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The Critical Elements in the Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of An Anti-bullying Policy for School Districts

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Abstract

The issue of bullying has become prominent in public schools and leads to an unsafe environment for learning. Due to the increased public concern regarding bullying and its impact on student safety and learning, states have been forced to develop legislation to address bullying behaviors. This study determined the necessary components in the development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policies in schools based on input from key stakeholders. Surveys were distributed to school superintendents and elementary and secondary principals in Dutchess County, New York to determine their rankings of the most important components or processes for inclusion in an effective anti-bullying policy. Additionally, a review of the literature indicated numerous strategies for the proper development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policy. Analysis indicated similarities in the responses from elementary school principals and school superintendents in the areas of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. The findings resulted in seven recommendations for policy development, six recommendations for policy implementation, and four recommendations for policy evaluation. The study is significant in that it provides school districts with a framework to develop, implement and evaluate anti-bullying policy.

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The Critical Elements in the Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of An

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Dedication

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Biographical Sketch

Dwight C. Bonk is currently Principal of John Jay High School in East Fishkill, New York. Mr. Bonk attended the State University College at Buffalo and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1991. He attended the State University College at Buffalo and graduated with a Master of Science degree in 1999. He attended the State University of New York and received a Certificate of Advanced Study in in 2004. He came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2010 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mr. Bonk pursued his research in anti-bullying policy development, implementation, and evaluation for school districts under the direction of Dr. Michael Robinson and Dr. Edward Sullivan and received the Ed. D. degree in 2013.

Abstract

The issue of bullying has become prominent in public schools and leads to an unsafe environment for learning. Due to the increased public concern regarding bullying and its impact on student safety and learning, states have been forced to develop legislation to address bullying behaviors. This study determined the necessary components in the development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policies in schools based on input from key stakeholders. Surveys were distributed to school superintendents and elementary and secondary principals in Dutchess County, New York to determine their rankings of the most important components or processes for inclusion in an effective anti-bullying policy. Additionally, a review of the literature indicated numerous strategies for the proper development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policy. Analysis indicated similarities in the responses from elementary school principals and school superintendents in the areas of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. The findings resulted in seven recommendations for policy development, six recommendations for policy implementation, and four recommendations for policy evaluation. The study is significant in that it provides school districts with a framework to develop, implement and evaluate anti-bullying policy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

  Education is a multi-faceted, complex, diverse and evolving entity. Schools exist for many reasons. They serve as a place for children to learn and grow while preparing to be contributing members of society. Unfortunately, many schools throughout the United States have had to balance this day-to-day rigor while managing the possibility, and probability, of school violence. The topic of school violence, bullying in particular, has become more prevalent and commonplace in response to the high profile cases that have occurred over the past ten years, including the Columbine School shooting in Littleton, Colorado in 1999.

  As a result of the Columbine tragedy, many states began monitoring the number and type of incidents of school violence that occur during the course of the school year. The New York State legislature passed the Dignity for All Students Act in June 2010. The act requires that all school districts in New York State public schools adopt a comprehensive anti-bullying policy by July 1, 2012. The Dignity for All Students Act, which took effect on July 1, 2012 stated that the legislature finds that a students' ability to learn and meet high academic standards is a school's responsibility. In response to the state mandate, this dissertation study examined research from anti-bullying experts as well as high-ranking school officials to determine the components necessary to develop, implement, and evaluate an anti- bullying policy.

Statement of the Problem

Since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, school violence and crime have become a major public concern (Small & Dressler) 2001. The Berkshire County Massachusetts District Attorney's Office (2010) indicated that nearly 3.2 million students are the victims of bullying behavior on an annual basis. Many researchers have stated that bullying is occurring in our schools on a regular basis. Sanders and Phye (2003) contended that bullying impacts more students than any other type of violent acts that are reported in schools. Beaudoin and Taylor (2009) stated that school bullying is occurring on a continual basis while Colorosso (2002) maintained that many students walk through school hallways with fear. Bullying occurs in every school, in every part of the nation (McGrath, 2007).

Members of many of our communities are searching for ways and policies to effectively reduce bullying behaviors and maintain a safe learning environment. Colorosso (2008) stated that the issue of bullying has become prominent in many public schools and that it not only leads to an unsafe environment but one that is not conducive to maximum student academic achievement. Bulach, Fulbright, and Williams (2003) indicated that students who are victimized by bullying are very likely to falter academically. Fried and Fried (1996) stated that in order to decrease social violence in school, bullying behavior must be curtailed. Green and Ross (2005) indicated that due to the increased public concern regarding bullying and its impact on student safety and learning, states have been forced to develop some type of legislation to address bullying behaviors.

The United States Department of Education Bullying Law and Policy Report (2011) analyzed state bullying laws and policies and indicated that as of 2011, 46 states had developed some type of anti-bullying legislation. However, Shah (2011) indicated that only two of those states, which did not include New York, have all of the necessary components that researchers believe are necessary for a policy to be successful. New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane, (2010) who was the lead sponsor of the bill, indicated that the legislation was a victory for all school families and addresses the need for safety and equality throughout New York schools. However, the final decisions for policy development rest with local school districts.

It is up to local school boards to develop effective policies that contain both the key components indicated in the research literature as well as the appropriate ways that anti-bullying measures can be developed, implemented, enforced and evaluated by school staff on an ongoing basis. Carver (2006) stated that policy development and leadership consists of three main components that include (a) an extensive description of the intended results of a policy, (b) the importance placed on holding the staff accountable to oversee and enforce the policy, and (c) the constant evaluation and monitoring of the progress of the policy.

Although a policy may look good in theory, Maines and Robinson (2010) strongly stated that any effective anti-bullying policy must define and focus on the effective ways to develop, implement, enforce and evaluate policy. De Lancer-Julnes (2009) indicated that one of the primary reasons that policies fail is that effective performance based measurements do not exist. De Lancer-Julnes contended that both practical

implementation and evaluation strategies are critical to successful policy and management.

Theoretical Rationale

Maslow (1954) stated in his Theory of Motivation and Human Needs that all human beings have physiological, safety, belonging, esteem and self actualization needs. Maslow defined physiological needs as the need for food, water, shelter, and sleep. Clearly, bullying is an impediment in gaining satisfaction in each of these areas. Maslow (1954) stated that examples of fulfillment needs include, attention, recognition, accomplishment and self- respect. Table 1.1 shows how Maslow organized the types of human needs. Bullying has a negative impact on each of those needs as well.

In the areas of love, respect and safety, Bingham (2009) indicated that bullying makes people feel unsafe and vulnerable to others. In addition, Bingham specifically stated that bullying leads to low self-esteem, a feeling of worthlessness and tremendous fear and anxiety. Goleman (2006) stated that bullying has severe effects on a child's ability to learn since it creates tremendous emotional issues.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the dissertation was to determine from key stakeholders, the necessary components in the development, implementation and evaluation of anti-bullying policies in public schools. Maines and Robinson (2010) maintained that an effective anti-bullying policy must contain strong language that indicates that the policy will be taken seriously, enforced, and managed effectively.

Table 1.1

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Type	Primary Needs	Secondary Needs
Physiological	Food, Water, Shelter	Sleep
Safety	Security, Stability	Free of anxiety and fear
Belonging and Love	Importance, Relations	Affection
Esteem	Recognition, Status	
Self-actualization	Success, Achievement	

Note. Adapted from Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality.* New York, NY: Harper and Brothers.

Sullivan (2011) stated that at the time of the development of a bullying policy or when an existing policy is being modified, it is necessary that the individuals responsible for its development have a thorough knowledge of current research regarding bullying and any trends or incidents that exist within the district. Lerman (2010) indicated that it is necessary to make sure that all bullying policies reflect and adhere to the both local and state statutes. Beane (2009) pointed to the critical role that adult authorities play in the supervision and enforcement of policies and that the adult role is one of the most important components in successful in dealing with the bullying issues that occur in our schools. The National Center on Crime Prevention (2011) indicated that policies signal a commitment to change and that for significant change to occur policy must be enforced. The final component of an effective anti-bullying problem that will be examined involves evaluation. Once a conscious decision has been made to attempt to curtail school bullying, Sullivan (2011) indicated that it is necessary to clarify the philosophy of the

policy and routinely evaluate both its strengths and weaknesses. Maines and Robinson (2010) indicated that school districts have a legal responsibility to ensure that schools are safe and pointed out that the anti-bullying policy that is eventually adopted must be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Identifying the Stakeholders

Beane (2009) maintained that an effective anti-bullying policy must be clear, enforceable and supported by all of the necessary stakeholders. Maines and Robinson (2010) stated that there are many benefits to establishing a thorough anti-bullying policy that includes a positive school climate and better morale among students, improved relationships among all, more positive relationships within the community, increased academic achievement and reduced absences. The stakeholders involved in setting anti-bullying policy include school board members, school superintendents, and building principals.

Clay and Soldwedel (2009) indicated that school board members must assume responsibility for all children in the district. Therefore in areas where significant development of policy is necessary to protect students from bullying, school board members are obligated to lead the policy process.

Furthermore, school superintendents must take the lead and serve as the driving force in ensuring that policies are implemented, enforced and evaluated at all schools throughout the district. Edwards (2005) indicated that one of the major responsibilities of a superintendent is to create and foster a school system that embodies the goals and values of the community. Clearly, the issue of bullying in schools is a top priority for many communities throughout the State of New York as well as the United States.

School principals are mostly responsible for the overall implementation, enforcement and evaluation of anti-bullying policies at the building level and their expertise regarding the types of bullying that are occurring in our schools today is extremely valuable. Kaplan (2004) indicated that building principals have a key role in determining how schools function since they have the ability to influence both interpersonal relations and academic achievement. This is done by the manner and methods that the building administration deals with issues such as bullying and student discipline.

For the research described in this dissertation, superintendents and principals participated in focus groups to determine the most effective ways to implement, enforce, and evaluate anti-bullying policies. Based on the results of the focus group, a survey was developed and administered to other school administrators throughout Dutchess County N.Y. to determine the degree of importance that they placed on the key components identified in the literature and to determine their practicality in each school setting.

Research Questions

Based on the review of the literature, I developed the hypothesis that comprehensive anti-bullying policies that have critical components relating to development, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation will be much more effective than those that do not contain these components. As many experts have alluded, it is expected that the successful reduction of bullying behaviors will also lead to increased academic achievement.

Research questions answered during the course of the study included the following:

1. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

2. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

3. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

4. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

5. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

6. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

7. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

8. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

9. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

10. What are the similarities between the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

11. What are the similarities between the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

12. What are the similarities between the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was the development of a model policy framework to be utilized by schools and school districts to develop, implement, and evaluate public policy that addresses the issue of bullying in public schools. The model policy included the necessary components that superintendents, principals, and experts in the literature have identified as key to the proper development, implementation, and evaluation of an anti-bullying policy. Based on this framework, it is anticipated that the amount of bullying will be reduced in schools, which will allow students to have a more continuous and greater focus on their academic mission.

The literature identified key theories that explain the reasons people bully and the impact that bullying has on victims. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory provided a rationale for the reasons why people bully and the negative impact it has on a victim's psyche. The research referred to public policy models, their necessary components, development and implementation, as well as analysis and evaluation. Many theories of public policy were also included in the literature and explained why certain public policy models are effective. The individuals in the literature provided detailed analysis for the necessary components of policy development.

Summary

Based on the information contained in the literature regarding the negative impact that bullying has on students, families and communities, along with the amount and degree of bullying that is occurring in our schools and communities, it is an absolute necessity to have anti-bullying legislation and local policies to ensure that our schools provide a safe environment conducive to maximum learning and participation. The study was significant in that it contained research conducted with superintendents and principals. The information contained in this study provides school districts with a solid framework to utilize when developing, implementing, and evaluating an anti-bullying policy. The review of the literature included recommendations from experts in the policy process and the anti-bullying field, regarding policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of the study was to identify from key stakeholders, necessary components in the development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policies in public schools. In order to accomplish this purpose, several theories that support a person's psychological, social and hierarchal needs as they pertain to bullying will be examined in this chapter. Policy governance will also be analyzed, along with the impact that bullying has on students. The need for the development of a comprehensive anti-bullying policy will be presented and the key procedures for developing and implementing anti-bullying policies that experts in the field believe are critical to the success of a policy, will be identified and studied. The art of developing effective public policy, and the theories that pertain to it, will be explored.

Since the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999, more attention has been given to student safety (Small & Dressler, 2001). Beaudoin and Taylor (2009) believed that school bullying has been occurring on a continual basis throughout schools. School professionals, parents, and citizens, have been constantly raising alarms about the apparent level of violent acts that seem to be plaguing school communities (Small & Dressler, 2001).

This dissertation study helps bridge the gap that exists between the development of effective policy and the ways to develop and implement a successful anti-bullying

policy in a local school district to ensure that schools are safe and provide an environment that is most conducive to learning.

Review of Literature

A review of the literature indicates that there are different types of bullying that affects different groups and that bullying has been responded to by the public at the legislative and policy levels.

Bullying. Bullying behaviors are now considered significant contributors to youth violence that can result in suicide and homicide (Kohut, 2008). This concern is reflected in anecdotal experiences as well as the extensive news media coverage that has appeared almost on a daily basis (Kohut, 2008). McGrath (2007) stated that bullying is occurring so frequently in our schools that it is often overlooked. McGrath also contended that it occurs in every school in every part of the world, on a daily basis.

There are a number of different definitions of bullying. Sullivan (2011) stated that bullying is defined as an act of aggression that is willful, conscious and repeated by one or more people against another person or people. South Hadley, a public school district in Massachusetts, recently experienced a traumatic experience related to bullying that involved a student suicide. The South Hadley School District (2011) defined bullying as an act that may include the repeated use of written, spoken, or electronically sent material that causes physical or emotional harm to another students or students. The district's policy added that this act may be a physical act or gesture that leads to or creates a hostile environment in school.

Roberts and Wiseman (2006) defined bullying as individuals or groups who repeatedly try to hurt others who are weaker. This may include simply excluding others

from participation in an activity. Recently, cyber bullying has become prevalent. School boards are worried; parents are worried; children are worried.

The National Safe Schools Partnership (2007) has indicated that bullying and harassment have negative effects on students in the areas of personal safety, emotional well being, and academic achievement. Strauss (2009) reported that for students and teachers, victimization at school can have major effects that are long lasting. Strauss indicated that these effects may include loneliness, depression, truancy issues, low academic achievement, and a high risk for dropping out of school because the student is not able to concentrate on education and learning.

In many cases, bullying victims are likely to falter academically (Bulach, Fulbright, & Williams, 2003). Sanders and Phye (2004) stated that bullying aggression occurs in schools and when bullying incidents are compared to other forms of violence that occur in schools, bullying has a greater impact on more students. This bullying behavior or abuse has a direct impact on the learning environment and learning capacity of students (Sanders & Phye, 2004). Goleman (2006) reported that being rejected socially by peers could negatively impact academic performance.

Sullivan (2011) indicated that bullying victims are likely to display symptoms that may include anxiety related to attending school, bed wetting and nightmares, stomachaches and headaches that generally occur before school, getting in trouble, and doing things that are out of character. Sullivan also stated that children who are bullied suffer from emotional issues that may include depression, alienation, uselessness, anxiety and shame. He also warned that those children who are bullied have problems developing positive relationships with peers and tend to live less successful lives. Fried and Fried

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(1996) indicated that continued exposure to bullying might lead victims into severe depression, which causes the victim to become withdrawn.

Barton (2006) stated there are many types of bullying behaviors that are carried out that include, physical, verbal, relational, sexual and cyber. The Table 2.1 shows the behaviors and their characteristics as identified by Barton. Barton also added that cyber-bullying has become an issue in schools.

Table 2.1

Types of Bullying

Type	Characteristics
Physical	Punching, Pushing, Shoving
Verbal	Threatening, Name Calling
Relational	Spreading of Rumors
Sexual	Inappropriate Touching

Carpenter and Ferguson (2010) reported that most bullies have no empathy or compassion, need to be the focal point of attention, crave control, and seek power. In addition, Carpenter and Ferguson indicated that many bullies feel and demonstrate ultimate superiority over others and believe that they can do no wrong. They also pointed out that bullies tend to be angry and aggressive. McGrath (2007) stated that bullies have such a strong desire for power that they are willing to do hurtful things to others to feel powerful or domineering. The bully is more powerful than the bullying victim and in some cases, bullies actually enjoy the act of bullying (McGrath, 2007).

Age differences. Borba (2009) stated that early intervention and discussions about bullying before it begins is very important. The University of Warwick research (citation) indicates that a girl who is bullied at six years old has a strong chance of remaining a victim at age ten. It is imperative to recognize that technology breaks down the boundary between home and school. Wiseman (2009) believed that the children who are bullied feel anxious, depressed and isolated in school. Wiseman stated that beginning in fourth or fifth grade, boys are called gay not only when they act in a feminine manner but also when they speak out against bullying.

In the elementary school stage (ages 6 to 10) a child's intellectual development reflects his or her humor (Braun, 2010). This is usually demonstrated in the areas of riddles, jokes and puns. However, when jokes and teasing becomes bullying, that is where the humor stops. Borba (2009) maintained that through the elementary school years, direct bullying seems to increase and that both verbal bullying and physical bullying occur among younger children.

Wiseman (2009) stated that in high school, a dynamic exists where boys are labeled gay or straight and this label has a direct result on their behavior. Braun (2010) believed that humor in middle school that is comprised of sarcasm can easily become teasing, and this can have a dramatic impact as a middle school student attempts to determine where he or she fits in. Borba (2009) indicated that bullying peaks in grades 6 through 8 and that it generally involves relational aggression, the spreading of rumors, cyber-bullying, and emotional bullying. Borba stated that the average middle school student deals with at least one verbal harassment per day. One study conducted for the American Psychological Association (citation needed) stated that 80% of middle school

students admitted to a bullying behavior within the past 30 days. According to Hall and Jones (2011) more than 85% of teenagers stated that revenge through school shootings and homicide is the result of being bullied.

Gender differences. Borba (2009) indicated that boys and girls are bullied in different manners. Boys are usually bullied in a physical manner or threat where girls are more likely to be bullied verbally and emotionally. In addition, a study of 452 fourth through sixth grade boys from different backgrounds indicated that bullies are intelligent, social, popular and self-assured kids (citation). One study indicated that by age 24, 60% of males who were chronic bullies in middle school had at least one criminal conviction (citation). Hall and Jones (2011) stated that bullying has resulted in 46% of males and 26% of females becoming involved in physical fights.

Wiseman (2009) stated that homophobia designates a person as a perpetrator, bystander or target. According to Wiseman, when a child witnesses bullying of this nature he can either be a passive bystander who chooses to look the other way, an active bystander who decides to support the bully, someone who runs away, or someone who stands up to the bully. Wiseman stated that as a society we must insist that everyone be treated with dignity.

Cyberbullying. Due to the rapid advancement of cell phone and Internet technologies, the cyber-bullying has increased dramatically and has become a priority for politicians, school officials and community leaders (Shariff, 2009). Hinduja and Patchin (2007) indicated that instances of cyber-bullying are of major concern since it can cause significant damage to a child's psyche. The New York State Senate (2011) stated that cyber-bullying has been occurring throughout New York State and in at least one case

resulted in the suicide of a teen. Kowalski, Limber, and Agatson (2008) reported that 18% of students indicated that they had been victims of cyber- bullying at least one time during a two-month period.

Hinduja and Patchin (2007) stated that cyber-bullying is harming someone in a deliberate or repeated manner by using various sources of electronic communicative devices. This may include Myspace, Facebook, or cell-phone texting in general. Kowalski, Limber, and Agatson (2008) indicated that the definition of cyber bullying must include all of the various methods of social networking including e-mail and social blogs. Trolley and Hanel (2010) contended that children who communicate electronically can do so anonymously and avoid face to face discussion. Trolley and Hanel stated that since this is done electronically and not face to face, the communication tends to be more vicious and hurtful.

Davis (2011) indicated that local school districts are faced with enormous challenges in dealing with cyber-bullying. Shariff (2009) stated that policymakers and educators share a high degree of concern regarding cyber-bullying since it provides children the opportunity to communicate with each other with little or no supervision and allows them to be anonymous. Davis indicated that many school leaders throughout the nation are faced with daily routine bullying cases and are searching for more concrete legal advice to make informed decisions.

Davis (2011) maintained that any current case law is out of date and that recent court rulings have lacked any sort of precedent. Davis also stated that one of the primary reasons for this is the question of whether schools should impose disciplinary consequences for incidents that happen outside of school. Davis maintained that two

recent bullying cases that were very similar in nature and were heard by the same court, received totally opposite rulings.

Sullivan (2011) stated that cyber-bullying is an act that is done both willfully and maliciously and can be identified by the following characteristics: it is usually done by people who know each other, it usually involves students who use electronic devices to bully other students during school, and it is typically done through cell phones and computers. Sullivan added that even though bullying may be done anonymously, students sometimes are able to determine the sender and that it generally follows similar patterns of normal bullying. Sullivan contended that cyber-bullying tends to peak in middle school and that in many cases, cyber-bullying occurs outside of school hours. Many cases it leads to both physical and psychological bullying and that students tend to be wary of telling parents or teachers about acts of cyber-bullying (Sullivan, 2011). Sullivan believed that girls generally are more apt to report incidents of cyber-bullying.

Sullivan (2011) suggested that the following be included in any plan that is developed to combat cyber-bullying: (a) the establishment of strong and inclusive foundations to hamper cyber-bullying, (b) the development of policies that are both practical and clear, (c) the translation of effective policy into practice, and (d) the ability to assist a student who is a victim of cyber-bullying.

Public/Legislative response. Beane (2009) found that bullying exists in all neighborhoods, school districts and school buildings. The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (2009) (GLSEN) released a report on school climate in New York. The key findings of the report suggested the following:

- 39% of respondents indicated that they felt bullying was a serious problem in their school,

- 45% of students indicated that they felt unsafe at school,

- 66% of students reported that they were harassed because of their weight or body size, and

- 57% indicated that they felt that they were harassed due to the way they expressed their gender.

The report also indicated that some of the student respondents stated that school faculty was unresponsive to the acts of bullying that occurred and sometimes ignored the acts altogether. The report also recommended that students be made aware of anti-harassment policies that are in place and are endorsed and supported by school faculty and administration.

New York State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos stated, the New York State legislature has an obligation to prevent bullying and inform students how harmful this behavior is. Skelos also said it is the responsibility of the legislature to ensure that students can grow up in a healthy fashion where they are able to concentrate on learning (New York State Senate, 2009). According to McGrath (2007), school staff are held more accountable by court systems and legislative bodies regarding bullying behavior. It is now expected that personnel will intervene when bullying occurs.

A number of education-based groups have also called on New York State to adopt legislation regarding bullying. The New York State United Teachers (2009) urged members to send legislators letters to demand approval of what would become the Dignity for All Students Act. The New York State Parent Teacher Association (2010)

indicated in its legislative brief, that they were strongly advocating for laws that oppose bullying in schools and supporting a safe environment for all children.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) (2009) expressed their support for an anti-bullying bill. The ADL stressed the necessity that school districts work with all community stakeholders such as parents, teachers, students, law enforcement, and other community leaders to ensure that anti-bullying policies will have support throughout the entire district and community. McGrath (2007) pointed out that parents and students have an expectation that schools provide an environment that is free of bullying and harassment and they are willing to make their voices heard.

In June 2010, The New York State Senate passed an anti-bullying law, 1987-B, which requires all school districts to effectively recognize and address any issues of discrimination or harassment. The "Dignity for All Students Act" took effect on July 1, 2012. It specifically stated that the legislature finds that a students' ability to learn and meet high academic standards is a schools' responsibility. New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane (2010), who was the lead sponsor of the bill, indicated that the legislation was a victory for all school families and addresses the need for safety and equality throughout New York State schools. New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) (2011) Public Policy Counsel Johanna Miller stated that the success of the Dignity for All Students Act will be determined by the experiences, expertise, and ideas of all of the interested stakeholders throughout the communities within New York State. The NYCLU contended that this group of stakeholders include educators, school board members, parents, and students. The New York State Senate (2009) set forth the policies and guidelines of the law as follows:

The board of education and the trustees or sole trustee of every schools district shall create policies and guidelines that shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Policies intended to create a school environment that is free from discrimination or harassment;

2. Guidelines to be used in school training programs to discourage the development of discrimination or harassment and that are designed:

A. To raise the awareness and sensitivity of school employees to potential discrimination or harassment, and

B. To enable employees to prevent and respond to discrimination or harassment; and

3. Guidelines relating to the development of nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods, and requiring that at least one staff member at every school be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation , gender and sex.

Policy. Jimenez (2010) maintained that any social issue that exists in society was created by the generations of people who came before and it is with society's consent that issues have been allowed to occur without policy. Jimenez stated that for social justice to occur, policymakers must develop policies to eradicate social issues. Sandel (2009) also discussed the importance of creating policy for the common good of all members of society.

Kraft and Furlong (2010) defined public policy as what governments enact, by the extension of the citizens that they represent to attempt to solve or not solve public issues.

Birkland (2005) had a similar definition for public policy and stated that public policy is defined as what our government chooses to do or not do, on our behalf regarding issues in our communities. Kraft and Furlong maintained that three types of public policy exist that and are generally divided into three distinct categories that include: government, politics, and policy analysis.

Kraft and Furlong (2010) stated that government serves as a representation of the people and is responsible for the development and implementation of public policy as they have the legal authority to do so. In the area of education, both state and local governments play a prominent role in the public policy process (Kraft & Furlong 2010). Kraft and Furlong (2010) define politics as the manner in which public policy is developed and adopted, and Birkland (2005) defined politics as the process that determines which people get certain things and the time that they receive it. Politics is chaotic and that makes people very skeptical of believing that it is a science (Birkland, 2005). Stewart, Hedge, and Lester. (2007) stated that public policy is always changing because better or new ways of dealing with issues are frequently identified.

Sabatier (2007) indicated that public policymaking involves the ways problems or issues are conceptualized and given to government leaders to develop resolution. The process continues by allowing the government to develop policy solutions, which are implemented, evaluated, and changed over time. Sabatier (2007) suggested that those involved in developing policy must have knowledge of both the goals and the perceptions of the entire constituency prior to developing a specific policy.

Due to the overwhelming complexity of the policy process, Sabatier (2007) suggested that a number of theories be followed to successfully navigate the policy

process. Sabatier suggested that theories should be logical with defined terms, identify the causal drivers, have propositions that are falsifiable, have both a broad and clear scope, and be fertile. The theories named by Sabatier include the Stages Heuristic, Institutional Rational Choice, Multiple Streams, Punctuated-Equilibrium Framework, and the Advocacy Coalition Framework.

Stages Heuristic Framework. Birkland (2007) stated that in the Stages Heuristic Framework, or Stages Model, policy development and implementation occurs in various stages. These stages include issue emergence, agenda setting, implementation, evaluation, and feedback. Sabatier (2007) described this theory as a collection of frameworks that concentrate on the manner in which institutional rules change the behavior of normally rational individuals who become motivated by their own self-interest. Sabatier maintained that this theory is generally recognized as one of the most utilized policy frameworks in the United States.

Multiple Streams Framework Policy Theory. The Multiple Streams Framework policy theory states that the policy process involves three groups of actors and processes (Sabatier, 2007). Sabatier indicated that these groups include the following: (a) a group that has information regarding problems, and the proponents of definitions of those problems; (b) a group that consists of the proponents of solutions to the problems with policy; and (c) a group of politicians that consist of elected officials. Sabatier maintained that these groups normally operate in an independent manner but rarely work in conjunction with each other. In the event that collaboration occurs, major policy changes can follow.

Punctuated Equilibrium Framework. Sabatier (2007) contended that the Punctuated Equilibrium Framework is based on the premise that policymaking consists of long periods of small change intertwined with small periods of significant change. Major policy change generally occurs when opponents of policy are able to exploit current policy venues (Sabatier, 2007).

Advocacy Coalition Framework. The Advocacy Coalition Framework involves the interaction that exists between advocacy coalitions that comprise actors from a number of institutions who view policy similarly and belong to the same political sub-system (Sabatier, 2007). Sabatier, who co-developed this framework with Jenkins-Smith, stated that a change in policy is a result of competition within a political sub-system as well as events that occur outside of the system.

Designing and implementing anti-bullying policies. Rigby (2001) indicated that there are several components of an effective anti-bullying policy. Rigby believed that these components include strong statements of the schools' stand against bullying, a succinct definition of bullying with illustrations, a declaration of the rights of individuals in the school community such as students, teachers, other employees and parents to be free of bullying and (if bullied) to be provided with help and support and a statement of the responsibilities of members of the school community. Rigby also contended that a successful policy must actively discourage bullying when it occurs and give support to those who are victimized. In addition, a general description of what the school will do to deal with incidents of bullying is necessary.

The Ohio Safe Schools Project at the University of Toledo (2006) suggested that the following items be included in any anti-bullying policy;

1. A statement that defined the purpose of the policy.

2. A definition of bullying that is contained in the statute of the state legislation.

3. A summary of the types of behaviors that are considered to be bullying in nature.

4. An overview of the manner in which the policy is disseminated to stakeholders, that reflects the legislation provided by the state.

5. A section that clearly outlines the procedures for reporting incidents of bullying.

6. A requirement that establishes the proper procedures for investigating complaints or reports of bullying behavior.

7. Includes, but is not limited to, employees, students, parents, and volunteers.

8. A summary of the manner in which bullying victims will be protected from any retaliation due to their reports of bullying behavior.

9. A section that contains the requirements, according to the state legislation, that outlines the process in which the parents or guardians of bullying victims will be notified.

10. A statement that clarifies the timeframe and process, required by state legislation, for the submission of bullying incident reports to the district office, school board or state education department.

The Anti-defamation League (2009) stated that the successful development of an anti-bullying policy will show the entire school community that a school district takes bullying seriously and will work diligently to reduce it. They also suggest that a model anti-bullying policy contains information that prohibits any forms of bullying that may

include but are not limited to, harassment, intimidation, and cyber- bullying. The Anti-defamation League also contended that it is imperative to involve all stakeholders within the community in policy development including community leaders, parents, students, administrators and teachers. They also suggested that the policy indicate specific prevention strategies or programs that will be utilized.

When developing a policy, Kowalski, Limber, and Agatson (2008) indicated that it is necessary to consult legal counsel early in the process and prior to developing policy to ensure that students' first amendments rights are safeguarded. Furthermore, the policy must have succinct definitions and examples of bullying, procedures for investigating reports of bullying, and disciplinary penalties for those who are guilty of bullying. In addition, it was strongly suggested by Kowalski, Limber, and Agatson that training and prevention models are clearly identified early in the policy development process.

Carver (2006) stated that policy development and leadership consists of three main components. These components are (a) an extensive description of the intended results of a policy, (b) the importance placed on holding the staff accountable to oversee and enforce the policy, and (c) the constant evaluation and monitoring of the progress of the policy. Wagner and Kegan (2006) indicated that the role of culture and relationships are of paramount importance when developing effective board policy. Policies that are strategically driven in nature are critical to the overall success of the culture of a school as well as overall student achievement (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Wagner and Kegan also pointed out that strategic policies that are developed by the Board of Education define the board's values and their commitment to making positive changes in education.

Sullivan (2011) indicated that the development of a successful anti-bullying policy is contingent on much discussion and consultation among the various stakeholders of an entire community. During the consultation stage, Sullivan suggested that students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider school community be involved in the process. It is necessary to have this dialogue in each community as bullying can manifest itself in different ways in different communities. Lerman (2010) stated that it is necessary to make sure that all bullying policies reflect and adhere to the both local and state statutes.

Rigby (2001) believed that an effective anti-bullying policy was developed by sharing clear and concise information with the entire school staff regarding the number of bullying incidents that are occurring in a particular school and ensuring that all members of a governing board examine all relevant information about bullying during the initial process of policy development. Once a conscious decision is made to attempt to curtail school bullying, Sullivan (2011) indicated that it is necessary to clarify the philosophy of the policy and routinely evaluate both its strengths and weaknesses. Sullivan suggested a six-pronged approach for developing effective policy. Sullivan suggested that schools review their philosophies and responses to bullying. In order to achieve this Sullivan maintained that all members of the school community such as families, school administrators, teachers, board members and other relevant members of the community, be invited to a meeting. According to Sullivan it also is necessary to focus on the intentions of the policy, and clarification of the goals and objectives must be covered. Sullivan contended that this should ultimately lead to an overall philosophy supported by the entire school community.

Once an overall philosophy is developed, Sullivan (2011) indicated that the second step be implemented. The next step in the six-step process is to convene a meeting of all community stakeholders to discuss ways to combat bullying. Sullivan pointed out that it is imperative to define the purpose of the meeting. This could be aided by bringing in a guest speaker knowledgeable in the area of bullying to facilitate discussions about the impact of bullying on the entire school community. Sullivan believed that it is critical to have open and frank discussion regarding strategies that the school should employ to reduce bullying and discuss terms of reference, which will be useful for program development.

Sullivan (2011) cited several examples of program development that include the evaluation of the school's strengths and the identification of the resources that are in existence, the identification of the type and quantity of bullying that is occurring in the school, and the discussion of ways to assist the school in providing an environment that is safe. Sullivan endorsed the creation of an anti-bullying committee to establish goals and objectives and lastly the development of effective policies and programs. This could be accomplished through an analysis of the schools strengths and weaknesses (Sullivan, 2011). In addition, a bullying survey should be conducted (Sullivan, 2011). Sullivan stated that this is a critical procedure to include since it will identify accurate information about the type and extent of bullying that occurs in the school. The next step in the process suggested by Sullivan is the construction and development of an anti-bullying policy draft.

Beane (2009) stated that it is necessary to have all of the bullying committee chairs from each school in the district firmly involved in the process to develop an

effective draft. In addition, Sullivan (2011) indicated that the policy draft should be critiqued and evaluated by selected school officials, parents, and students and that the policy guidelines should (a) reflect the school philosophy regarding bullying, (b) contain accurate information regarding the type and degree of school bullying that has been gathered by the committee, (c) address the legal requirements of any legislation or any other binding regulations that that the school must adhere to, and (d) be both achievable and enforceable.

Sullivan (2011) stated that at the time of the development of a bullying policy or when an existing policy is being modified, it is necessary that the individuals responsible for its development have a thorough knowledge of current research regarding bullying and any trends or incidents that exist within the district. The individuals must design the policy to meet the needs of that specific school district while maintaining the integrity of local and state laws (Sullivan, 2011). Within this step, Sullivan (2011) indicated the need to develop clear strategies to deal with bullying behavior and that all findings are presented with all interested parties.

Sullivan (2011) also suggested that the plan be presented to the school community and clearly indicate who will be responsible for overseeing the plan and process for implementation. Sullivan (2011) indicated that the next step is effective implementation. Sullivan (2011) also maintained that it is imperative to distribute the policy in writing to all appropriate parties. The policy becomes the school's contract between parents, pupils and the school district and must be discussed in the classrooms and at school assemblies. Sullivan maintained that once the policy is in place it must be enforced. The last step in the policy process is evaluation and oversight of the policy. Sullivan recommended that

support for the policy be ongoing and that evaluation and feedback be provided on a continual basis.

Policy implementation is the process through which government puts into action the policies that it has set forth through its departments or agencies (Birkland, 2005). Two forms of policy implementation models outlined by Birkland (2005) are the top-down approach and the bottom-up approach. Birkland (2005) stated that the top down approach is based upon the following beliefs:

1. Policies can be measured effectively since they consist of well-developed and defined goals.

2. Policies consist of clearly defined objectives that allow for the achievement of goals.

3. A single statute is included in the policy.

4. Policy originates at the top and filters down through the organization.

In order for the top-down approach to be successful, Birkland (2005) indicated that the policy must have clear goals and objectives. Without this, the opportunity for failure is present (Birkland) 2005.

Birkland (2005) stated that the bottom up approach is developed at a lower level of an organization and then is eventually endorsed at the highest level. The bottom up method is successful based on the premise that constituents are a part of the implementation process (Birkland, 2005). The implementation of the bottom up policy model is a continuation of the issues, conflicts, and agreements that occur during the policy process. Beane (2009) maintained that in order for a policy to be successful it must be supported systemically. Kaplan (2004) stated that the principal has the responsibility

to implement the policies within the school and play a key role in ensuring that the student conduct is acceptable and conducive to learning. Gerston (2010) indicated that policy implementation reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of the policy and rarely works without some difficulties. Once a policy is implemented, it generally starts a new cycle of development (Gerston, 2010).

Oliver (2009) defined policy governance as a system in which boards are able to conceptualize, organize, and complete their mandated duties. Oliver suggested that boards take into consideration that policy governance starts with the theory of accountability to ownership. Organizations are in existence to achieve the desired outcomes of their owners, or constituents, and school board serves as a representative of those owners or constituents. Oliver stated that the owners or constituents of a board are as follows:

- those who possess a source of authority,

- those individuals to whom the board is accountable,

- those who legitimize the decisions and actions of a board,

- those who profess and unify the board in common cause,

- those who are a likely source of future board leadership,

- those who contribute to the sustainability and stability of the board,

- those who serve as a proponent of the common cause and protect against board self-interest.

- those who are concerned and supportive of the entire organization.

Oliver also indicated that school boards must have a chain of accountability. The school board must interact and be accountable to its constituency, must have the proper

knowledge of the interests of its constituency when defining the manner in which the organization should operate, and must make sure that the organization functions and performs as it pertains to the best interest of its constituency.

The next step in the policy governance process is to put theory into practice, and Oliver (2009) suggested that school boards identify the areas that the constituents value. Oliver stated that this can be done by answering three specific questions that include the benefits that an organization will produce, the people that they will produce them for, and the cost efficient manner in which this will all be done. Carver (2006) stated that the most effective way to manage and oversee an organization or board is by using a policy governance model. Carver formulated a Policy Governance Model that is a collection of concepts or principles. He stated that governance is conceptually whole and is a downward extension of ownership, not an upward extension of management. The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) (2010) indicated that the governance team must base their governance structure on good sound research. Carver maintained that the governance structure of an effective school board should consist of four philosophical foundations that include accountability, servant-leadership, clarity of group values, and empowerment.

Carver (2006) maintained that a school board is accountable to its constituency and must ensure that the organization achieves its highest potential and avoids any circumstances deemed unacceptable. Carver also indicated that governance is a part of ownership and not management and that boards must be careful to adhere to the wishes of staff, vocal groups, or an individual board member that are not reflective of the entire constituency. A school board is both servant to, and responsible for, the overall

ownership of the organization. In the event that a school board does not serve in both of these important roles, it could be perceived as abusing its power (Carver, 2006). The school board must also act as an entity and be clear on its core values (Carver). Carver warned that individual board members should refrain from imposing personal desires and the values on the entire board and while it is appropriate to discuss the individual wishes of board members, such discussion should be done internally rather than outside the group. An effective board should also empower its employees to make decisions and suggest ways of doing things (Carver). The school board must be careful not to stifle the creativity of its employees but must remember that it is accountable for the overall direction, decisions, and ethics of its organization (Oliver, 1999).

Oliver (1999) contended that many strategies must be employed by a school board to develop a sound and effective policy. One strategy is to ensure that members of the school board accurately know the content of any policy. If this does not occur, some members may not endorse the policy due to fear that the board is incapable of oversight . In order to effectively accomplish effective oversight, it was suggested by Oliver (1999) that board members be provided with all of the information and issues regarding the policy being developed.

Gerston (2010) suggested that the appropriate data and results from the implementation of a policy be collected and evaluated to determine the true effect of a policy. Gerston stated that this will determine what has or has not been accomplished as a result of the policy. Gerston was careful to point out that the evaluation of a policy must take into account the intent and any intervening circumstances that could hamper

implementation. Any quick reactions that do not take these factors into account would be unwise (Gerston, 2010).

Bardach (2009) indicated that public policy analysis is social and political in nature. In his Eightfold Path, Bardach suggested that policy be analyzed using the following steps: (a) the definition of the problem, (b) the collection of evidence, (c) the construction of the alternatives, (d) the selection of criteria, (e) the projection of potential policy outcomes, (f) the analysis of any potential tradeoffs, (g) the conclusion of an analyst decision regarding appropriate policy, and (h) the development of a solid rationale to defend the decision.

Bardach (2009) advocated that this structure is used during policy analysis as it guides the policy analyst by ensuring that they have taken all of the variables into account. Bardach suggested that the final analysis of policy should consist of (a) a detailed description of any problems or issues that need to be more closely examined or changed, (b) a plan that list possible alternatives if necessary, (c) a course of action with projected outcomes and any evidence that supports the projections, (d) the impact that any trade-offs would have or not have by choosing other policy alternatives, and (e) a potential list of alternative policy choices that would confirm to the intent of the overall policy.

Guess and Farnham (2009) indicated that effective policy analysis includes defining any issues or problems are associated with policy in conjunction with developing options for other programs and projects that achieve the intended results of the policy. Those responsible for the decision making process regarding the adoption of

policy must analyze the policy and ensure that it meets all statutes and regulations (Guess & Farnham, 2009).

Existing anti-bullying policies. Four anti-bullying policies that have been approved by their respective Boards of Education are examined in this section. The first policy is that of the South Hadley School District, located in South Hadley, Massachusetts. The South Hadley School District had a student commit suicide due to excessive cyber-bullying. The other three policies are from New York State. Unlike the policy in Massachusetts, which was developed as a result of a tragic bullying case, the three policies from New York State School Districts were constructed to be in compliance for the Dignity for All Students Act. The second policy draft examined is from the Belleville-Henderson School District, near Watertown. The third policy draft examined is from the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District on Long Island and the final policy to be studied will be from the Hudson City School District.

South Hadley School District. A high profile suicide of a student from the South Hadley School District occurred in February of 2010. As a result, the South Hadley Anti-bullying Policy Committee (Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy, 2011c) members shared a commitment to creating a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all students. The goals of the committee included collaboration with teachers, families, and community members to have each school develop a plan for education and discipline regarding bullying. The adopted policy defines bullying and states that bullying may be in the verbal or written form or electronic in nature, a physical act, gesture or exclusion. Bullying is prohibited on school grounds or off school grounds if it creates a hostile

environment at school for the victim, or if it disrupts the school environment. If bullying is suspected it must be reported and will be grounds for disciplinary action.

According to the policy, the principal of each building is responsible for handling any complaint regarding bullying. Additionally the Superintendent is to develop guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the policy as well as publish disciplinary policies in the student handbook. The policy required that the school district update and develop a prevention and intervention plan at least every two years. In addition, each grade level is to incorporate an anti-bullying curriculum based on age appropriate material. Annually, school staff is given the opportunity to learn, build, and develop the skills for bullying prevention. The plan includes information and education for parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum being implemented in each school and is encouraged to reinforcement of the main components of the policy in the home.

Belleville-Henderson School District. The Belleville-Henderson School District Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy (2011a) stated that the district is committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment for students. Bullying is prohibited on and off school grounds if the event is school sponsored or related. According to this policy, bullying is defined as "a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time." It involves a real or perceived imbalance of power with a more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. The policy identified three forms of bullying: physical, verbal and psychological. In addition, cyber-bullying is defined as a form of bullying utilizing technology. The Belleville Henderson Board of Education required that personnel take corrective action if an incident of bullying is brought to his/her attention.

The bullying behavior must be reported to an immediate supervisor. In order to assist

with this goal, staff training is provided to raise awareness of bullying. The district also

planned to implement prevention and intervention techniques at the building and

classroom level as well as individual intervention on an as needed basis.

Plainview-Old Bethpage School District. The Plainview-Old Bethpage School

District Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy (2011b) stated that the district is committed

to providing an environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. Bullying and

harassment define the creation of a hostile educational environment when there is written,

verbal or physical conduct, threat, intimidation or abuse that has the ability to interfere

with the education of the student. Bullying may also take place through electronic

communication.

The policy required that any victim or person with knowledge of an occurrence of

bullying to notify district administrative staff. The complaint is to be investigated and if

there is evidence of such an event, corrective action will be taken. In addition, retaliation

against victims who report an incident is in violation of this policy. The Superintendent

of Schools is responsible for developing and implementing the regulations regarding

reporting, investigating and addressing bullying and harassment allegations.

Hudson City School District. The Hudson City School District (2011) adopted

regulations to include in their anti-bullying policy that included specific procedures to be

followed in the case of bullying (Appendix).

Summary

The literature identified key theories that explain why people bully and the impact

that bullying has on bullying victims. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory provided a

rationale for the reasons why people bully and the negative impact it has on a victim's psyche. The research referred to public policy models, their necessary components, development and implementation, and analysis and evaluation.

Many theories of public policy are included in the literature and explained why particular public policy models are effective. Carver (2006), Birkland (2006), Sullivan (2011), Kraft and Furlong (2010) and Oliver (1999) provided detailed analysis for the necessary components of policy development. Based on the information contained in the literature regarding the negative impact that bullying has on students, families, and communities, along with the amount and degree of bullying occurring in schools and communities, it is necessary to have anti-bullying legislation and local policies to ensure that schools provide a safe environment conducive to maximum learning and participation.

Four policies are currently in place, and the question remains, what components of a policy make it effective? The literature stated that an effective policy must be developed properly, implemented correctly, enforced on a daily basis, and evaluated continuously. Chapter three will discuss the research design utilized for the dissertation study.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Bullying is one of the major issues in our public schools today (Drew, 2010).

Drew stated that bullying can lead to fear, mistrust, anxiety and the inability of students

to concentrate on learning. Twemlow and Sacco (2012) indicated that the amount of

bullying that occurs is dependent on the amount of bullying that bystanders will allow.

School staff and students are bystanders in this epidemic and thus effective policies must

be enacted to eradicate school bullying. The purpose of this study was to determine the

necessary components of an effective anti-bullying policy to guide policy developers in

the development, implementation, and evaluation of appropriate district policies for

bullying.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe
   are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their
   schools?

2. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe
   are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their
   schools?

3. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are
   the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

4. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

5. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

6. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

7. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

8. What do public school superintendents believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

9. What do public school superintendents believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

10. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

11. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in

Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

12. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

Public school principals at both the elementary and secondary levels, along with public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY participated in focus groups and surveys to determine what they believed are the necessary steps to develop, implement, and evaluate an effective anti-bullying policy.

Research Context

The study took place in Dutchess County, New York, which is located in the southeastern portion of the state. The July 2009 population of Dutchess County was 293,562 and encompassed a land area of 802 square miles (city–data, year). City-data reported that the ethnic percentages of Dutchess County in 2009 was 78.7% White, 9.1% Black, 8.8% Hispanic, 3.3% Asian and 1.7% multi-racial. City-data also reported that as of 2009, 8.9% of the residents in Dutchess County lived in poverty.

The New York State Education Department (2009) reported that the total enrollment of Dutchess County Public School Districts was approximately 45,000. Data on the public school enrollment and the area classifications of the school districts within Dutchess County varied widely. Edudemic.com classified one of the school districts as a small city school district, while the rest were classified as a mix of suburban and rural. Two school districts, Wappingers and Arlington, were classified as Large Suburban, and

comprised nearly 50% of the overall population of the students in Dutchess County. The

enrollment of school districts from largest to smallest is included the Table 3.1

Table 3. 1

Dutchess County School District Population Description

District	Elementary	Middle	High	Total	Area Classification
Wappingers	5,562	2,469	4,263	12,294	Large Suburban
Arlington	3,969	2,364	3,397	9,730	Large Suburban
Poughkeepsie	2,257	1,017	1,177	4,451	Small City
Hyde Park	1,674	937	1,439	4,050	Rural Fringe
Beacon	1,707	735	1,074	3,516	Large Suburban
Red Hook	903	492	768	2,163	Town Fringe
Spackenkill	639	409	565	1,613	Large Suburban
Dover	703	350	507	1,560	Rural Fringe
Pawling	494	444	416	1,354	Rural Fringe
Millbrook	491	301	388	1,180	Rural Distant
Rhinebeck	483	280	399	1,162	Town Fringe
Pine Plains	481	234	393	1,108	Rural Distant
Northeast	265	169	369	803	Rural Distant

Note. Data taken from schooldistricts.edudemic.com

      The Dutchess County school districts have varied amounts of building

classifications. Four of the 13 districts have more than one elementary school, while all

but two have one middle school. With the exception of Wappingers, all districts have one

high school. The classifications are listed Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Dutchess County School Building Grade Configurations

District	Elementary	Middle	High	Alternative	Total
Arlington	9	3	1	-	13
Beacon	4	1	1	-	6
Dover	2	1	1	-	4
Hyde Park	5	1	1	-	7
Millbrook	2	1	1	-	4
Northeast	1	1	1	-	3
Pawling	1	1	1	-	3
Pine Plains	1	1	1	-	3
Poughkeepsie	6	1	1	-	8
Red Hook	2	1	1	-	4
Rhinebeck	1	1	1	-	3
Spackenkill	2	1	1	-	4
Wappingers	10	2	2	1	15

Note. Data taken from schooldistricts.edudemic.com

The number of students who qualified for free or reduced lunches within Dutchess County school districts varied widely. The New York State Education Department School Report Card (2009) reported that six school districts had less than 16% who qualified,

while three school districts had between 24% and 34%, and one district had nearly 80%

qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

Table 3.3

Percentage of Students Who Receive Free or Reduced Lunch

District	Percentage free/reduced lunch
Arlington	11.2%
Beacon	24.7%
Dover	N/A
Hyde Park	34.3%
Millbrook	12.5%
Northeast	N/A
Pawling	11.3%
Pine Plains	27.8%
Poughkeepsie	79.7%
Red Hook	14.4%
Rhinebeck	9.7%
Spackenkill	15.5%
Wappingers	13.9%

Note. Data taken from schooldistricts.edudemic.com

Feb.newAmerica.net (2009) revealed that for the most part, many of the school

districts contained a majority of white students with the exceptions of Poughkeepsie and

Beacon. Poughkeepsie and Beacon had higher numbers of African-American and

Hispanic Students while the other districts in the county had low percentages of these

populations. With the exception of Spackenkill, other school districts had very small

percentages of Asian students.

Table 3.4

Racial Demographics of Dutchess County Public School Districts

District	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian
Arlington	81.0	6.8	7.6	3.5
Beacon	48.3	22.2	22.7	3.2
Dover	Not available			
Hyde Park	77.8	12.5	7.8	1.7
Millbrook	88.1	3.0	5.4	1.4
Northeast	79.5	5.6	13.1	1.8
Pawling	88.4	1.8	7.1	2.4
Pine Plains	88.2	2.7	6.9	1.0
Poughkeepsie	14.9	60.5	23.3	1.1
Red Hook	90.5	1.7	4.5	2.5
Rhinebeck	90.7	1.9	4.5	2.8
Spackenkill	67.0	10.0	7.7	13.4
Wappingers	77.1	5.7	10.5	5.9

Note. Data taken from feb.newAmerica.net

Research Participants

The population for this study consisted of elementary principals, middle school

principals, high school principals, and school superintendents in Dutchess County, New

York. Within the 13 school districts that exist in the county, there were 13

superintendents, 46 elementary principals, 16 middle school principals, and 14 high school principals at the time of the study.

The majority of Schools Superintendents in Dutchess County had been in their respective positions for fewer than seven years and at the time of this study 4 of the 13 districts had interim superintendents. Only two superintendents within the county had been in their respective positions for more than 8 years.

The majority of building principals at the middle school and elementary levels within Dutchess County had been in their respective positions for at least five years. At the high school level, nearly 75% of building principals had been in their respective positions for less than five years.

The study was mixed methods and initially relied on focus groups that consisted of representatives from both building and district administration from a county located in southeastern New York State, other than Dutchess County. The purpose of the focus groups was to develop a survey to determine what school principals and superintendents believe are the key steps to developing, implementing, and evaluating an anti-bullying policy to be utilized by local school districts. The sample population for the survey consisted of superintendents and building principals from Dutchess County New York.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

Three separate focus groups that consisted of Building and District administrators were conducted with administrators outside of Dutchess County. The purpose of these focus groups was to interview educators in order to determine the necessary information to be included in the survey.

The participants for the focus groups consisted of a sample of school principals and Superintendents. The focus group discussions were recorded and analysis occurred after both groups completed the conversations. Based on the analysis of the responses of these three focus groups, a Likert scale survey was developed and sent by mail to the participants in Dutchess County. The focus group questions included the following questions:

1. What are the most important steps necessary to develop an anti-bullying

     policy?

2. What are the most important steps to implementing an anti-bullying policy?

3. What are the most important steps to evaluating an anti-bullying policy?

Survey

The survey consisted of 20 statements identified by the focus groups or by the literature as critical for inclusion in the successful development, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation of an anti-bullying policy. The survey was sent by mail to all superintendents, elementary, middle and high school principals in Dutchess County to determine their rankings of the most important components or processes that must be included in an effective anti-bullying policy. Each element within the survey was rated using a Likert Scale from 3 to 1 with 3 being highly important, 2 as important, and 1 as not important.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the importance of suggested components of anti-bullying policy development, implementation, and evaluation. The school administrators within Dutchess County were sent a packet that included a cover letter, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and a survey. The self-addressed stamped

envelopes were coded numerically to indicate which individuals participated and returned the survey. An individual not affiliated with the survey was responsible for recording the coded numbers of the returned survey envelopes. This individual was not be permitted to open the envelopes. A second individual, who was also not affiliated with the study, opened the envelopes and but was unaware of the identity of the respondents or the school district in which the data was affiliated. This procedure was followed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Sample

The research sample for the focus groups consisted of nine building and district administrators from four suburban districts in Southeastern New York in a county other than Dutchess County. The research sample for the survey consisted of 88 school administrators from Dutchess County, New York, and included 13 school superintendents, 13 high school principals, 16 middle school principals, and 46 elementary school principals from each school district within Dutchess County.

Data Analysis

Notations and recordings were utilized to both collect and interpret the qualitative data from the focus groups. The data was analyzed to determine what components were most important for inclusion in a model anti-bullying policy. Based on the analysis, recommendations were made regarding the key components identified by school superintendents, and building principals within Dutchess County.

Dissemination of results and disposition of data

       The results of this study was for the dissertation in the completion of the requirements of the Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) in Executive Leadership from in the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Executive Leadership at Saint John Fisher College.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Bullying has become a prominent issue in many of our public schools and has resulted in negatively impacted learning environments and has hampered academic success (Colorosso, 2008). Green and Ross (2005) indicated that due to the amount of bullying occurring throughout schools, many states have adopted legislation that require local school districts to develop anti-bullying policies.

The process to develop a comprehensive policy is not an easy one. Maines and Robinson (2010) stated that a successful policy must both define and focus on ways to develop, implement, and evaluate policy. De Lancer-Julnes (2009) indicated that practical implementation and evaluation strategies are critical to the oversight and management of policy.

The purpose of the dissertation research was to identify from key stakeholders important considerations in developing, implementing, and evaluating anti-bullying policies. Since many school districts are in the early phases of policy development, it may be helpful for school districts to survey school and district administrators to determine their thoughts and suggestions regarding an anti-bullying policy early in the development process. In order to support the development of anti-bullying policy, a Likert scale survey was distributed to school superintendents, elementary school principals, and secondary school principals in Dutchess County, New York to determine the necessary components to develop, implement, and evaluate a school anti-bullying policy.

Research Questions

   A number of research questions were answered during the course of this study that included the following:

1. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

2. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

3. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

4. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

5. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

6. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

7. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

8. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

9. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

10. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

11. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

12. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

Data Analysis and Findings

The survey was distributed to all 88 elementary principals, secondary school principals and school superintendents in Dutchess County, New York. A total of 48 surveys were returned for a return rate of 54.5% with 22 elementary school principals, 19 secondary school principals, and 7 school superintendents responding.

The findings of the survey are presented in nine tables that identify the responses of the elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents. Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 contain information regarding anti-bullying policy development. The second set, Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6, includes information on anti-bullying policy implementation. The final set of tables, Tables 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9, contains data regarding the evaluation of anti-bullying policy. The first set of figures, 4.1 to 4.3, has data regarding areas that the respondents rated as very important in the areas of development, implementation, and the evaluation of anti-bullying policies.

Policy development views of elementary principals. Table 4.1 presents the responses from elementary principals regarding their views on the components they believe are important in policy development. A high percentage of elementary principals suggested that it is very important to distribute a survey to staff regarding bullying concerns and examine past incident reports in the developmental phase of an anti-bullying policy. In addition, the majority of elementary principals also recommended that data be examined to determine the types of bullying behaviors exhibited as well as the locations in which bullying incidents occur. A high percentage of elementary principals also stated that staff must be surveyed regarding their bullying concerns and that bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs be instituted and supported. A high percentage of elementary principals also indicated that it is important to survey parents regarding their bullying concerns and that parental focus groups should be held to discuss bullying issues when developing an anti-bullying policy.

Table 4. 1

Elementary Principals: Important Steps to Develop Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
A1 Distribute survey to staff to solicit bullying concerns	0%	68%	32%
A2 Distribute survey to students to solicit bullying concerns	5%	23%	72%
A3 Distribute survey to parents to solicit bullying concerns	0%	68%	32%
A4 Schedule parent focus groups to seek parent input regarding bullying concerns	5%	77%	18%
A5 Examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents	0%	41%	59%
A6 Institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs	0%	23%	77%
A7 Seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying	0%	23%	77%

Note. N = 22

Policy development views of secondary principals. Table 4.2 presents the results regarding important steps identified by secondary principals to develop anti-bullying policies. Secondary principals, like elementary principals, stated that they strongly believe that seeking input from guidance counselors, school psychologists and social workers to identify students who may be prone to bullying behaviors is very

important. They placed higher importance on examining incident reports and data than elementary principals. In addition, a high percentage of secondary principals rated instituting and supporting bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs as very important. Secondary principals also indicated that it is very important to distribute surveys to staff to solicit bullying concerns, distribute surveys to parents to solicit bullying concerns, and schedule parent focus groups to seek parent input regarding bullying concerns.

Policy development views of school superintendents. As Table 4.3 shows, one of the more divided responses in the survey involved the superintendents' responses to the importance of distributing a survey to staff to solicit bullying concerns as well as importance of scheduling parent focus groups to seek parental concerns regarding bullying. Of the superintendents who responded, 43% stated that it is very important while 43% indicated that it is not important. The remaining 14% rated the approach as important. In addition, 42% of the superintendents indicated that it is not important to schedule parent focus groups, 29% stated that it is important, and another 29% rated the approach as very important.

Policy implementation views of elementary principals. As shown in Table 4.4, consistent enforcement among schools or staff was the top priority for 91% of the elementary principals. This high percentage indicated that principals consider it to be very important to have student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures. A high percentage of elementary principals also felt that it is very important to develop a newsletter outlining policy for the school community and to have staff presentations at Board of Education meetings when implementing an anti-bullying

policy. More than half of the elementary principals were also convinced that it is

important to seek support from parental groups when implementing an anti-bullying

policy and an additional 33% indicated that they believe it is very important to do so.

Table 4.2

Secondary Principals: Important Steps to Develop Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
A1 Distribute survey to staff to solicit bullying concerns	16%	58%	26%
A2 Distribute survey to students to solicit bullying concerns	5%	26%	69%
A3 Distribute survey to parents to solicit bullying concerns	5%	68%	27%
A4 Schedule parent focus groups to seek parent input regarding bullying concerns	5%	95%	0%
A5 Examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents	0%	21%	79%
A6 Institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs	5%	26%	69%
A7 Seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying	0%	21%	79%

Note. N = 19

Table 4.3

School Superintendents: Important Steps to Develop Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
A1 Distribute survey to staff to solicit bullying concerns	43%	14%	43%
A2 Distribute survey to students to solicit bullying concerns	14%	29%	57%
A3 Distribute survey to parents to solicit bullying concerns	14%	29%	57%
A4 Schedule parent focus groups to seek parent input regarding bullying concerns	42%	29%	29%
A5 Examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents	0%	29%	71%
A6 Institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs	0%	29%	71%
A7 Seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying	0%	14%	86%

Note. N = 7

Table 4.4

Elementary Principals: Important Steps to Implement Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
B1 Have a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies	5%	18%	77%
B2 Student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures	0%	32%	68%
B3 Development of a newsletter outlining policy for school community	9%	68%	23%
B4 Staff presentations regarding policy at Board Of Education meetings	18%	59%	23%
B5 Consistent enforcement among schools and/or staff	0%	9%	91%
B6 Seek support from parental groups (PTSA) for policies	14%	55%	31%

Note. N = 22

Policy implementation views of secondary principals. The survey responses of

the secondary principals, like both elementary principals and school superintendents,

showed that consistent enforcement among schools or staff is very important when

implementing anti-bullying policy (Table 4.5). In fact, this response was the only one in

the survey where respondents were in complete agreement. Each secondary principal

indicated that this item is very important. It is also important to note that over 60%

responded that having a series of staff meetings to discuss anti-bullying objectives and

procedures, as well as having student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy

objectives, is very important in the implementation of an anti-bullying policy.

Additionally, 89% of secondary principals indicated that it is very important to develop a

newsletter that outlines the adopted policy, while 79% stated that it is very important to

seek support from parental groups in implementing policy. Staff presentations at Board of

Education meetings was important to 53% of the secondary principals.

Table 4.5

Secondary Principals: Important Steps to Implement Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
B1 Have a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies	0%	37%	63%
B2 Student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures	0%	37%	63%
B3 Development of a newsletter outlining policy for school community	0%	89%	11%
B4 Staff presentations regarding policy at Board Of Education meetings	26%	53%	21%
B5 Consistent enforcement among schools and/or staff	0%	0%	100%
B6 Seek support from parental groups (PTSA) for policies	5%	79%	16%

Note. N = 19

Policy implementation views of school superintendents. Table 4.6 shows that

86% of school superintendents indicated that it is very important to have consistent

enforcement in schools when implementing an anti-bullying policy. This was comparable

to the responses of the elementary and secondary principals. A high percentage of school superintendents also stated that it is very important to have a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and proper procedures of anti-bullying policies. More than half of the school superintendents also indicated that it is very important to have student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures when implementing a policy.

Table 4.6

School Superintendent: Important Steps to Implement Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
B1 Have a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies	0%	29%	71%
B2 Student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures	14%	29%	57%
B3 Development of a newsletter outlining policy for school community	14%	72%	14%
B4 Staff presentations regarding policy at Board Of Education meetings	14%	86%	0%
B5 Consistent enforcement among schools and/or staff	0%	14%	86%
B6 Seek support from parental groups (PTSA) for policies	0%	57%	43%

Note. N = 7

Policy evaluation views of elementary principals. Table 4.7 shows that 77% of

the elementary principals who responded to the survey indicated that it is very important

to evaluate an anti-bullying policy by analyzing bullying incident reports. The remaining

respondents believed that it is important to analyze bullying reports. Providing

continuous and ongoing documented conversations with bullying victims was also

identified as very important by 64% of elementary principals while the remaining 36%

agreed that this practice is important in evaluating policy. Additionally, 73% of the

elementary principals felt that it is important to have staff meetings to discuss the overall

perceptions of the staff while 68% stated that it is important to disseminate parent surveys

to evaluate anti-bullying policies. Furthermore, 59% responded that it is important to

provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of

an anti-bullying policy.

Policy evaluation views of secondary principals. As demonstrated by Table 4.8,

84% of the secondary principals who responded to the survey believed it is very

important to analyze bullying incident reports. Moreover, 53% indicated that it was very

important to provide continuous and ongoing documented conversations with bullying

victims and that it is also very important to disseminate student surveys when evaluating

the effectiveness of a policy. Additionally, 79% of the secondary principals indicated that

it is important to provide ongoing staff meetings to discuss overall perceptions of

bullying while 53%, indicated that it is also important to distribute an anonymous survey

to solicit feedback from bullying victims to determine the effectiveness of a policy.

Table 4.7

Elementary Principals: Necessary Steps to Evaluate Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
C1 Disseminate parent surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy	18%	68%	14%
C2 Disseminate student surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy	5%	45%	50%
C3 Analyze anti-bullying reports	0%	23%	77%
C4 Provide continuous and ongoing documented conversations with bullying victims	0%	36%	64%
C5 Provide ongoing staff meeting to discuss overall perceptions of bullying	5%	73%	22%
C6 Provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy	23%	9%	18%
C7 Distribute an anonymous evaluation survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy	5%	4%	31%

Note. N = 22

Table 4.8

Secondary Principals: Necessary Steps to Evaluate Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
C1 Disseminate parent surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy	11%	68%	21%
C2 Disseminate student surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy	5%	42%	53%
C3 Analyze anti-bullying reports	0%	16%	84%
C4 Provide continuous and ongoing documented conversations with bullying victims	0%	47%	53%
C5 Provide ongoing staff meeting to discuss overall perceptions of bullying	0%	79%	21%
C6 Provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy	11%	42%	47%
C7 Distribute an anonymous evaluation survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy	5%	53%	42%

Note. N = 19

Policy evaluation views of school superintendents. Each school superintendent

indicated that it was is important to analyze anti-bullying reports. Table 4.9 shows that

79% responded that it is very important to provide continuous and ongoing documented

conversations with bullying victims. The responses of the school superintendents were somewhat mixed regarding the importance of the dissemination of both student and parent surveys: 42% indicated that it is important, 29% responded that is not important, and 29% stated that it is very important.

Table 4.9

School Superintendents: Necessary Steps to Evaluate Policy

Survey Question	Not Important	Important	Very Important
C1 Disseminate parent surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy	29%	42%	29%
C2 Disseminate student surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy	29%	42%	29%
C3 Analyze anti-bullying reports	0%	0%	100%
C4 Provide continuous and ongoing documented conversations with bullying victims	0%	29%	71%
C5 Provide ongoing staff meeting to discuss overall perceptions of bullying	14%	57%	29%
C6 Provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy	14%	72%	14%
C7 Distribute an anonymous evaluation survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy	14%	57%	29%

Note. N = 7

Similarities and differences across groups. Analysis revealed important similarities and differences between the perspectives of the three group surveyed regarding policy development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policy. This section highlights those similarities and differences. Table 4.10 summarizes the similarities and differences between the responses of the three groups.

Policy development similarities. Analysis indicated that there are similarities in the responses from the elementary school principals, secondary school principals and school superintendents. These similarities included, that it is very important to (a) distribute surveys to students to solicit bullying concerns, (b) examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents, (c) institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs, and (d) seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying.

Policy development differences. Analysis revealed differences in opinion between the building level administrators and school superintendents. The elementary principals and secondary principals indicated that distributing surveys to staff was important in developing an anti-bullying policy, but a high percentage of school superintendents did not agree. The responses of the school superintendents was split regarding the important components necessary in policy development as it related to the distribution of surveys to staff. Specifically, 43% indicated that this component is not important, 14% responded that it is important, and 43% believed that it is very important.

Table 4.10

Similarities and Differences in Stakeholder Responses

	Similarities	Differences
Development	• Distribute surveys to students to solicit bullying concerns • Examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents, • Institute and support bullying prevention programs • Seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying.	Survey staff • Building administrators supported • Superintendents split in opinion: 43% not important 14% important 43% very important.
Implementation	• Series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and proper procedures • Student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures • Consistent enforcement among schools and or/staff. • Development of a newsletter outlining policy • Staff presentations regarding policy at Board of Education meetings, • Seek the support of parental groups	No differences
Evaluation	• Analyze bullying incident reports when evaluating an anti-bullying policy. • Distribute an anonymous survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy • Provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy • Provide ongoing staff meetings to discuss the overall perceptions of bullying.	Survey parents • Building administrators supported • Superintendents split in opinion 29% not important 42% important 29% very important

Policy implementation similarities. Elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents were in agreement that the following elements of anti-bullying policy implementation are very important: (a) having a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies, (b) having student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures, and (c) consistent enforcement among schools and or/staff. The study participants also indicated that the following are important to the implementation process: (a) development of a newsletter outlining the policy for the school community, (b) staff presentations regarding policy at Board of Education meetings, and (c) seeking the support of parental groups, such as the Parent Teacher Student Association, (PTSA) for policies.

Policy implementation differences. The data from the elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents did not show any differences in response regarding the implementation of anti-bullying policies.

Policy evaluation similarities. A high percentage of elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents indicated that they are overwhelmingly in agreement that it is very important to analyze bullying incident reports when evaluating an anti-bullying policy. Similarly, elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents all responded that the following steps are important in the effective evaluation of an anti-bullying policy: (a) distribute an anonymous survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy, (b) provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy, and (c) provide ongoing staff meetings to discuss the overall perceptions of bullying.

Policy evaluation differences. Elementary principals and secondary principals were in agreement that it is important to disseminate surveys to parents regarding their perceptions of bullying, but the results from school superintendents were mixed. Specifically, 42% of the school superintendents indicated that it is important to survey parents, while 29% responded that it is very important, and 29% indicated that surveying parents is not important in the evaluation of a policy.

Summary of Results

In conclusion, the policy development strategies that elementary principals, secondary school principals and school superintendents identified as necessary in developing an anti- bullying policy were quite similar. According to the survey results, all three groups of stakeholders indicated that it is most important to seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying behaviors. In addition, they also were in agreement that it is very important to institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs and examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents.

Elementary principals, secondary principals and school superintendents were in agreement that the most important step to implement an anti-bullying policy is to ensure consistent enforcement of the policy among schools and/ or staff. The three groups also indicated that it is very important to conduct a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies and provide student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy procedures and objectives when implementing an anti-bullying policy. In the area of policy evaluation, elementary principals, secondary

principals, and school superintendents identified the analysis of anti-bullying reports as the most important step to evaluate an anti-bullying policy. They were also in agreement that it is very important that staff have ongoing, documented conversations with bullying victims to evaluate policy.

The next chapter includes a detailed discussion and summary of the findings of the dissertation study. In addition, the chapter includes recommendations for future practice, additional research, and a discussion of the limitations of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Bullying in schools is a major concern for parents, students, educators, politicians and citizens in communities throughout the country. Klein (2012) states bullying is an ongoing issue plaguing schools, and Katz (2012) indicates that cyber-bullying is rampant, impacting 20% of children between the ages of 10 -19. Meyer and Brown (2009) argue that many schools have attempted to combat bullying behaviors with policies that are inadequate and do not specifically identify ways to improve both school climate and school culture.

The problem is that local school districts have not been provided with the critical information required for the successful development, implementation and evaluation of anti-bullying policies. Research from experts in the area of school bullying including Beane (2009), Birkland (2005), Carver (2006), Coloroso (2008), Oliver (2009), Rigby (2001), Sabatier (2007), Sullivan (2011), and others provide a solid foundation for the development of a successful anti-bullying policy. The purpose of the dissertation study is to determine the components of an effective anti-bullying policy for guiding policy developers in the development, implementation, and evaluation of an appropriate district policy for bullying in public schools. The results of the dissertation study, coupled with the review of literature, provide a framework for the successful development, implementation and evaluation of anti-bullying policies to be used by school districts. The findings indicate scholars and the surveyed school administrators agree on numerous

components that are important in anti-bullying policy development, implementation and evaluation. The study is guided by twelve related research questions that investigate superintendent and building principal perspectives relevant to the development, implementation and evaluation of an anti-bullying policy.

Research questions. The research questions for this study include the following:

1. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

2. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

3. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

4. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

5. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

6. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

7. What do elementary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

8. What do secondary public school principals in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

9. What do public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY believe are the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

10. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to develop an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

11. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to implement an anti-bullying policy for their schools?

12. What are the similarities among the elementary public school principals, the secondary public school principals, and the public school superintendents in Dutchess County, NY in what they believe to be the most important steps to evaluate an anti-bullying policy in their schools?

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings of the study, research limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and a summary of the dissertation.

Implications of the Findings

The implications of this study are wide and far reaching. The findings are useful for school districts as they develop, implement, and evaluate anti-bullying policies in that the school administrators and experts in the field of anti-bullying policy development agree on the important components to be included in an anti-bullying policy.

Many states have adopted some type of anti-bullying legislation; however, the identification of the important components necessary for inclusion in an anti-bullying policy way and an approach for developing, implementing, and evaluating policy is not suggested in most legislation. Thus, it is necessary for each school district to determine a framework and the criteria that must be adhered to in the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective anti-bullying policy.

This study provides a framework to assist school districts in three primary areas. The first area includes the components necessary to develop an anti-bullying policy. The second area examines the proper ways to implement an effective anti-bullying policy. The final emphasis of the study details the manner in which anti-bullying policies should be evaluated.

The results of this study can be transferred to any school district throughout the country in that it includes survey data from school administrators as well as a review of literature from scholars. The survey data was derived from Dutchess County, NY, which includes school districts that range from urban to rural, large to small, and represents a variety of socioeconomic levels. The review of the literature includes findings by scholars in the area of anti-bullying policy development and implementation from the United States, Europe and Australia.

Limitations

The study is limited due to the small number of responses received from school superintendents. The survey was sent to each school superintendent in Dutchess County N.Y. Although the response rate is over 50%, only seven superintendents are included in the results. Therefore, the survey results from superintendents may not be as rich as that from secondary and elementary school principals.

Recommendations

The study includes an extensive review of literature and the survey results of practitioners in the areas of anti-bullying policy development, anti-bullying policy implementation and anti-bullying policy evaluation. The recommendations are to be used by school districts in future practice in the development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policies. Figure 5.1 provides an overview of the recommendations, and this section explains those recommendations in detail.

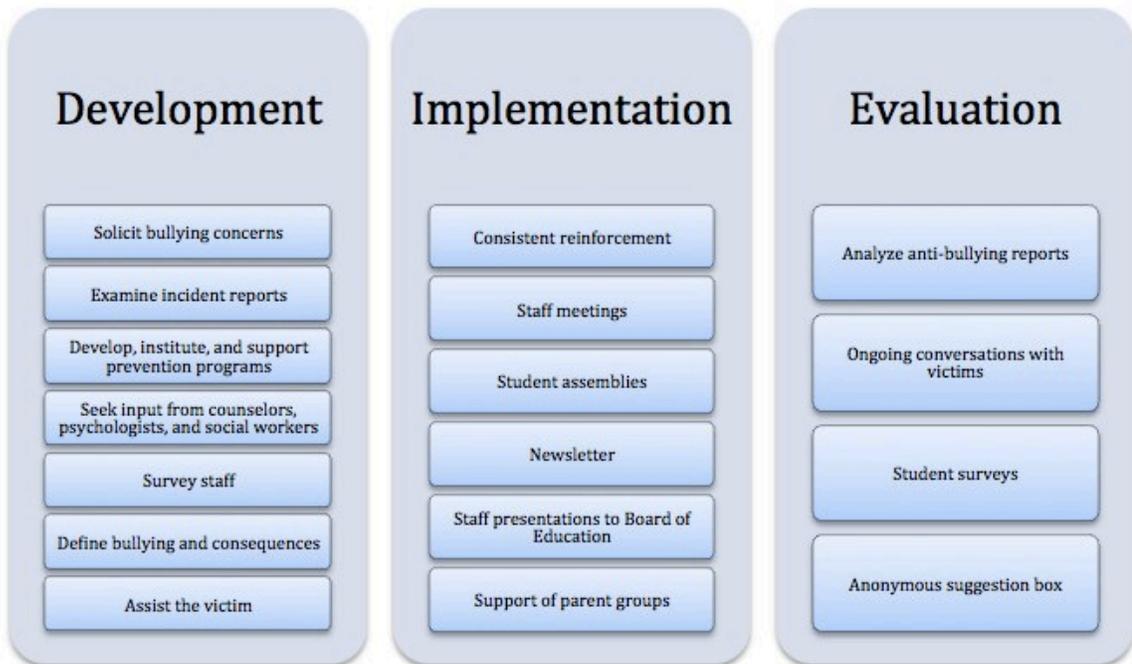| Development	Implementation	Evaluation
Solicit bullying concerns	Consistent reinforcement	Analyze anti-bullying reports
Examine incident reports	Staff meetings	Ongoing conversations with victims
Develop, institute, and support prevention programs	Student assemblies	Student surveys
Seek input from counselors, psychologists, and social workers	Newsletter	Anonymous suggestion box
Survey staff	Staff presentations to Board of Education	
Define bullying and consequences	Support of parent groups	
Assist the victim		

Figure 5.1. Overview of recommendations.

Policy development. Based on the literature and survey results, there are seven

components that should be included in an anti-bullying policy. This section details each

of the seven components.

Solicit bullying concerns. The first component is the distribution of surveys to

students to solicit bullying concerns. Sullivan (2011), states that this step is critical as

students in different schools may experience different types of bullying behaviors.

Examine incident reports. The second component in the development of an

effective anti-bullying policy is the examination of past incident reports and data to

determine the various types of bullying behaviors that exist as well as the locations where

the incidents occur. The research findings support the literature's assertion that it is is

very important to analyze the type of bullying behaviors as well as the locations that they

occurred.

Develop, institute, and support bullying prevention programs. The third

recommendation for effective policy development in an anti-bullying policy is the

development, institution and support of bullying prevention programs. These may include

Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs. Rigby

(2001) indicates that a kes to bullying prevention is the establishment of a positive culture

and climate within the school.

Seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers.

The fourth recommendation is to seek input from guidance counselors, school

psychologists, and social workers about who may be prone to bullying behavior. The

findings show that school superintendents, elementary school principals, and secondary

school principals all indicate that doing so was the most important component to be included in anti-bullying policy development.

Distribute surveys to staff. The fifth recommendation for inclusion in the successful development of an anti-bullying policy is the distribution of surveys to staff regarding their bullying concerns. Sullivan (2011) states that it is necessary to involve staff in the policy development process because they are aware of the types of bullying behaviors they see during the school day.

Define what constitutes bullying and consequences for that behavior. The sixth recommendation in the area of policy development includes a specific definition of what constitutes bullying behavior and what the consequences are for the perpetrator. Sullivan (2011) believes that the definition must be succinct and should be adhered to on a consistent basis.

Assist the victim. The seventh recommendation for inclusion in the policy development of an effective anti-bullying policy is having provisions for assisting the bullying victim. Sullivan (2011) states that this is important and often omitted from policies.

Policy implementation. Based on the review of the literature and the results of the survey, six components should be included in the implementation of an anti-bullying policy. This section details that recommendations.

Consistent enforcement. The first recommendation is to ensure that the anti-bullying policy is enforced consistently among schools/and or staff. The school superintendents, secondary principals, and elementary principals rank this as the most important component in the entire survey.

Hold staff meetings. The second recommendation regarding effective anti-bullying policy implementation is that schools should hold a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives of and proper procedures for implementing anti-bullying policies. The school superintendents, elementary principals and secondary principals indicate that this is very important.

Hold student assemblies. The third recommendation is to have student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures. School superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals all feel that this is very important. Rigby (2001) states that it is necessary for students to understand the components of the policy, and what is right, and what is wrong.

Develop a newsletter. The fourth recommendation is to develop a newsletter outlining the policy for the school community. The survey data indicate that school superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals feel it is important to inform the community of policies. Sullivan (2011) also states that it is necessary to inform all of the stakeholders within a community of policy procedures.

Staff present to Board of Education. The fifth recommendation for the successful implementation of an anti-bullying policy is staff presentations of the policy at Board of Education meetings. School superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals all indicate these presentations are important.

Seek support of parent groups. The sixth recommendation involves the support of parental groups. The school superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals indicate that parental support for policy is important.

Policy evaluation. In the area of policy evaluation, five recommendations are suggested. This section details those five recommendations.

Analyze anti-bullying reports. The first recommendation rated as very important by school superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals is to analyze anti-bullying reports. Gersten (2010) also states that it is necessary to evaluate policy on an ongoing basis to determine if it is of benefit and truly making a difference.

Ongoing conversations with victims. The second recommendation in the area of anti-bullying policy evaluation is to provide continuous and ongoing conversations with bullying victims. School superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals rate this as a very important step to evaluating an anti-bullying policy.

Disseminate student surveys. The third recommendation is to disseminate student surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy. Elementary principals and secondary principals indicated that this is very important while school superintendents state that it is important.

Disseminate parent surveys. The fourth recommendation is to disseminate parent surveys. School superintendents, elementary principals and secondary principals agree that it is important to survey parents to evaluate policy.

Provide an anonymous suggestion box. The fifth recommendation in the evaluation of an anti-bullying policy is to provide an anonymous suggestion box. The purpose of the box is to gather anonymous feedback regarding the effectiveness of anti-bullying policy. Sullivan (2011) argues that an anonymous box is necessary if a school district is to have knowledge of the perspective that people offer regarding policy. School

superintendents, elementary principals, and secondary principals also indicate that parental evaluation of policy was important.

Recommendations for future research

Further research is necessary in the area of adult behavior to determine if any correlation exists between adult behavior and the impact of that behavior on the behavior of children. Adults are expected to serve as role models for children. Therefore, additional exploration should be undertaken to determine whether there a correlation between children's interactions and the way adults treat each other and children. Additionally, a study measuring the impact of adult behavior as it relates to the acts of bullying or harassment committed by children would provide additional insight. Further study of the impact of an anti-bullying curriculum and its effect on the type and number of bullying incidents that occur in school also is required. A meta-analysis might also determine the most common components of anti-bullying policies developed in response to legislative actions.

Conclusion

The dissertation explores the critical elements necessary in the development, implementation, and evaluation of an anti-bulling policy for school districts. The purpose of the study is to determine the necessary components in the development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policies in public schools as perceived by key stakeholders. Hirsch, Lowen and Santorelli (2012) stress that it is time for school districts to address the issues of bullying, and administrators, teachers, and counselors are part of the solution. Local school districts are responsible for developing comprehensive

anti-bullying policies that contain mechanisms for effective development, consistent implementation, and on-going evaluation.

Despite the ongoing issue of bullying, it is problematic that many legislative policies do not provide significant strategies for the successful development, implementation and evaluation of the policy. A review of the literature as well as numerous state anti-bullying statutes shows that very few, if any, laws require guidance regarding the necessary assistance that must be provided to victims of bullying. Most of the policies focus on the necessary consequences for the bullying perpetrator.

Role of school superintendents. School superintendents are responsible for leading the charge and ensuring that policies are developed, implemented, and evaluated at all schools throughout the district. Edwards (2005) indicates that a major duty of a superintendent is to create and foster a school system that embodies the goals and values of the entire community. This includes creating an environment where bullying does not exist or is appropriately addressed.

Role of school principals. School principals are responsible for the overall implementation, enforcement and evaluation of anti-bullying policies at the building level, and their expertise regarding the types of bullying occurring in schools is extremely valuable. Kaplan (2004) states that building principals have a crucial role in how schools function and are able to influence both interpersonal relations and academic achievement.

Research context and participants. The first step of the study involved a series of focus groups developed to include building and district administrators from a county in Southeastern New York other than Dutchess County. The purpose was to determine necessary components in the development, implementation, and evaluation of an anti-

bullying policy. The data derived from the focus groups was used to develop the survey instrument.

Once developed, the survey was distributed to 88 school administrators in Dutchess County, New York to determine the necessary components for inclusion in the development, implementation, and evaluation of anti-bullying policies in public schools. The survey, coupled with a review of literature involving experts in the areas of effective anti-bullying policy development, resulted in key recommendations.

Policy development results. Research questions 1, 2 and 3 examined the area of policy development related to the significant components identified by school superintendents and principals. Elementary school principals, secondary school principals and school superintendents indicate that prior to developing policy it is very important to distribute surveys to students to solicit bullying concerns. In addition, elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents state that it is very important to examine past incident reports and data to determine the bullying behaviors that existed as well as the locations of incidents when developing policy. Furthermore, elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents indicate that is very important to institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs in the area of anti-bullying policy development. Lastly, the survey results indicate that elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents believe that it is very important to seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify those who may be prone to bullying when developing policy.

These results coincide with Sullivan (2011) who states that the development of a successful anti-bullying policy is contingent on much discussion and consultation among the various stakeholders of an entire community. Sullivan (2011) notes several examples of program development that include (a) the identification of the type and quantity of bullying that is occurring in the school, and (b) the distribution of a survey to students and staff since it will identify accurate information regarding the type of bullying that occurs as well as prominent locations and times. During the development stage of an anti-bullying policy, Sullivan suggests that students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider school community be involved in the process.

Similarly, Rigby (2001) believes that in order to develop an effective anti-bullying policy, clear and concise information must be shared with the entire school staff regarding the number of bullying incidents occurring in a particular school. Sullivan (2011) also suggests that the plan be presented to the school community. Furthermore, Sullivan (2011) argues that the plan should include a clear indication of who is responsible for overseeing the plan and the process for implementation. Similarly, Carver (2006) states that an extensive description of the intended results of the policy be agreed upon and included during policy development.

Policy implementation results. Research questions 4, 5, and 6 examine the areas of policy implementation related to the necessary components identified by elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents. Elementary principals, secondary principals and school superintendents strongly indicate that it is most important to ensure that consistent enforcement of the policy occur. Elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents indicate that a series of staff

meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies is very important. Similarly, the survey data indicate that elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents believe that having student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures is very important.

Elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents also state in that it is important to develop a newsletter outlining the policy for the school community in the implementation process. The survey data indicates that staff presentations regarding policy at Board of Education meetings is also important during the implementation process. Elementary principals, secondary principals and school superintendents also state in that it is important to seek the support of parental groups such as the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) during the policy implementation process.

The review of the literature supports the suggestions of the school superintendents and principals. Carver (2006) states that a great deal of importance must be placed on staff accountability, particularly in the area of consistent enforcement. Sullivan (2011) maintains that it is imperative to distribute the policy in writing to all involved parties. The policy then becomes the school's contract between parents, pupils, and the school district. As such, it must be discussed in the classrooms and at school assemblies. Sullivan maintains that once the policy is in place, it must be enforced.

Policy evaluation results. Research questions 7, 8 and 9 focus on the necessary components, as determined by school superintendents and principals, in the area of policy evaluation. A high percentage of elementary principals, secondary principals, and school

superintendents state that they are overwhelmingly in agreement that it is very important to analyze bullying incident reports when evaluating an anti-bullying policy.

In addition, elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents all state that it is important in the evaluation of an anti-bullying policy to distribute an anonymous survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy. Furthermore, they suggest that it is important to provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. In addition, elementary principals, secondary principals, and school superintendents indicate that it is important to provide ongoing staff meetings to discuss the overall perceptions of bullying. .

The results of the survey consistently coincide with that of scholars regarding policy evaluation. Gerston (2010) suggests that all of the appropriate data and results from the implementation of a policy be collected and evaluated to determine the true effect of a policy. Guess and Farnham (2009) indicate that effective policy analysis includes defining any issues or problems associated with policy in conjunction with developing options for other programs and projects that achieve the intended results of the policy. Bardach (2009) state that the collection of evidence is critical to the determination of the success or failure of a policy.

Comparing and contrasting views of stakeholders. Research questions 10, 11 and 12 involve similarities in responses by school superintendents in the area of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. The similarities between the respondents have been discussed and the differences now are examined. The results of the survey

show only two differences of opinion regarding policy development, implementation, and evaluation among the school superintendents, elementary, and secondary principals.

One difference exists in the area of policy development where elementary and secondary principals indicate that the distribution of surveys to staff is important in the successful development of an anti-bullying policy, whereas, the school superintendents were split as to whether or not this was important. The other difference noted is in the area of policy evaluation. The building administrators indicate that it is important to survey the parents of anti-bullying victims, while 29% of school superintendents note that it is not important.

Summary. This study is significant due to the results gained from the distribution of the survey. Policy developers can use the information in the development, implementation and evaluation of anti-bullying policy. The limitations of the study include the small number of responses from school superintendents. Therefore, the survey data from superintendents may not be as rich as that from both secondary and elementary school principals.

In closing, Sandel (2009) indicates that it is socially just to provide those being treated unjustly with safeguards and protection. It is an absolute necessity to provide all students with safeguards against bullying behaviors in schools. Therefore, in order to attempt to reduce the amount of bullying in schools, the responsibility for the proper development, implementation and evaluation rests with each local school district. School districts have a moral responsibility to enact comprehensive anti-bullying policies that are evaluated on a continual basis.

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Appendix A

Hudson City School District Anti-bullying Policy

1. Reporting and Investigation

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims and persons with knowledge of bullying report such behavior immediately to the supervisor or the building administrator as soon as possible after the incident so that it may be effectively investigated and resolved. The district will promptly investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner, although limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. In order to assist investigators, individuals should document the harassment, hazing, bullying as soon as it occurs and with as much detail as possible including: the nature of the incident(s); dates, times, places it has occurred; name of perpetrator(s); witnesses to the incident(s); and the victim's response to the incident. If, after appropriate investigation, the district finds that a student, an employee or a third party has violated this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken in accordance with the code of conduct, applicable collective bargaining agreement, district policy and state law. If the reported behavior constitutes a civil rights violation, the complaint procedure associated with either policy 0100 or 0110 will be followed, as applicable." (p.1)

2. Confidentiality

“It is district policy to respect the privacy of all parties and witnesses to complaints of bullying. To the extent possible, the district will not release the details of a complaint or the identity of the complainant or the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed to any third parties who do not need to know such information. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with the district's legal obligation to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary action to resolve the complaint, the district retains the right to disclose the identity of parties and witnesses to complaints in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. The staff member responsible for investigating complaints will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with all complainants. If a complainant requests that his/her name not be revealed to the individual(s) against whom a complaint is filed, the staff member responsible for conducting the investigation shall inform the complainant that: The results of the investigation shall be reported back to both the target and the accused in accordance with the accompanying regulation. If either of the parties disagrees with the results of the investigation, they can appeal the findings in accordance with the regulations that accompany this policy.

    1. the request may limit the district's ability to respond to his/her complaint;

    2. district policy and federal law prohibit retaliation against complainants and witnesses

    3. the district will attempt to prevent any retaliation; and

    4. the district will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs.

If the complainant still requests confidentiality after being given the notice above, the investigator will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request as long as doing so does not preclude the district from responding effectively to the bullying and preventing the bullying of other students." (p.1)

3. Investigation and Resolution Procedure

    A. Initial (Building-level) Procedure

    "Whenever a complaint of bullying is received whether verbal or written, it will be subject to a preliminary review and investigation. Except in the case of severe or criminal conduct, the supervisor or building administrator should make all reasonable efforts to resolve complaints informally at the school level. The goal of informal procedures is to end the bullying and obtain a prompt and equitable resolution to a complaint. As soon as possible but no later than *three working days* following receipt of a complaint, the supervisor or building administrator should begin an investigation of the complaint by:

    Reviewing any written documentation provided by the victim(s).

    Conducting separate interviews of the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s), and witnesses if any, and documenting the conversations.

    Providing the alleged perpetrator(s) a chance to respond and notify him/her that if objectionable behavior has occurred, it must cease immediately and that the individual may be subject to discipline.

    Parents of student victims and accused students should be notified within one school day of allegations that are serious or involve repeated conduct.

Where appropriate, informal methods may be used to resolve the complaint, including but not limited to:

a. discussion with the accused, informing him or her of the district's policies and indicating that the behavior must stop;

b. suggesting counseling, skill building activities and/or sensitivity training;

c. conducting training for the department or school in which the behavior occurred, calling attention to the consequences of engaging in such behavior

d. requesting a letter of apology to the victim;

e. writing letters of caution or reprimand; and/or

f. separating the parties.

Appropriate disciplinary action shall be recommended and imposed in accordance with district policy, the applicable collective bargaining agreement or state law. The supervisor or the building administrator shall report back to both the victim and the accused, notifying them in writing, and also in person, as appropriate, regarding the outcome of the investigation and the action taken to resolve the complaint. The victim shall report immediately if the objectionable behavior occurs again or if the alleged perpetrator retaliates against him/her. If a complaint contains evidence or allegations of serious or extreme bullying, the complaint shall be referred promptly to the Superintendent.

In addition, where the supervisor or the building administrator has a reasonable suspicion that the alleged bullying incident involves criminal activity, he/she should immediately notify the Superintendent, who shall then contact the school attorney, appropriate child protection and law enforcement authorities. Any party who is not

satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation by the supervisor or the building administrator may request a district-level investigation by submitting a written complaint to the Superintendent within 30 days." (p.3)

B. District-level Procedure

"The Superintendent or his/her designee shall promptly investigate and resolve all bullying complaints that are referred to him/her, as well as those appealed to the Superintendent following an initial investigation by a supervisor or the building administrator. In the event the complaint involves the Superintendent, the complaint shall be filed with or referred to the Board President, who shall refer the complaint to an appropriate individual for investigation. The district level investigation should begin as soon as possible *but not later than three working days* following receipt of the complaint by the Superintendent or Board President.

In conducting the formal district level investigation, the district will endeavor to us individuals who have received formal training regarding such investigations or that have previous experience investigating such complaints. If a district investigation results in a determination that bullying did occur, prompt corrective action will be taken to end the misbehavior. No later than 30 days following receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent (or in cases involving the Superintendent, the Board-appointed investigator) will notify the victim and alleged perpetrator, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation. If additional time is needed to complete the investigation or take appropriate action, the Superintendent or Board-appointed investigator will provide all parties with a written status report within 30 days following receipt of the complaint." (p.4)

C. Retaliation Prohibited

"Any act of retaliation against any person who opposes bullying behavior, or who has filed a complaint, is prohibited and illegal, and therefore subject to disciplinary action. Likewise, retaliation against any person who has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing of a bullying complaint is prohibited. For purposes of this policy, retaliation includes but is not limited to: verbal or physical threats, intimidation, ridicule, bribes, destruction of property, spreading rumors, stalking, harassing phone calls, and any other form of harassment. Any person who retaliates is subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination." (p.5)

Discipline/Penalties

"Any individual who violates this policy by engaging in prohibited bullying will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary measures available to school authorities include, but are not limited to the following:

Students: Discipline may range from a reprimand up to and including suspension from school, to be imposed consistent with the student conduct and discipline policy and applicable law.

Employees: Discipline may range from a warning up to and including termination, to be imposed consistent with all applicable contractual and statutory rights.

Volunteers: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of volunteer assignment.

Vendors: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of district business.

Other individuals: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including denial

of future access to school property." (p.6)

Training

"All students and employees shall be informed of this policy in student and

employee handbooks, on the district website and student registration materials. A poster

summarizing the policy shall also be posted in a prominent location at each school. All

employees shall receive information about this policy and regulation at least once a year.

Administrative employees and other staff, such as counselors or social workers, who have

specific responsibilities for investigating and/or resolving complaints of bullying shall

receive yearly training to support implementation of this policy, regulation and on related

legal developments. Principals in each school shall be responsible for informing students

and staff on a yearly basis of the terms of this policy, including the procedures for filing a

complaint and the impact of bullying on the victim and bystanders. Training needs in

support of this bullying prevention and intervention program will be reflected in the

district's annual professional development plan, in curriculum and will be considered in

the budget process." (p.7)

Appendix B

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY SURVEY

Please circle the correct title: Superintendent H.S. Principal   M.S. Principal   El. Principal

Please circle the following statements as either (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

A. Components in the **development** of an anti-bullying policy

1. Distribute survey to staff to solicit bullying concerns (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

2. Distribute survey to students to solicit bullying concerns (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

3. Distribute survey to parents to solicit bullying concerns (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

4. Schedule parent focus groups to seek input regarding bullying concerns (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

5. Examine past incident reports and data to determine bullying behaviors and the locations of incidents (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

6. Institute and support bullying prevention programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies and character education programs (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

7. Seek input from guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers to identify students who may be prone to bullying behaviors (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

B. Components in the **implementation** of an anti-bullying policy

1. Have a series of staff meetings to discuss the objectives and the proper procedures of anti-bullying policies (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

2. Student assemblies to discuss anti-bullying policy objectives and procedures (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

3. Development of a newsletter outlining policy for school community (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

4. Staff presentations regarding policy at Board of Education meetings (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

5. Consistent enforcement among schools and/or staff (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

6. Seek support from parental groups (PTSA) for policies (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

C. Components to <u>evaluate</u> an anti-bullying policy

1 Disseminate parent surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

2. Disseminate student surveys to evaluate anti-bullying policy (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

3. Analyze bullying incident reports (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

4. Provide continuous and ongoing, documented conversations with bullying victims (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

5. Provide ongoing staff meetings to discuss overall perceptions of bullying (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

6. Provide an anonymous suggestion box to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important

7. Distribute an anonymous evaluation survey to bullying victims to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy (1) Not Important (2) Important (3) Very Important