that “major change is often said to be impossible unless the head of the organization is an active supporter.” The belief that the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program is dependent upon getting staff to buy-in to the idea that bullying prevention should be a priority, and that they should be invested and actively involved in promoting bullying prevention, is validated by Greenberg & Baron (2000), who pointed out that “unless staff understand and appreciate the need for change in their school, their interest in maintaining the status quo will undoubtedly take precedence over their willingness to accept change.” It makes perfect sense that the success of a bullying prevention program will be dependent upon the attitude and role that the building principal takes regarding the importance prioritizing and promoting bullying prevention. According to Fullan (2010), “A leader’s role is to facilitate change by being involved but not dominating the situation. Instead,

utilizing transformational leadership to create a system where positive change is virtually inevitable and developing the organization's capacity to innovate is much more successful." Getting everyone in the building invested and actively involved in bullying prevention is a form of transformational leadership which "focuses on developing a shared vision and shared commitment to school change" (Hallinger, 2003).

There were several limitations associated with this study, primarily the limited number of participants that chose to complete the electronic survey. Many of the middle school principals who were sent the electronic survey did not respond. There were 305 emails sent to middle school principals across the state of Pennsylvania, and only 55 or 18.0% completed the electronic survey. The sample size being small and limited to only middle school principals, limits its generalizability. Even though the sample size was smaller than hoped, the results are nonetheless valid for the purpose of answering the research question. Out of the 55 respondents, only 4 of them were from urban schools, preventing any comparison between urban, suburban, and rural schools. It would have been interesting to see if there were obvious differences or similarities among the schools based on their location. This study only focused on the opinions of middle school principals and didn't get the perspective of other middle school employees, such as teachers, who are often the people responsible for implementing and promoting the bullying prevention program. Another limitation is whether or not a bullying prevention program is successful may depend upon reportable incidents of bullying. This information may not be accurate to the actual number of bullying incidents taking place.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, middle school principals were surveyed and interviewed to collect data regarding their opinions about conditions that they believe need to be present in order for a bullying prevention program to be successful and sustainable in a middle school. The purpose of this study was to determine why the same bullying prevention programs, that have been successful and sustainable in some schools, have been unsuccessful and unsustainable in other schools, and if that success was due to the presence of specific conditions. Upon reviewing the information collected, it became evident that there is a definite correlation between the presence of particular conditions and the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs. In addition, it was obvious that middle school principals, overwhelmingly, believe that bullying prevention programs can be successful and sustainable in a middle school, when specific conditions are present.

As a result of their experiences, middle school principals firmly believe that when building administrators are invested and actively engaged in bullying prevention, the program will be more likely to succeed. This active involvement indicates to staff and students that bullying prevention is a priority of administration, which was indicated as a key condition believed to be necessary for a bullying prevention program to be successful and sustainable. Adequately training staff on the bullying prevention program prior to implementation, allocating time in the schedule for bullying prevention activities and programs, and continuing to evaluate and upgrade the bullying prevention program to keep it current and effective, are conditions that will promote bullying prevention as a priority and help to get staff invested in the success of the bullying prevention program.

This study has confirmed that the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program relies greatly on both the actions of building leaders and staff buy-in. Even though this study focused on the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program, what we have learned can easily be adapted to any new initiative being implemented in a school. Building principals are often referred to as agents of change, because they have the ability to facilitate or hinder the success of a new initiative through their actions. They have the ability to develop a shared vision and shared commitment to the success of a program, but they also have the ability to hinder its success by not promoting the program as a priority. The most important finding as a result of this study is, when implementing a new initiative or program into a school, building leaders need to be actively involved in order for staff to buy into the need for the program, and ultimately work towards its success. This study has made it clear that it is the responsibility of building leaders to promote the success of a bullying prevention program, or any new initiative for that matter, by helping staff to understand and believe in the need for the program and the role that they play in the program's success.

Prior research has shown that implementing new initiatives in schools is often met with resistance by staff. The unwillingness of staff to change can affect whether or not an initiative is successful; therefore, when embarking on any reform effort, such as bullying prevention, school leaders should plan for and focus on the buy-in of staff prior to and during implementation. Involving staff in the selection and implementation of the bullying prevention program, utilizing the strengths of staff members in the implementation, and showing staff that their efforts in bullying prevention are appreciated, are all conditions that will help to get staff invested and increase the possibility of program success and sustainability. The results of this study clearly show that the actions of the building leader(s) matter to those that they lead. If the building

leader does not show that they are personally invested in the initiative, it will be extremely difficult to get staff invested in the success of the program. It has been proven, time and time again, that employees thrive on positive feedback; therefore, it is extremely important for building leaders to show staff that their efforts are appreciated. Showing staff that they are valued and supported by taking time to meet with them, hear their questions and address their concerns, and utilize their talents, will increase buy-in and support the program's success.

We learned from this study that many different bullying prevention programs have seen success and sustainability, and it appears that the specific program, whether it is an official bullying prevention program, a school wide positive behavior program, or one that was created by and is unique to a school, does not particularly matter. More importantly, the program must meet the needs of the school, align with the school culture, and be supported by the presence of the conditions addressed in this study. School culture refers to the way staff members work together and the beliefs, values, and assumptions they share. In order for a bullying prevention program to fit into the culture of the school staff members have to believe in the need for the program and work together towards its success. It is clear that actively invested administration, promoting the bullying prevention program as a priority, and staff that believes in and is actively engaged in the bullying prevention program are all conditions that are positively associated with the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs. This study has also shown that other conditions including promoting positive behaviors and kindness rather than focusing on the negative effects of bullying; involving students in regular bullying prevention activities such as class meetings; and providing students with several ways to report bullying, including an online method, have also been positively associated with the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program.

Reviewing the results of this study and realizing the importance of a school leader's actions and attitudes on the success and sustainability of a bullying prevention program, has brought to light the need for future educational leaders to be prepared to lead a school or district through the implementation of a new program. School leaders need to understand that they will often set the tone for the overall implementation, and how invested staff will be. It is extremely important for future leaders to appreciate that leading through change will require them to be invested and actively engaged. They cannot just agree to implement a new program without having an active role, even if that role is offering continued support. They need to understand their ability to facilitate and hinder the success of the program, and future leaders must have a clear understanding of how much they will be relied upon by their staff. It is the role of a school leader to be tenacious, vigilant, supportive and patient, while inspiring hope and confidence in his or her staff as a change is occurring.

#### **Need for Future Research:**

Since bullying as a research topic is fairly new, there is a definite need for additional research moving forward. Most of the research pertaining to bullying up to this point, has focused on the effects of bullying or cyberbullying and why it occurs. There has been very little research on the prevention of bullying and even less on the success of specific bullying prevention programs or conditions needed for bullying prevention programs to succeed in a school setting. This study focused primarily on the opinions of middle school principals and whether or not they believe specific conditions contribute to the sustainability and success of bullying prevention programs in a middle school. Future research that would be beneficial to the field would be:

- A study to get the perspective of other middle school employees, such as teachers, about conditions that they believe contribute to the success and sustainability of bullying prevention programs in schools, since they are typically the ones who are working to implement and promote the bullying prevention program. Their opinions are extremely important. If staff believe that certain conditions should be present and they're not, it may influence their buy-in and ultimately the success of the program.
- A study on the types of bullying prevention that is taking place in urban, suburban, and rural schools, and the success of those programs.
- A study to investigate race and bullying. Although bullying is recognized as a serious problem among adolescents, little is known about racial differences in bullying.

## References

*American Psychological Association*, American Psychological Association, [www.apa.org/research/action/bullying.aspx](http://www.apa.org/research/action/bullying.aspx).

Andrews, K., & Rothman, M. (2002). Cultivating innovation: How a charter/district network is turning professional development into professional practice. *Phi Delta Kappa*, 83(7). Retrieved from <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0203and.htm>

An Exploration of Effects of Bullying Victimization from a Complete Mental Health Perspective (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244015623593>

ANOVA Test: Definition, Types, Examples. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statisticshowto.datasciencecentral.com/probability-and-statistics/hypothesis-testing/anova/>

Barshay, J. (2018). Research evidence on bullying prevention at odds with what schools are doing. Retrieved from <https://hechingerreport.org/research-evidence-on-bullying-prevention-at-odds-with-what-schools-are-doing/>

Bauer, N. S., Lozano, P., & Rivara, F. P. (2007). The effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in public middle schools: A controlled trial. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Volume 40, pp. 266–274.

Bazelon, E. (2013). How Do We Define Bullying? *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/contemporary-psychoanalysis-in-action/201303/how-do-we-define-bullying>

Beale, A. & Hall, K. (2007). Cyberbullying: What School Administrators (And Parents) Can Do. *The Clearing House*, Volume 81(1), pp. 8-12. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30189945>

Berger, K.S. (2007). Update on bullying at school: Science forgotten? *Developmental Review*, Volume 27, pp. 90-126.

Blase, J. & Kirby, P.C. (2000). *Bringing out the best in teachers: What effective principals do* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Bogart, L.M., Elliott, M.N., Klein, D.J., Tortolero, S.R., Mrug, S., Peskin, M.F., Davies, S.L., Schink, E.T., Schuster, M.A. (2014). Peer victimization in fifth grade and health in tenth grade. *Journal of Pediatrics*, Volume 133(3), pp. 440–447.

Brackett, M. & Divecha, D. (2018). School Anti-Bullying Programs Ineffective. *Hartford Courant*. Retrieved from <https://www.courant.com/opinion/hc-op-brackett-school-bullying-programs-ineffectiv-20130906-story.html>



Bradshaw, C. (2015). Translating Research to Practice in Bullying Prevention. *American Psychologist*, Volume 70(4), pp. 322–332.

Breivik, K., Limber, S.P., Masiello, M., Olweus, D., Wang, W. (2018). Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: A large scale study of U.S. students in grades 3-11. *Journal of School Psychology*, Volume 69, pp 56-72.

Briggs, B., Vernberg, E., Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., & Dill, E. (2008). Teacher Adherence and Its Relation to Teacher Attitudes and Student Outcomes in an Elementary School-Based Violence Prevention Program. *School Psychology Review*, Volume 37, pp. 533-549.

Bullying Prevention and School Safety. (2019). *American Educational Research Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.aera.net/Education-Research/Issues-and-Initiatives/Bullying-Prevention-and-School-Safety>

Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. (2018). *Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network*. Retrieved from <https://www.pattan.net/multi-tiered-system-of-support/mtss-positive-behavior-interventions-and-supports/bullying-prevention-in-positive-behavior-intervent/>

Cantone, E., Piras, A. P., Vellante, M., Preti, A., Danielsdóttir, S., D'Aloja, E., Lesinskiene, S., Angermeyer, M. C., Carta, M. G., Bhugra, D. (2015). Interventions on bullying and cyberbullying in schools: a systematic review. *Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health*, Volume 11, pp. 58-76.

Check J., Schutt R. K. (2012). Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research. *Research methods in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. pp. 159–185.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Cornell, D., Gregory, A., Huang, F., & Fan, X. (2013). Perceived prevalence of teasing and bullying predicts high school drop-out rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Volume 105, pp. 138-149.

Craig, W. (1998). The relationship among bullying, victimization, depression, anxiety, and aggression in elementary school children. *Personality and Individual Differences*, Volume 24, pp. 123-130.

Cunningham, C.E., Rimas, H., Mielko, S., Mapp, C., Cunningham, L., Buchanan, D., Vaillancourt, T., Chen, Y., Deal K., & Marcus, M. (2016). What Limits the Effectiveness of Antibullying Programs? A Thematic Analysis of the Perspective of Teachers. *Journal of School Violence*, Volume 15(4), pp. 460-482.

Cyberbullying. Edited by Larissa Hirsch, (2014). *KidsHealth*, The Nemours Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html>.

“Description of the Bullying Prevention Program.” *Bullying Prevention Program*. Retrieved from [www.bullyfree.com/school-program/description-of-the-bullying-prevention-program](http://www.bullyfree.com/school-program/description-of-the-bullying-prevention-program).

Dishion, T. J., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: Peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist*, Volume 54, pp. 755-764.

Dryer, K. & Thompson, G. (2018). Transformational Change: A How-To Guide for Educators. Retrieved from <https://www.edcircuit.com/transformational-change-school-districts/>

Espelage, D. L. (2013). Why are bully prevention programs failing in U.S. schools? *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, Volume 10, pp. 121–124.

Evans, C.B., Fraser, M.B., Cotter, K.L. (2014). The effectiveness of school-based bullying prevention programs: A systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, Volume 19, pp. 532-544.

Fairbanks, S., Simonsen, B., & Sugai, G. (2008). Class-wide secondary and tertiary tier practices and systems. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Volume 40(6), pp. 44-53.

Farrington, D.P., & Ttofi, M.M. (2009). School-based programs to reduce bullying and victimization. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4073/csr.2009.6>.

Farrington, D. P., Ttofi, M. M., & Lösel, F. (2011). Editorial: School bullying and later offending. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, Volume 21, pp. 77–79.

Felix, E., Green, J. & Sharkey, J. (2002). Best Practices in Bullying Prevention. Retrieved from [http://apps.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/books-and-products/products/books/docs/bp6/book\\_3\\_w/17\\_B3chapter17\\_WM.pdf](http://apps.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/books-and-products/products/books/docs/bp6/book_3_w/17_B3chapter17_WM.pdf)

Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F., Fredriks, A., et al. (2006). Do bullied children get ill, or do ill children get bullied? A prospective cohort study on the relationship between bullying and health-related symptoms. *Journal of Pediatrics*, Volume 117, pp. 1568-1574.

Ferguson, C. J., Miguel, C. S., Kilburn, J. C., & Sanchez, P. (2007). The effectiveness of school-based anti-bullying programs: A meta-analytic review. *Criminal Justice Review*, Volume 32, pp. 401–414.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M., (2010). *Motion leadership: the skinny on becoming change savvy*. Thousand oaks, CA: Corwin press.

Fullchange, A., Furlong, M.J. (2016). An Exploration of Effects of Bullying Victimization from a Complete Mental Health Perspective. *SAGEOpen*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015623593>

Gersten, R. & Dimino, J. (2001). The Realities of Translating Research into Classroom Practice. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, Volume 16, pp. 120 - 130.

Gini, G. & Pozzoli, T. (2009). Association between bullying and psychosomatic problems: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Pediatrics*, Volume 123, pp. 1059-1065.

Gini, G. & Pozzoli, T. (2013) Bullied Children and Psychosomatic Problems: A Meta-analysis *Journal of Pediatrics*, Volume 132(4), pp. 720-729.

Good, C., McIntosh, K., & Gietz, C. (2011). Integrating bullying prevention into School-wide Positive Behavior Support. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Volume 44(1), pp. 48-56.

Gordon, S. (2018). How Middle School Bullying Can Be Stopped. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellfamily.com/bullying-in-early-teen-years-460485>

Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. A. (2000). *Behavior in organizations* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist*, Volume 58, pp. 466–474.

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading Educational Change: reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Volume 33(3), pp. 229-351.

Hanewinkel, R. (2004). Prevention of bullying in German schools: An evaluation of an anti-bullying approach. In P. K. Smith, D. Pepler & K. Rigby (Eds.), *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?* (pp. 81–98). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.

Hanson, M. (2001). Institutional theory and educational change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(5), pp. 637-661.

Hertz, M., Donato, I. & Wright, J. (2013). Bullying and Suicide: A Public Health Approach. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Volume 53, Supplement pp. S1e-S3.

Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J.W. (2008). Cyberbullying: An Exploratory Analysis of Factors Related to Offending and Victimization. *Journal of Deviant Behavior*, Volume 29(2), pp. 129-156.

Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J.W. (2013). Social Influences on Cyberbullying Behaviors Among Middle and High School Students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Volume 42, pp. 711-722.

Hodgson, P. (2010). Usability Test Data. Retrieved from <https://www.userfocus.co.uk/articles/datathink.html>

Hoover, J.H., Oliver, R., & Hazler, R.J. (1992). Bullying: Perceptions of adolescent victims in the Midwestern USA. *School Psychology International*, Volume 13(1), pp. 5-16.

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., & Anderson, C. M. (2010). Examining the evidence base for school-wide positive behavior support. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, Volume 42(8), pp. 1-14.

Hulin, C., Netemeyer, R., Cudeck, R. (2001). Can a reliability coefficient be too high? *J. Consum. Psychol.* 10, 55-58.

Human Rights Campaign. (2018). 2018 LGBTQ Youth Report. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/2018-lgbtq-youth-report?>

Illinois Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports Network (2010). Effective Bullying Prevention within a School-wide System of Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports. Retrieved from <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/bully-prev-pbis-brief.pdf>

Integrating the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Pennsylvania. (2018). Center for Safe Schools. Retrieved from <http://intranet.bloomu.edu/documents/mcdowell/pk12/OBPP-PBIS.pdf>

iSAFE (2018). Cyber Bullying: Statistics and Tips. Retrieved from [https://www.isafe.org/outreach/media/media\\_cyber\\_bullying](https://www.isafe.org/outreach/media/media_cyber_bullying)

Juvonen, J. & Graham, S. (2014). Bullying in schools: The Power of Bullies and the Plight of Victims. *Annual Review of Psychology*, Volume 65, pp. 159–185.

Juvonen, J. & Gross, E. (2008). Extending the School Grounds? - Bullying Experiences in Cyberspace. *Journal of School Health*, Volume 78(9), pp. 496-505.

Juvonen, J., Wang, Y., & Espinoza, G. (2011). Bullying experiences and compromised academic performance across middle school grades. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, Volume 31, pp. 152-173.

Kaagan, S.S. & Markle, B.W. (1993). Leadership for learning. *Perspective*, 5(1), pp. 1-16.

Kalman, I. (2011). Why Anti-Bully Programs Aren't Working. Retrieved from <https://bullies2buddies.com/why-anti-bully-programs-arent-working/>

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. (1983). *The Change Masters*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kelehear, Z. (2003). Mentoring the organization: Helping principals bring schools to higher levels of effectiveness. *Bulletin*, Volume 87(637), pp. 35-47.

Kids on Social Media and Gaming (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/kids-on-social-media-and-gaming/index.html>

Kim, T. K. (2015). T test as a parametric statistic. *Korean journal of anesthesiology*, Volume 68(6), pp. 540–546.

King, H.L (2018). Cyberbullying Among Students. The National Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. Retrieved from <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/cyber.pdf>

Kochenderfer, B. & Ladd, G. (1997). Victimized children's responses to peers' aggression: Behaviors associated with reduced versus continued victimization. *Development and Psychopathology*, Volume 9, pp. 59-73.

Kotter, J.P. (1996). *Leading Change*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Kowalski, R. M. & Limber, S. P. (2007). Electronic Bullying Among Middle School Students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Volume 41(6), Supplement, pp. S22–S30.

Kowalski, R.M. & Limber, S.P. (2013). Psychological, Physical, and Academic Correlates of Cyberbullying and Traditional Bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Volume 53, pp. 13–20.

Kruse, S.D., & Louis, K.S. (2009). *Building strong school cultures: A guide to leading change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Lacey A. & Cornell D. (2011). The impact of bullying climate on schoolwide academic performance. Paper presented at: Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association; Washington, DC.

Laerd Statistics, 2018. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation using SPSS Statistics. <https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/spearman-rank-order-correlationusingsspsstatistics>

Lanigan, A.R. (2015). A Systematic Review of Bullying Prevention Programs in Schools. Retrieved from Sophia, the St. Catherine University repository website: [https://sophia.stkate.edu/msw\\_papers/479](https://sophia.stkate.edu/msw_papers/479)

Laurent, Anne. (2003). Entrepreneurial Government: Bureaucrats as Business People. In *New Ways of Doing Business*, edited by Mark A. Abramson and Ann M. Kieffaber, pp. 13–47. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lawlor, M. S. (2014). Mindfulness in practice: Considerations for implementation of mindfulness-based programming for adolescents in school contexts. *New Directions for Youth Development*, Volume 142.

Leech, N., Gliner, J., Morgan, G., & Harmon, R. (2003) Use and Interpretation of Multiple Regression. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, Volume 42(6), pp. 738-740.

Leithwood, K. & Jantzi, D. (2000). Principal and teacher leader effects: a replication. *School Leadership and Management*, 20(4), pp. 415-434.

Lenhart, A., Duggan, M., Perrin, A., Stepler, R., Rainie, L., & Parker, K. (2015). *Teens, social media & technology overview*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.  
[http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/04/PI\\_TeensandTech\\_Update2015\\_0409151.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/04/PI_TeensandTech_Update2015_0409151.pdf)

“LGBTQ Youth.” (2017). *StopBullying.gov*, Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from [www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html).

Lickerman, A. (2010). Psychosomatic Symptoms. *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, Retrieved from [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/happiness-in-world/201003/psychosomatic-symptoms](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/happiness-in-world/201003/psychosomatic-symptoms)

Likert Scale Definition and Examples. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.statisticshowto.datasciencecentral.com/likert-scale-definition-and-examples/>

Lindemulder, M.D., Ju, C., & Pritchard, C. (2017). Halting Harassment: The Impact of Anti-Bullying Policies on LGBT Students. Retrieved from <http://chicagopolicyreview.org/2017/04/26/halting-harassment-the-impact-of-anti-bullying-policies-on-lgbt-students/>

Magid, L. (2009). It Didn't Happen at School, but. *Threshold*. Retrieved September 22, 2017, from <https://www.nais.org/Articles/Documents/THSummer09ItDidntHappenatSchool.pdf>

Marketing, R.E. (2018). The Effects of Bullying. Retrieved from <https://www.rethinked.com/blog/blog/2017/10/12/the-effects-of-bullying/>

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Masiello, M.G. & Schroeder, D. (2014). A public health approach to bullying prevention. American Public Health Association, Washington, DC.

Mayer, G. R. (1995). Preventing antisocial behavior in the schools. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, Volume 28, pp. 467-478.

McClellan, J. (2018). One Third of Middle and High Schoolers Were Bullied Last Year, Study Shows. *USA Today*. Gannett Satellite Information Network. Retrieved from [www.usatoday.com/story/life/allthemoms/2018/09/24/one-out-three-students-were-bullied-us-school-last-year/1374631002/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/allthemoms/2018/09/24/one-out-three-students-were-bullied-us-school-last-year/1374631002/).

McDougall, P. & Vaillancourt, T. (2015). Long-term adult outcomes of peer victimization in childhood and adolescence: Pathways to adjustment and maladjustment. *American Psychologist*, Volume 70, pp. 300-310.

McIntosh, K., Brown, J. A., & Borgmeier, C. J. (2008). Validity of functional behavior assessment within an RTI framework: Evidence and future directions. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, Volume 34, pp. 6-14.

- McIntosh, K., Horner, R. H., & Sugai, G. (2009). Sustainability of systems-level evidence-based practices in schools: Current knowledge and future directions. In W. Sailor, G. Dunlap, G. Sugai, & R. Horner (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Behavior Support* (pp. 327–352). New York: Springer.
- McManis, D.E. (2012). Middle School Bullying Prevention & Intervention: An Overview of Best Practices and Current Research. ProQuest LLC.
- Menesini, E. & Nocentini, A. (2009). Cyberbullying definition and measurement. *Journal of Psychology*, Volume 217, pp. 230–232.
- Menesini, E. & Salmivalli, C. (2017) Bullying in Schools: The State of Knowledge and Effective Interventions. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, Volume 22, pp. 240-253.
- Merrell, K. W., Gueldner, B. A., Ross, S. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008). How effective are school bullying intervention programs? A meta-analysis of intervention research. *School Psychology Quarterly*, Volume 23, pp. 26–42.
- Mitzner, K.D. (2012). Perceptions of cyberbullying from secondary school administrators in Texas (Doctoral dissertation) [Abstract].
- Molnar-Main, S. (2014). Best Practices in Bullying Prevention: Components of Effective Practice at the School Level. Center for Safe Schools. Retrieved November 14, 2018 from <https://www.safeschools.info/bullying-prevention/professional-development/390>
- Moodie-Mills, D. (2013). The Kids Are Not Alright: The Plight of African American LGBT Youth in America’s Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news>
- Nakamoto, J. & Schwartz, D. (2009). Is peer victimization associated with academic achievement? A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Social Development*, Volume 19, pp. 221-242.
- Nansel, T., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R., Ruan, W., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Volume 285, pp. 2094-2100.
- Nathan, L. (2015). How Should Law Enforcement Respond to Cyberbullying Incidents? Retrieved September 22, 2017, from [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov)
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2016). *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/23482>.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (n.d.). A Whole school approach to bullying prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/a-whole-school-approach-to-bullying-prevention/>

Nishina, A. & Juvonen, J. (2005). Daily reports of witnessing and experiencing peer harassment in middle school. *Child Development*, Volume 76, pp. 435-450.

Nunnolley, J.C., Whaley, J., Mull, R. & Hott, G. (2003) Brain compatible secondary schools: The visionary principal's role. *Bulletin*, Volume 87(637), pp. 48-59.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Olweus, D. (2005). A useful evaluation design, and effects of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, Volume 11, pp. 389–402.

Olweus, D., Limber, S., & Mihalic, S. F. (1999). Bullying prevention program: Blueprint for violence prevention, book nine. In D. S. Elliott (Ed.), *Blueprints for violence prevention series*. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado.

Olweus, D. & Limber, S.P., (2007) *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: Teacher guide*. Hazelden, Center City, MN

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children. (2016). *Ending the Torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace*. United Nations, New York.

Patchin, J.W. (2016) 2016 Cyberbullying Data. *Cyberbullying Research Center*. Retrieved from [Cyberbullying.org/2016-cyberbullying-data](http://Cyberbullying.org/2016-cyberbullying-data).

Patchin, J.W. and Hinduja, S. (2006). "Bullies Move Beyond the Schoolyard: A Preliminary Look at Cyberbullying." *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, Volume 4(2), pp. 148 –169.

Patchin, J., Schafer, J. and Hinduja, S. (2013). Cyberbullying and Sexting: Law Enforcement Perceptions. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*. Retrieved from <https://leb.fbi.gov/2013/june/cyberbullying-and-sexting-law-enforcement-perceptions>

Pellegrini, A. D., Bartini, M. (2000). A longitudinal study of bullying, victimization, and peer affiliation during the transition from primary school to middle school. *American Educational Research Journal*, Volume 37, pp. 699-725.

Pepler, D. J., Craig, W. M., O'Connell, P., Atlas, R., & Charach, A. (2004). Making a difference in bullying: Evaluation of a systemic school-based program in Canada. In P. K. Smith, D. Pepler, & K. Rigby (Eds.), *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?* (pp. 125–140). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Petrosino, A. (2003). Standards for evidence and evidence for standards: The case of school-based drug prevention. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Volume 587, pp. 180–207.



Playworks, (2013). Anti-Bullying Programs Don't Work? Retrieved from <https://www.playworks.org/resource/anti-bullying-programs-dont-work/>

Poiner, J. (2015). Should districts get rid of middle schools? Ohio Gadfly Daily. Retrieved from [http://edexcellence.net/articles/should-districts-get-rid-of-middle-schools?utm\\_source=Fordham+Updates&utm\\_campaign=19bd655b51-20150419\\_LateLateBell4\\_17\\_2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d9e8246adf-19bd655b51-71539577](http://edexcellence.net/articles/should-districts-get-rid-of-middle-schools?utm_source=Fordham+Updates&utm_campaign=19bd655b51-20150419_LateLateBell4_17_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d9e8246adf-19bd655b51-71539577)

Ponto, J. (2015). Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4601897/>

Promoting Positive Peer Relationships (P3R). (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://www.storiesofus.com/home.html>

Reijntjes, A., Kamphuis, J., Prinzie, P., Telch, M. (2010). Peer victimization and internalizing problems in children: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Child Abuse Neglect*, Volume 34, pp. 244-252.

Rigby, K. (2002). *How successful are anti-bullying programs for schools?* Paper presented at The Role of Schools in Crime Prevention Conference, Melbourne, AU. Retrieved from <http://aic.gov.au/conferences/schools/rigby.pdf>

Rivara, F. & Le Menestrel, S. (2016). *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press. Preventive Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK390407/>

Schober, P., Boer, C., & Schwarte, L. (2018). Correlation Coefficients: Appropriate Use and Interpretation. *Anesthesia & Analgesia*, Volume 126(5), pp. 1763-1768.

Schwartz, D., Gorman, A. H., Nakamoto, J., & Toblin, R. L. (2005). Victimization in the peer group and children's academic functioning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Volume 97, pp. 425-435.

Silins, H.C., Mulford, W.R., & Zarins, S. (2002). Organizational learning and school change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(5), 613-642.

Simonsen, B., Sugai, G., & Negrón, M. (2008). Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports: Primary systems and practices. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Volume 40(6), pp. 32-40.

Singleton R. A., Straits B. C. (2009). *Approaches to social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, J. D., Cousins, J. B., & Stewart, R. (2005). Antibullying interventions in schools: Ingredients of Effective Programs. *Canadian Journal of Education*, Volume 28(4), pp. 739- 762.

Smith, J.D., Schneider, B.H., Smith, P.K., & Ananiadou, K. (2004). The Effectiveness of Whole-School Antibullying Programs: A Synthesis of Evaluation Research. *School Psychology Review*, Volume 33(4), pp. 547-560.

Smith, P. K., Pepler, D. & Rigby, K. (2004). *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?* Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press.

Smith, P., Talamelli, L., Cowie, H., *et al.* (2004) Profiles of non-victims, escaped victims, continuing victims and new victims of school bullying. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Volume 74, pp. 565-581.

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2006). A promising approach for expanding and sustaining the implementation of school-wide positive behavior support. *School Psychology Review*, Volume 35, pp. 245-259.

Sugai, G., Horner, R. H., & McIntosh, K. (2008). Best practices in developing a broad-scale system of support for school-wide positive behavior support. In A. Thomas & J. P. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology*. Volume 3, pp. 765-780.

Swearer, S.M. & Cary, P.T. (2003). Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Bullying in Middle School Youth: A Developmental Examination Across the Bully/Victim Continuum. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, Volume 19, No. 2. Retrieved September 22, 2017, from [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J008v19n02\\_05](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J008v19n02_05)

Takizawa, R., Maughan, B., Arseneault, L. (2014). Adult health outcomes of childhood bullying victimization: Evidence from a five-decade longitudinal British birth cohort. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Volume 171, pp. 777-784.

Tokunaga, R.S. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, Volume 26, pp. 277-287.

Ttofi, M. M. & Farrington, D. P. (2009). What works in preventing bullying: Effective elements of anti-bullying programs. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, Volume 1, pp. 13-24.

Ttofi, M. M., & Farrington, D. P. (2011). Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: A systematic and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, Volume 7, pp. 27–56.

U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service (USDOE). (2011). *Analysis of state bullying laws and policies*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/bullying/state-bullying-laws/state-bullying-laws.pdf>

Vreeman, R. C. & Carroll, A. E. (2007). A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, Volume 161, pp. 78-88.

What are the Advantages of a 5-point Likert Scale? Retrieved from <https://www.reference.com/world-view/advantages-5-point-likert-scale-56b1d8d6d1ddbb55>  
“What Is Bullying.” (2019). *StopBullying.gov*, Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from [www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html).

Wolke, D., & Lereya, S. T. (2015). Long-term effects of bullying. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, Volume 100, pp. 879–885.

Wolpert, S. (2013). ‘Cool’ kids in middle school bully more, *UCLA psychologists report*. Retrieved from <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/cool-middle-school-kids-bully-242868>

Wolpert, S. (2016). Successful anti-bullying program identified by UCLA. *The Regents of the University of California*. Retrieved, November 12, 2018, from <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/successful-anti-bullying-program-found-ucla>

Wright, R. (2018). Transformational Change: A how-to-guide for educators. Retrieved from <https://www.schlechtycenter.org/blog/2018/2/7/transformational-change-a-how-to-guide-for-educators>

Ybarra M. & Mitchell K. (2004). Online aggressor/targets, aggressors, and targets: A comparison of associated youth characteristics. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*. 45:1308 e16.

Yeager, D. S., Fong, C. J., Lee, H. Y., & Espelage, D. (2015). Declines in efficacy of anti-bullying programs among older adolescents: Theory and a three-level meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 37, 36–51.

Zimmerman, J. (2006). Why Some Teachers Resist Change and What Principals Can Do About It. *NASSP Bulletin*, Volume 90(3), pp. 238-249.

## APPENDIX A

### BULLYING PREVENTION SURVEY

1. By completing this survey, I give the researcher permission to use my responses in data collection
  - Agree
  
2. I am a current employee of a/an:
  - High School
  - Middle School
  - Elementary School
  
3. What is your current position?
  - Principal
  - Assistant Principal
  - School Counselor
  - School Psychologist
  - Teacher
  - Nurse
  - Paraprofessional
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. My school is located in the following setting:
  - Urban
  - Suburban
  - Rural
  
5. Has your school implemented an official bullying prevention program aimed at preventing bullying, such as Olweus Bullying Prevention Program or School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports?
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  
6. How long did that bullying prevention program last?
  - < 1 year
  - 1 – 2 years
  - 3 - 6 years
  - 7 – 10 years
  - >10 years

7. What is the name of that bullying prevention program?

---

8. How involved were school staff in choosing the bullying prevention program?

- Extremely
- Very
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

9. How involved were school staff in the implementation of the bullying prevention program?

- Extremely
- Very
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

10. How involved was/are building administration in the day-to-day success of the bullying prevention program?

- Extremely
- Very
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

11. All staff members are/were invested in the success of the bullying prevention program (buy-in among staff)?

- Extremely
- Very
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

12. Staff are/were provided with adequate training on the bullying prevention program prior to implementation?

- Extremely
- Very
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

13. Bullying prevention is/was promoted as a priority within the school?
- Extremely
  - Very
  - Moderately
  - Slightly
  - Not at all
14. Your school has a bullying prevention committee that consists of staff and administration?
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
15. The school developed ways for students to report bullying, other than reporting in person to an adult?
- To a Great Extent
  - Somewhat
  - Moderately
  - Very Little
  - Not at All
16. Staff are regularly & actively involved in bullying prevention activities throughout the school year?
- Extremely
  - Very
  - Moderately
  - Slightly
  - Not at all
17. The bullying prevention program is/was combined with promoting positive behaviors such as kindness?
- Extremely
  - Very
  - Moderately
  - Slightly
  - Not at all
18. Time is/was allocated in the schedule at my school for bullying prevention activities/programs.
- To a Great Extent
  - Somewhat
  - Moderately
  - Very Little
  - Not at All

19. Strengths of staff members in my building are/were recognized through their involvement in the bullying prevention program.
- Extremely
  - Very
  - Moderately
  - Slightly
  - Not at all
20. Since the implementation of the bullying prevention program, there has been a decrease in bullying behaviors among students?
- Extremely
  - Very
  - Moderately
  - Slightly
  - Not at all
21. My school continues to evaluate and upgrade the bullying prevention program to keep it current and effective?
- Extremely
  - Very
  - Moderately
  - Slightly
  - Not at all
22. If your school currently has a successful bullying prevention program in place or implemented a bullying prevention program that did not last more than 3 years, are you willing to be interviewed to answer more detailed questions about why you believe the program was successful/failed?
- Yes
  - No

(IF Yes) Provide Name and Contact Information including Email & Phone #

---

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do you believe that the bullying prevention program was (was not) successful within your school?
2. Are there any specific conditions within your school that in your opinion contributed to the bullying prevention program being successful (unsuccessful)?
3. What kind of bullying prevention activities take place within your school?
4. To what extent is bullying prevention seen as a priority within your school? How do you know that bullying prevention is (is not) a priority in your school? Can you give specific examples that show bullying prevention is (is not) a priority?
5. How are building administrators involved in the day-to-day bullying prevention activities within your school?
6. To what extent does the staff within your school understand the importance of implementing the bullying prevention program? What evidence can you share that supports that staff do (do not) understand the importance of the bullying prevention program?