

The Effectiveness of Bullying Interventions between School Resource Officers Hired by School Districts Compared to Law Enforcement Agencies

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The Effectiveness of Bullying Interventions between School Resource Officers Hired by School
Districts Compared to Law Enforcement Agencies

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Abstract

The Effectiveness of Bullying Interventions between School Resource Officers Hired by School

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Statement of the Problem

Due to increased rates of school bullying school districts have created programs and interventions in order to help deter bullying and reduce victimization. “Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance” (StopBullying.gov, 2016). There are several types of school bullying including verbal bullying, social bullying, physical bullying, cyberbullying and social alienation. The five types of school bullying usually occurs within the school building either during or after school hours (StopBullying.gov, 2016). A few examples of places school bullying occurs are inside the classroom as well as the playground or bus stop.

School bullying has a huge effect on victims. Schools are now working towards bullying interventions in order to decrease the amount of victimizations in schools. School resource officers (SROs) have been employed or contracted as a way to decrease school bullying. SRO’s are either hired by independent school districts (ISD SROs) or contracted from law enforcement agencies (CSROs). Robles-Piña and Denham (2012), explains the number of school resource officers are increasing on school campuses in order to assist and prevent bullying and other forms of school violence.

With school bullying being such a large issue throughout the United States school resource officers need to be assessed as well as the programs used to deter bullying.

Methods of Approach

The first method of approach will involve a review of literature to define school bullying. This will evaluate both characteristics of victims and bullies. Petrosino, Guckenburg, DeVoe and Hanson (2010), did a study on characteristics of bullying, bullying victim, and school are associated with increased reporting of bullying to school officials. A study will also be evaluated in regards to bystander intervention behavior from school-based bullying (Polanin, Espelage & Pigott, 2012).

The second method of approach is a comparison of knowledge between school resource officers who are contracted and school resource officers who are employed by the school districts. Robles-Piña and Denham (2012), presented a mixed-methods analysis on bullying interventions and the knowledge of school resource officers.

The final method of approach will involve a thorough explanation of specific rules and policies initiated at school districts. State laws will be compared in order to establish ways school districts are taking action to prevent bullying and to protect students. Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) will also be explained and evaluated in regards to bullying prevention. This program is the most researched and best-known bullying prevention program available in today's society (Hazelden, 2016). The program components will be explained as well as an estimated breakdown of costs for school districts to initiate the program.

Other studies will be evaluated in order to have a clear understanding of school bullying, school prevention programs and school resource officers. There have been numerous studies conducted over the years and further research is still being conducted in regards to this topic.

Assumptions of the Study

One common assumption that can be made is that bullies are considered juvenile delinquents and bully due to personal conflict. Whether the juvenile isn't doing well in school, living in poor conditions, has parents who commit crime or initiate in peer pressure are all characteristics that can be assumed for school bullies. Another assumption of the study would be that school resource officers decrease the amount of school bullying in school districts.

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Introduction

This research paper is about the effectiveness of bullying interventions between school resource officers hired by school districts compared to law enforcement agencies. The purpose of the research is to define and explain school bullying and focus on interventions used within school districts. Creating a safe environment for children in today's society is one of the most important aspects for school districts.

School bullying has significant short and long term effects on victims and bystanders. School faculty, parents and school resource officers play a vital role on how to maintain school safety and protect victims from bullying in school districts. Due to the increased rates of school bullying, school districts have created programs and interventions in order to help deter bullying and reduce victimization. School programs and interventions allow students, teachers and parents to learn about school bullying in a classroom setting.

There have been numerous studies conducted over the years in regards to school bullying. An overview will be presented on important studies containing topics such as school bullying, school resource officers, victims, bystanders and bullies throughout the United States. Theories will also be examined in order to have a clear understanding as to why students engage and initiate in school bullying. There are several theories that involve school bullying but the two main theories include: general strain theory and differential association theory. With previous research and theories that have evolved over time school faculty, parents and school resource officers can better understand school bullying. School faculty, parents and school resource officers can also maintain a better understanding from not only the bully standpoint but also the victim and bystander.

Through the use of school bullying prevention programs, state and local laws, school policy and the use of school resource officers, school districts can limit the amount of school bullying and ensure a safer learning environment for students.

Literature Review

In today's society school bullying is a huge issue. There are several types of bullying and specific effects of school bullying. Through research it has been established that there are different characteristics between school bullies and victims as well as specific signs to look for when a student is believed to be a victim. Researchers have taken a step to focus on school resource officers (SROs) hired by independent school districts (ISD SROs), compared to being contracted from law enforcement agencies (CSROs). Research is currently being conducted in regards to school bullying. Previous studies show and compare specific effects of school bullying and how school resource officers play a role on bullying interventions. Through research and studies there will be a comparison between the types of bullying, characteristics of bullies, victims and bystanders and the overall effects of bullying. There are also specific signs to focus on as a school resource officer or school faculty member that could lead to victims and bullies in regards to bullying within the school district.

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is one of the most common types of bullying that happens either before school, during school and/or after school. "Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Physical bullying includes but isn't limited to: hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and/or making mean or rude hand gestures (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Sexual harassment and assault also fall within physical

bullying. One common example of physical bullying includes fights at the playground. This form of bullying could cause physical harm to victims as well as psychological harm.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Verbal bullying includes teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting and/or threatening to cause harm (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Verbal bullying is just as traumatic as physical bullying. According to Just Say Yes (2015), females primarily engage in this form of bullying, though males may also use it in an attempt to dominate their victim.

Social Alienation

Social alienation can be very traumatic on victims in a group setting. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). This form of bullying can cause public humiliation leaving victims upset and very discouraged. Social alienation is the hardest form of bullying to detect since its sometimes indirect (Just Say Yes, 2015). "It can go behind the victim's back, or can take the form of public humiliation. It includes: spreading rumors, non-inclusion, negative gestures, jokes or pranks, embarrassment or humiliation, and damaging someone's social reputation" (Just Say Yes, 2015). Victim's of social alienation often are left emotionally damaged and experience depression and anxiety (Just Say Yes, 2015).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is one of the newest forms of bullying that is being recognized. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such

as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat and websites (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). This form of bullying is increasing as technology increases. Social media websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other websites are so common and an easy way to cyber bully victims. “Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). In today’s society, it’s very common for school aged children to send private pictures to friends, boyfriends and/or girlfriends which eventually could be leaked to several people including most of the students at the school in which the victim attends. The overall affects of this incident would have social, emotional and psychological effects on the victim.

School Bullying

Children who are bullies or victims of bullying could show several characteristics. Victims and bullies include boys and girls from all ages, sizes and backgrounds (Education Development Center, 2008). According to Petrosino, Guckenbug, Devoe and Hanson (2010), “bullying appears to be common among U.S. students and has been associated with short and long term negative consequences such as depression and poor health” (p. 1). School district employees can focus on the specific characteristics of victims and bullies in order to control bullying within the school district.

Characteristics of Victims and Bullies

Even though victims and bullies both range from boys and girls of all ages and sizes children are more likely than others to be victimized because they appear small, weak, insecure, sensitive, or different from their peers (Education Development Center, 2008). Specific

characteristics of victims include but not limited to: low self-confidence, anxiety, fearfulness, submissiveness, depression or sad appearance, limited sense of humor and/or below-average size, strength or coordination (Education Development Center, 2008). A few tendencies shown by victims include: feelings of helplessness, self-blame for problems, social withdrawal and isolation, poor social skills, low popularity, few or no friends and/or excessive dependence on adults (Education Development Center, 2008). Several victims of bullying tend to be repeat victims and this is an ongoing issue within the school districts. Students who are victims of bullying can help reduce the risk by exhibiting self-confidence, avoid the bully's tactics, respond with assertiveness and obtain support from others (Education Development Center, 2008). Victims can act a specific way in order to hide the characteristics that make him/her at risk to be a potential victim of bullying.

There are a few harmful immediate and long-term harmful effects on victims when it comes to bullying. A few harmful effects include: headaches, skin problems, abdominal pain, sleep problems, bed-wetting, crying and depression (Education Development Center, 2008). All of these effects on victims can be a red flag for not only parents but also teachers. Bullying is also linked to mental health issues, substance use and suicide (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Children who are bullied tend to have a decreased academic achievement which can be a sign for teachers and other faculty members. Students GPA, test scores and/or school participation could decrease which are all signs of possible school victimization for bullying. Students are more likely to miss, skip or drop out of school if he/she is being victimized at school (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

The media often puts a correlation between school bullying and suicide when students at school districts do commit suicide and there were signs of victimization. Even though children

who are bullied are at risk of suicide there usually is other reason behind the suicide (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (2016), many issues contribute to suicide risk, including depression, problems at home, and trauma history. Children who are not supported by parents, peers, and schools also have an increased risk of suicide and bullying can make situations worse (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Brett J. Litwiller and Amy M. Brausch (2012) conducted a study on cyber bullying and physical bullying in adolescent suicide. During this study data was collected from a large risk-behavior screening study with a sample of 4,693 public high school students (Litwiller & Brausch, 2012). According to Litwiller and Brausch (2012), “the study’s findings showed that both physical bullying and cyber bullying were associated with substance use, violent behavior, unsafe sexual behavior, and suicidal behavior. Substance use, violent behavior, and unsafe sexual behavior area also associated with suicidal behavior.” (p. 675).

Although bullies often look like out of control children, there are a lot of characteristics and reasons why children act out in a specific way. Bullies on the other hand have different specific characteristics compared to victims. Typically, characteristics of bullies include: having a need to control and dominate others, quick tempered and impulsive, take pleasure in seeing someone or an animal in distress, find it difficult to see a situation from another person’s point of view and refuse to take responsibility or deny wrong doing (Strauss Esmay Associates, 2011). A few other characteristics include: blaming the target or say they deserved what they got, good at talking their way out of situations, intolerant of differences, feeling superior and insensitive to the feelings or needs of others and have a lack of empathy (Strauss Esmay Associates, 2011). Children who bully may also witness physical and verbal violence or aggression at home, may

hit or push other children, may often be physically strong, may or may not be popular with other children and/or have trouble following rules (Healthwise, 2015).

Just like victims, bullies have specific risk behaviors as they move into adulthood. Children who bully are more likely to: abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults, get into fights, vandalize property, drop out of school, engage in early sexual activity, have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults, be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

Even though victims and bullies differ in characteristics there are a few similarities. One important common characteristic is school dropout rate. Bullies and victims both are at risk for failing in school and eventually dropping out. Adult supervision also plays a role on bullies and victims. The behavior and actions children witness at home can be considered appropriate behavior at school towards others. If physical confrontation occurs at home bullies might believe that's appropriate at school. Victims on the other hand who witness physical confrontation at home might believe that's how he/she is supposed to be treated.

Anthony Petrosino, Sarah Guckenburger, Jill DeVoe and Thomas Hanson (2010), conducted a study based on characteristics of bullying, bullying victims, and schools associated with increased reporting of bullying to school officials. A secondary analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey School Crime Supplement was conducted (Petrosino, Guckenburger, DeVoe & Hanson, 2010). This survey covers all students ages 12-18 who attend at least some school in the prior academic year. The total number of students who were invited into the survey in 2007 was 11,161 students. Of the 11,161 students 6,503 completed the survey and only 5,621 met the criteria for the secondary analysis conducted in this study. The study tested 51 characteristics

between the three specific categories. Petrosino, Guckenburg, DeVoe and Hanson (2010), found that 11 characteristics in two categories including bullying victimization and bullying victims showed a statistically significant association with reporting. The study also notes that 64 percent of the respondents who experienced bullying did not report it (Petrosino, Guckenburg, DeVoe & Hanson, 2010). Three research questions were addressed during this study. According to the researchers the three questions consisted of: what characteristics of bullying victimization are associated with increased reporting of bullying to a teacher or other adult at the school, what characteristics of bullying victims are associated with increased reporting of bullying to a teacher or other adult at the school and what characteristics of bullying victims' schools are associated with increased reporting of bullying to a teacher or other adult at the school (Petrosino, Guckenburg, DeVoe & Hanson, 2010). The study was conducted by current literature which included studies done based on the three categories. Based on the findings 35.8 percent of bullying victims reported their victimization to a teacher or other adult at their school and 64.2 percent of the students did not (Petrosino, Guckenburg, DeVoe & Hanson, 2010). Based on the study, it can be determined that a large percentage of victimizations aren't reported to adults such as teachers, parents or other faculty members within the school district. Based on the study the researchers determined future research is important in order to determine why there are such a high percentage of students who didn't report the victimization compared to students who did report the victimization.

Characteristics of Bystanders

Since bullying is so common within school districts bystanders play an important role and should be recognized. "A bystander is a person present but not involved" (Dictionary.com, 2016). Victimization of school bullying is usually done in a group setting or in front of a few

people. Bullying is usually not done at school districts when the bully and victim are alone. Bystanders are important because it almost never happens when adults are watching, most bystanders want to do something to stop the bully and bullies like an audience and if the audience disapproves he/she are discouraged from continuing (Strauss Esmay Associates, 2011). Sometimes bystanders can cause a situation to escalate and make it worse by laughing or cheering which is common for a group setting where bullying is occurring. Bystanders can help by defending the target, getting help from their peers, reporting the act to adults and discouraging the bullying (Strauss Esmay Associates, 2011). Even though bystanders can have an overall positive effect on school bullying often times bystanders won't intervene. Bystanders will choose not to intervene due to being fearful of becoming a target, feel powerless, don't like the target, fear retribution, don't know what to do and believe telling adults won't help or may even make the situation worse (Strauss Esmay Associates, 2011). With proper knowledge taught by parents and teachers, students should know specific strategies in order to intervene with bullying.

Children who are bystanders also have long term and short term effects just like victims and bullies. Bystanders who witness bullying are likely to have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs, have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety and miss or skip school (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Joshua R. Polanin, Dorothy L. Espelage and Therese D. Pigott (2012) presented a study school based bullying prevention programs and the overall effects on bystander intervention behavior. Several studies have been done throughout the years on bullying and victimization intervention and prevention programs. Polanin, Espelage and Pigott (2012), conducted a comprehensive search to retrieve articles from the last 30 years. A total of 360 articles were retrieved by the researchers but only 11 studies made the final criteria of the study and were reviewed. Evidence from 12

school-based programs, involving 12,874 students, indicated that overall the programs were successful (Polanin, Espelage & Pigott, 2012). Overall, the studies found that programs increased bystander interventions within school districts. The researchers have discovered a few limitations to the study but overall found that future research needs to be conducted on the design of the programs with a focus on the bystander.

Police Involvement

With the increase concern and rate of school bullying in school districts police involvement is becoming much more important. Police have a greater responsibility in order to help schools ensure student's safety. "As pressure increases to place officers in schools, police agencies must decide how best to contribute to school safety" (Sampson, 2002). According to Sampson (2002), "the most effective ways to prevent or lessen bullying require school administrators' commitment and intensive effort; police interested in increasing school safety can use their influence to encourage schools to address the problem." School resource officers (SROs) have been created in order to help ensure students safety in school districts.

Barbara Raymond compiled an article in 2010 that discussed in detail the common roles of school resource officers and deciding whether and how to assign police officer to specific schools. As a sworn police officer, school resource officers play a unique role working within the school district. Some common roles include: assuming primary responsibility for handling calls for service from the schools, addressing crime and disorder problems such as gangs and drug activity occurring in and around the school, making arrests and issuing citations on campus providing leads and information to the appropriate investigative unit and serving as hall monitors, truancy enforcers, crossing guards, and operators of metal detectors and other security devices (Raymond, 2010). A few other common roles of school resource officers include: taking

action against unauthorized persons on school property, responding to off-campus criminal mischief that involves students and serving as liaisons between the school and the police and providing information to students and school personnel about law enforcement matters (Raymond, 2010). School resource officers also serve as first responders in the event of a critical incident at schools such as accidents, fires, explosions, and other life threatening events (Raymond, 2010). Most of the time school resource officers are in charge of coordinating emergency response plans with the faculty at the school districts. A few emergency response plans that need to be in place include incidents involving active shooters and bomb threats. Drills are done throughout the school year with faculty and students to ensure everyone knows what to do when an emergency situation occurs. Since teachers are the most important part of the drill a lot of drills will be done when students are off for the day. Teachers will get together with the school resource officer and conduct mock drills and conduct exercises in case of a real incident.

School resource officers also play a role on being an educator. According to Raymond (2010), a school resource officer can present courses for students, faculty and parents.” A few topics that are taught by school resource officers are policing as a career, criminal investigation, alcohol and drug awareness, gang and stranger awareness, crime prevention, babysitting safety and several others (Raymond, 2010).

Rebecca A. Robles-Piña and Magdalena A. Denham conducted a mixed methods analysis on school resource officers for bullying interventions. School resource officers are increasing in school districts across the United States in order to prevent school violence. “More than any other school safety problem, school violence, in the form of bullying, continues to represent a real threat to the emotional and physical health of students in the United States’ schools (Robles-Piña & Denham, 2012, p. 38). The mixed-method study was conducted to compare the

knowledge and perceptions of school resource officers hired by independent school districts (ISD SROs) and those contracted from law enforcement agencies (CSROs) about their knowledge and perceptions about bullying interventions (Robles-Piña & Denham, 2012). Through research bullying interventions was identified as the best practice for school districts. In order for effective bullying interventions there needs to be consideration on whether the programs are school-wide program interventions, class curriculum interventions or individual strategies (Robles-Piña & Denham, 2012). Other factors that play a role include grade level, gender, target (bully, victim or bystander), implementation strategies, and sustainability over time (Robles-Piña & Denham, 2012). School resource officers are important on bullying awareness, comprehensive antibullying policy, rules and guidelines, conflict resolution, peer mediation support, empathy building, cooperative learning and social skills education against victimization (Robles-Piña & Denham, 2012). The researchers for this study used a mixed-methods approach for the collection and analyses of data to increase the trustworthiness/validity of the research findings (Robles-Piña & Denham, 2012). Robles-Piña & Denham (2012) surveyed 184 participants who were identified as ISD SROs and the rest identified as CSROs. The sample consisted of 137 males, 36 females, 2 participants who identified as other, and 9 participants did not specify gender. The bullying survey was then provided to all of the participants and the results were collected. According to Robles-Piña and Denham (2012), “ISD SROs were more aware than CSROs about knowledge of school bullying plans, the need for social skills and training, enforcing existing school policies regarding bullying intervention strategies, and using more conflict resolution strategies. Additionally, ISD SROs were less likely to use punitive law enforcement strategies than were CSROs” (p. 38). Several explanations can be provided based on the information that was discovered for this study. One of the most important explanations is the amount of training each

school resource officer was provided on bullying interventions. School resource officers need several hours of training in order to understand school bullying interventions. This would include initial training courses as well as refresher training courses. Lack of exposure could also play a role on the results of this study. According to Robles-Piña and Denham (2012), “ISD SROs differed from CSROs in training and application of best practices due to lack of exposure. It may be that CSROs who work in municipal settings may have to go off campus to perform law enforcement duties for their parent agencies and due to those duty shifts may not be able to develop their counselor and educator functions to their fullest positional” (p. 51). Based on this one study, both groups didn’t present a solid knowledge of best practices related to interventions. This study proves that school resource officers need to be trained accordingly and need to be made aware of the best bullying interventions that can be conducted throughout the school district.

In order to have an effective SRO program there needs to be a strong relationship between the school and law enforcement agency. Most schools are generally safe although crime and violence can occur at nearly all schools so it’s important to establish the specific public safety needs (Raymond, 2010). Selecting and training school resource officers are the two most important aspects to an effective SRO program in school districts.

Since officers in schools are highly visible to students, faculty and parents it’s important to select an officer who will work well in a school environment. School resource officers are role models for students and will be looked up to by many students. A few key attributes of school resource officers include: the ability to work effectively with students, ability to work with parents and ability to work with principals and other school administrators (Raymond, 2010). Every school resource officer has to have knowledge of school-based legal issues, knowledge of

school resources, knowledge of social service resources and an understanding of crime prevention and child development (Raymond, 2010). A lot of the attributes can be taught through training but the more knowledge officers have before applying for the position the better.

A lot of school resource officers learn through trial and error on the job especially when he/she is new to the position (Finn, McDevitt, Lassiter, Shively & Rich, 2005). According to Finn, McDevitt, Lassiter, Shively and Rich (2005), “Today, SROs are trained the summer before their new assignment begins, including G.R.E.A.T training (which has the added advantage of teaching the SROs how to teach), 40-hour juvenile officer training, and training related to sexual abuse, domestic violence, and resources such as social service agencies” (p. 20). The basic school resource officer course is held by NASTRO (National Association of School Resource Officers). This course includes a forty-hour block of instruction designed for any law enforcement officer with two years of less experience working in an education environment and school administrators (National Association of School Resource Officers, 2016). During this course school resource officers will be taught about the foundations of school based law enforcement, ethics, school resource officers as a teacher, diversity, understanding special needs students, social media, school law, school resource officers as a counselor/mentor and several other topics. After each session is completed the school resource officer will maintain his/her National School Resource Officer Basic Course Certificate. Overall, this course teaches school resource officers how to establish partnership with their schools.

School resource officers and school faculty need to have an understanding in regards to the types of bullying and specific effects of school bullying. In order to ensure school safety and help prevent school bullying, school resource officers and school faculty need to know specific signs and characteristics that may point to a victim of bullying. Once school resource officers

and faculty are aware of the behavior that's happening in the school district it becomes easier to help resolve the issue.

School Bullying Prevention

School bullying has a huge effect on not only students but teachers at a school district. "Bullying can threaten students' physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). There are several things schools can do in order to help prevent bullying. The first effort faculty should focus on is to assess bullying in the school district. "Conduct assessments in the school to determine how often bullying occurs, where it happens, how students and adults intervene, and whether your prevention efforts are working" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). The next effort faculty should focus on is to engage parents and youth. "It is important for everyone in the community to work together to send a unified message against bullying" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Schools can even establish a school safety committee or task force to plan, implement, and evaluate your school's bullying prevention program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). The third effort faculty can focus on is creating policies and rules. "Create a mission statement, code of conduct, school-wide rules, and a bullying reporting system" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). With these set policies and rules, students will become aware of what's not acceptable on school grounds in regards to school bullying. The fourth effort faculty can focus on is to build a safe environment. "Establish a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). One common example of this is staff meetings which happen often at school districts. The last effort faculty can focus on is to educate students and school staff. Build bullying prevention material into the curriculum and school

activities for students and train teachers on the school rules and policies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

School bullying preventative programs are set in place at school districts in order to help deter school bullying. Schools throughout the United States use these preventative programs and have had successful results. In addition to the preventative programs there are set policies and rules within each school district on school bullying. State laws are used throughout the United States which helps guide school districts on the policies and rules. School staff and school resource officers have to be aware of the programs, policies, rules and state laws in order to enforce them at the school district in which they're employed.

School Bullying Preventative Program

One of the most common bullying preventative programs used across the United States is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). This program is the most researched and best-known bullying program available today (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). This program is used for not only school bullying but for dating violence and youth suicide. According to Hazelden Foundation (2016), "with over thirty-five years of research and successful implementation all over the world, OBPP is a whole-school program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting." The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed for students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools which consists of students ages five to fifteen years old (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). This program is also effective in high schools. During the program, all students participate in most aspects of the program, which students identified as bullying others, or as targets of bullying receive additional individualized interventions (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). The program utilizes the Olweus bullying questionnaire and classroom curriculums. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program does its best

in order for every student to have individual training and knowledge to help ensure an overall decrease rate of school bullying for the future.

According to the Hazelden Foundation (2016), “The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop.” Specific goals of the program consist of: reducing existing bullying problems among students, preventing and development of new bullying problems and achieving better peer relations at school (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Based on research and statistics the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has had successful results across the world. “Outcomes have included: fifty percent or more reductions in student reports of being bullied and bullying others and a significant reduction in student reports of general antisocial behavior such as school bullying, vandalism, school violence, fighting, theft and truancy” (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Peer and teacher ratings of bullying problems have also had similar results to student reports of being bullied and bullying others (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Hazelden Foundation (2016) also acknowledged, “significant improvements in the classroom social climate as reflected in students’ reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relations, and more positive attitudes toward schoolwork and school and last greater support for students who are bullied, and stronger, more effective interventions for students who bully.”

In order to show the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program researchers have conducted studies over the years. Previous research should be evaluated by school districts in order to establish which program would work best for a specific school district. Nancy M. Bowllan conducted a study in 2011 on the implementation and evaluation of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in an urban/suburban middle school. Bowllan conducted a research study using a quasi-experimental design and collected data for 158 students prior to the

implementation of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and were compared to 112 students who received the program intervention for one year (Bowllan, 2011). Several perspectives on bullying were collected using the Revised-Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (Bowllan, 2011). In addition to the students being evaluated with the program, data was collected for 17 teachers on prevalence of bullying and capacity of intervene pre- and post- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program intervention (Bowllan, 2011). “The purpose of this intervention study was to investigate the prevalence of bullying in an urban-suburban, Catholic middle school and to evaluate the impact of a comprehensive school-wide prevention program on the frequency of bullying behavior and its potential impact on the overall school climate and students’ perceived sense of safety” (Bowllan, 2011). Results based on the study showed successful rates. Significant findings were found for 7th grade students who received one year of the program on reports of prevalence of bullying and exclusion by peers (Bowllan, 2011). In contrast, variability in statistical findings were obtained for 8th grade females and no statistical findings were found for males (Bowllan, 2011). Teachers on the other hand reported improvements in the ability to identify bullying, talk to students who bully and talk with students who are bullied (Bowllan, 2011).

Nerissa S. Bauer, Paula Lozano and Frederick P. Rivara (2007), conducted a study based on the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in public middle schools. The researchers conducted a nonrandomized controlled trial with 10 public middle schools, 7 intervention and 3 control groups (Bauer, Lozano & Rivara, 2007). “Student-reported relational (e.g., spreading rumors, social exclusion) and physical victimization, and whether the program improved student attitudes and perceptions towards bullying were assessed pre-and post-implementation using available school survey data” (Bauer, Lozano & Rivara, 2007). The

overall results based on this study showed no overall effect on student victimization although reports of relational and physical victimization decreased by 28 percent (Bauer, Lozano & Rivara, 2007). Students in the intervention schools were more likely to intervene in school bullying incidents and the 6th graders evaluated were more likely to feel sorry and want to help the victims during a bullying incident (Bauer, Lozano & Rivara, 2007). Overall, the study showed mixed effects but further studies should be done in addition to this research.

Policies and Rules

School districts have established set policies and rules in order to prevent school bullying. “School staff can help prevent bullying by establishing and enforcing school rules and policies that clearly describe how students are expected to treat each other” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Within the school policy and rules consequences will also be explained so students understand what will happen if they violate the policy.

There are several types of policies and rules established at school districts in order to prevent bullying. One common type is a mission statement which establishes the vision for the school (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Burnet Middle School located in Union, New Jersey has established an anti-bullying mission statement for students. The mission statement states, “Our school is a place where everyone feels safe and accepted and has a sense of belonging. Bullying will never be tolerated here. School personnel, students, parents and the community will work in collaboration to prevent all forms of bullying through education and the establishment and maintenance of policies and programs designed to eradicate bullying” (Township of Union Public Schools, 2013).

The second type is creating a code of conduct. This code of conduct will describe positive behaviors expected of the school community (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

2016). State laws will sometimes specify what must be included in the school's code of conduct (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

The third type is having a set student bill of rights which includes positive things students can expect at school (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). This will include a list of short statements that the students will have to obey. Danbury, Connecticut has a student bill of rights for the middle schools in the community. The bill of rights includes what expectations the school has as well as what the students have the right to do on school property. According to Danbury Public Schools (2010), "We expect all of the following from you as a student in our school: we expect you will represent our school in an outstanding manner, we expect you will work to the best of your ability, we expect you to treat others with dignity, worth and respect, we expect you will keep our school beautiful and clean and we expect you will obey all the rules and regulations set forth by your teachers and schools etc." Students should also have a bill of rights that explains the rights of the students in order to ensure a safe learning environment. According to Danbury Public Schools (2010), the list consists of the following: "learn in a disruption free-environment, know what is expected of them at all times in every area of the school, be protected from verbal abuse, have their positive behavior recognized, have their personal property protected, have their concerns heard and be treated with kindness and caring." Student bill of rights should be created and established to fit each particular school district. Even though student bill of rights will be similar at school districts across the United States they will differ in order to meet the needs, standards and expectations at that particular school district.

While developing and establishing rules and policies it's important to keep them meaningful and relevant to both teachers and students (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Make sure rules and policies are consistent with state laws, include school staff,

parents and students when developing the rules and policies, train school staff on enforcing school rules and policies and incorporate the rules and policies in day-to-day interactions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). It's also beneficial for school districts to create a reporting system. The easier it is for students to report an incident the more students will file reports. This is important so students can express themselves in a confidential and private way without fear of retaliation from the bully/aggressor.

State Laws

State and local lawmakers have taken action to prevent bullying and protect children” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Several states have both anti-bullying laws and policies except for the following 10 states which only have laws: Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Wisconsin uses the term bullying for anti-bullying laws whereas California uses the term discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Within every state policy groups are listed under the state law. In Wisconsin there is no specific groups listed but schools that receives federal funding are required by federal law to address discrimination a number of different personal characteristics (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). On the other hand, California specifically lists groups under the California state law. The groups consist of: disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and association with a person or group with one of more of these actual or perceived characteristics (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Wisconsin has state laws that are under three different statutes which include: special observance days, policy on bullying and hazing (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). On the other hand, California state laws that cover

bullying are broken down into 34 California education codes and 25 California code of regulations. Each state has passed set laws in regards to bullying. Montana is the only state that has passed a statewide policy discussing bullying without having enacted a statute specifically prohibiting it (Thomson Reuters, 2016). “All other states have at least passed a law defining bullying and authorizing school officials or other authorities to take appropriate action to stop it” (Thomson Reuters, 2016).

Bullying prevention programs, policies, rules and state laws are all established to help school districts prevent bullying. Even though school districts will use different bullying prevention programs, have different policies and rules set in place and have different state laws every school district is able to maintain the ability to prevent bullying. School faculty and school resource officers have to be aware of school bullying within the school district and be able to identify school bullying when it happens. Once the bullying incident is identified then faculty and school resource officers can take proper steps in order to ensure the bullying stops with specific consequences stated within the school policy and rules.

Theoretical Framework

School bullying is one of the most important crimes that occur within school districts. School resource officers have an important role within the school district in order to help ensure the safety of school staff and students. School bullying has a major effect on not only victims but also bystanders. There are several reasons why bullies initiate in this type of behavior and act in such an aggressive manner towards others. Theories and research explain an in depth analysis why bullies act in such a manner. Theories and researchers have discovered that several school bullies learn and/or are taught the aggressive behavior at a young age. Two main theories that help explain school bullying are general strain theory and differential association theory. Both

theories have evolved over time and several researchers have done studies in order to compare the theories to bullying. School resource officers and school faculty need to have an understanding and knowledge of specific theories in order to have a better understanding as to why school bullies act a certain way.

General Strain Theory

General strain theory (GTS) focuses on not just the lower class but every social class. “In the 1980s, Robert Agnew proposed general strain theory, which covers a much larger range of behavior by not concentrating on simply the lower class and which provides a more applicable model for the frustrations that all individuals feel in everyday life” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 334-335). The general strain theory model is composed of three main categories that branches out to three other sections which eventually leads to criminal behavior. The three main categories consist of: failure to achieve positively valued goals, presentation of noxious (negative) stimuli and removal of positively valued stimuli. The three categories then lead to strain and frustration, anger and other negative emotions, lack of legal coping mechanisms and eventually criminal behavior (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010).

General strain theory is usually examined based on the overall effect of a specific strain within the crime. There are specific types of strain that are most likely to lead to crime. “Strain refers to relationships in which others are not treating the individual as he or she would like to be treated” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 367). Many researchers will refer the term strain as different meanings within the study he/she is conducting. “Strains are most likely to lead to crime when they are seen as unjust are seen as high in magnitude, are associated with low social control, and create some pressure or incentive to engage in criminal coping” (Tibbetts &

Hemmens, 2015, p. 374). There are specifically three types of strains that researchers could be referencing within his/her study.

Objective Strains

Objective strain is the most common type of strain studied by researchers. “Objective strains refer to events or conditions that are disliked by most members of a given group (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 367). Objective strains are based on the events and conditions regardless of group membership (physical assault, lack of adequate food and shelter) but evaluates gender and age within specific group characteristics (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015). One of the most common research methods to study objective strains is observational research. Tibbetts and Hemmens (2015) explains that a researcher by the name of Anderson described many of the objective strains in a poor, inner-city, African American community (p. 368).

Subjective Strains

“Subjective strains refer to events or conditions that are disliked by the people who are experiencing (or have experienced) them” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 368). In this type of strain, the individuals being researched have experienced an event or condition that they disliked. Subjective strain worked within objective strain. “People differ in how they subjectively evaluate such objective strains as divorce and the death of a family member” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 368). In this example, the subjective evaluation of the objective strain is a function of a range of factors including individual traits, personal and social resources, goals, and a range of life circumstances (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015).

Emotional Response to an Event or Condition

Emotional response to an event or condition works close with subjective strain. “There are many definitions of emotions, but most state that a central component of an emotion is an

evaluation of or an affective response to some object or behavior or idea” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 368). Evaluations of emotions goes beyond the actual state of emotion but involves changes in physiological or bodily sensations (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015). One example of this could be that two individuals evaluate an event/condition in the same way and they both dislike it an equal amount but when evaluating the individuals one become angry and the other become depressed (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015). With that being said they can both be studied on how they established different emotions after the event/condition occurred. Tibbetts and Hemmens (2015) explain a study done by Broidy and Agnew in 1997. The researchers argued that males and females often differ in their emotional reaction to subjective strains (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015). “Although both males and females may experience anger, the anger of females is more likely to be accompanied by feelings of guilt, depression, and anxiety with helps explain gender differences in such crime” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 369).

General Strain Theory Studies

Byongook Moon, Hye-Won Hwang and John D. McCluskey (2011), presented an empirical test of general strain theory and how it relates to the causes of school bullying. Moon, Hwang and McCluskey (2011) states, “little previous research has examined whether leading criminological theories can explain bullying, despite the commonality between bullying and delinquency” (p. 849). “School bullying has gained near-universal attention among researchers, media, school authorities, and parents concerned about students’ well-being and safety” (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011, p. 850). There are three important perspectives within this research study. “First, it will serve to bridge criminology and its typical emphasis on serious misbehavior with the (arguably more mundane but pervasive behavior of school bullying. Second, it will explore the fit of general criminological theory in an international context, which is an area

where criminology must expand its empirical inquires. Finally, this investigation will open the door for further study of this topic as we necessarily will leave more questions, and directions for future research, than answers in our wake” (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011, p. 850).

It hasn't been since recent years that school violence in South Korea, particularly school bullying, has been exposed as a serious school and social problem (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011). It has been established based on research that there is little evidence that school and teachers comprehend the seriousness of school bullying. “Overall, these findings indicate that school authorities and teachers do not give enough attention to school bullying or are not fully aware of its consequences” (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011, p. 852). With more knowledge teachers will better understand school bullying.

“According to general strain theory individuals experience negative emotions, especially anger, when they are treated unjustly and unfairly or exposed to negative stimuli” (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011, p. 854). As a result of these negative emotions people might engage in delinquent behavior. Based on previous researcher's findings indicated that individuals who experienced physical/emotional abuse, maltreatment, rejection and/or anger are more likely to engage in bullying (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011). The researchers for this study investigated the uses of longitudinal data on 655 Korean youth and investigated how it explains criminological theories (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011). The overall results of this study showed limited support that general strain theory supports and results in bullying. Even though that is the case there are significant effects of school-generated strains such as teachers' physical and emotional punishment and examination related strain that compares to bullying (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011). Depression also has a significant impact on bullying and causes people to engage in deviant behaviors and/or aggressive behavior. Moon, Hwang & McCluskey

(2011) established that future research should be conducted to explore gender difference in school bullying and future research should seek to identify and measure various types of strains students experience in the school environment.

Justin W. Patchin and Sameer Hinduja (2011) also presented a study based on traditional and nontraditional bullying among youth and used general strain theory as a guiding framework for the study. “Bullying at school is a common problem facing youth, school officials, and parents” (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011, p. 727). In particular, cyberbullying has risen in recent times in order to initiate in school bullying. Patchin and Hinduja (2011) surveyed approximately 2,000 students in 30 middle schools in one of the largest school districts in the United States. The surveys were distributed in 2007. Overall, there was a 96% completion rate and the final sample size was totaled to 1,963 students (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). “Results suggest that those who experience strain are more likely to participate in both traditional and nontraditional forms of bullying” (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011, p. 727). Researchers from this study found a direct relationship between strain and both types of bullying.

As researchers continue to further their studies teachers and school resource officers will gain more knowledge in regards to school bullying. General strain theory illustrates that negative factors lead to criminal behavior. Specific negative factors can have an overall effect on bullies which causes them to initiate in bullying. School resource officers and school faculty could play an important role on the students who have negative factors who might initiate in bullying. While helping the students’ school resource officers and faculty could help ensure that the students who are struggling won’t initiate in bullying. Students that do decide to initiate in bullying will then have specific consequences that follow school policy.

Differential Association Theory

Differential association theory was first introduced by Edwin Sutherland in the late 1930s. “He proposed a theoretical framework that explained how criminal values could be culturally transmitted to individuals from their significant others” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 438). One of the most important aspects of differential association theory is that criminal behavior is learned. “Sutherland was one of the first to state that criminal behavior was the result of normal social processes, resulting when individuals associated with the wrong type of people, often by no fault on their part” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 438). By associating with crime-related people, whether parents or peers, an individual will choose to engage in criminal behavior since that’s what he/she learned (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015). Sutherland also presented another principle that is important to understand the framework of differential association theory. “A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 439). People are always going to be surrounded by people who favor criminal and noncriminal behavior. Such learning can take place only in interactions with significant others, and not via television, movies, radios, or other media (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015). “According to Sutherland, crime is learned the same way; our close associates teach us both the techniques (e.g., how to steal a car) and the motivations (e.g., it is fun and/or you might be able to sell it or its parts) (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015, p. 440). Differential association theory is based on social interactions so people don’t actually make the decision to commit or not commit the crime (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2015).

Byongook Moon, Wye-Won Hwang and John D McCluskey (2011), also presented an empirical study of differential association theory and how it relates to the causes of school

bullying. Within the same study that was done on general strain theory they also evaluated differential association theory. Based on the study it was established that stronger beliefs about use of violence are positively associated with bullying (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011).

Jing Wang, Tonja R. Nansel and Ronald J. Iannotti (2011), conducted a study based on differential association with depression and how it relates to cyber and traditional bullying. The researchers compared levels of depression among bullies, victims, and bully-victims of traditional (physical, verbal, and relational) and cyberbullying (Wang, Nansel & Iannotti, 2011). Students in grades 6-10 were presented a study called Health Behavior in School-Aged Children 2005 Survey which asked questions in regards to both bullying and depression. In the end, depression was associated with bullies, victims, bully-victims of traditional bullying and cyberbullying. According to Wang, Nansel and Iannotti (2011), physical, verbal, and relational bullies, the frequently-involved group of victims and bullying victims reported higher levels of depression. Cyberbullying showed differences between occasional and frequent victims but there needs to be further researched based on cyberbullying (Wang, Nansel & Iannotti, 2011). Since this crime is a newer form of bullying more research needs to be conducted in the future.

Olga Gomez-Ortiz, Eva Maria Romera and Rosario Ortega-Ruiz (2015), conducted a study based on a comparison of parenting styles and bullying. “Studies concerning parenting styles and disciplinary practices have shown a relationship between both factors and bullying involvement in adolescence” (Gomez-Ortiz, Romera & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). The researchers used a sample that consisted of 2060 Spanish high school students and the students responded to the European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (Gomez-Ortiz, Romera & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). The overall goal of the study was to determine the mediating role of punitive parenting discipline (physical punishment and psychological aggression) between the dimensions

of parents' parenting styles and their children's involvement in bullying victimization and aggression (Gomez-Ortiz, Romera & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). "The results confirmed the mediating role of parental discipline between the parenting practices analyzed and students' aggression and victimization. Significant gender-related differences were found for aggression involvement, where boys were for the most part linked to psychological aggression disciplinary practices and girls to physical punishment" (Gomez-Ortiz, Romera & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). In the end, parents need to be aware of the discipline used for children because it can have an overall effect on the children. Intervention programs must involve parents to make them aware of the important role they play in regards to parenting style and bullying (Gomez-Ortiz, Romera & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015).

On the other hand, Paul O'Connell, Debra Pepler and Wendy Craig (1999), conducted a study based on peer involvement and how that affects bullying. The main purpose of this study was to examine the peer involvement that occurs on the school playground. The school playground is one of the main areas within the school where bullying occurs. Participants were drawn from an ongoing study of bullying and victimization at two Toronto area elementary schools and as part of a larger study children from grades one to six provided self-report information on bullying, victimization, and school climate (O'Connell, Pepler & Craig, 1999). Through different scenarios of playground bullying episodes and the Bullying/Victim Questionnaire the researchers were able to collect specific data for the study. Through the use of different scenarios, it was established that older boys (grades 4-6) were more likely to actively join with the bullying than were younger boys (grades 1-3) (O'Connell, Pepler & Craig, 1999). It was also established that both younger and older girls were more likely to intervene on behalf of

victims than were older boys (O'Connell, Pepler & Craig, 1999). Based on the study it was confirmed that peers do play a role on playground bullying episodes.

A lot of students decide to initiate in school bullying because that's the behavior that was taught to them either by parents and/or peers. Watching television etc. doesn't always play a role on bullying behavior even though a lot of people believe to be a main reason for school crimes. Students who associate with bullies are more likely to initiate in the aggressive manner. Students can be considered a bully if he/she associates with the group and are there when the bullying incident is happening. There are ways to help resolve bullying issues at school districts which involves the actions of school resource officers and school faculty.

Recommendations

Based on the research collected throughout the paper in regards to school bullying there are a few recommendations that can be made to school districts and school resource officers. Focusing on literature review, theoretical framework and bullying prevention methods school districts and school resource officers have the tools in order to successfully deter school bullying. Since this is such a common occurrence in school districts and so many students are affected by bullying it's important for school districts and school resource officers to have the proper tools in order to help victims, bystanders and bullies.

The five recommendations made to school districts and school resource officers are as followed: evaluate the number of school resource officers compared to the number of students, have more education provided to parents, teachers and students in regards to school bullying, have a strict policy, utilize a preventative bullying program and provide proper training to school resource officers in regards to working in school districts and proper training on school bullying.

With the five recommendations provided to school districts and school resource officers, school bullying rates will decrease and students will be learning in a safer environment on school grounds. Also with the five recommendations school districts and school resource officers will be able to properly and effectively handle school bullying incidents.

The first recommendation for school districts is to evaluate the number of school resource officers compared to the number of students. The larger the school district the more school resource officers should be hired. Based on previous studies and current statistics school districts need to have the proper number of school resource officers in order to handle crimes on school grounds. One school resource officer is not as effective in a large school district with higher crime rates. The workload could become overwhelming which is why larger school districts need to have more school resource officers. School districts have to look at the number of students as well as crime rates in order to determine the correct number of school resource officers needed on school grounds. Financial challenges and staffing issues can occur when more school resource officers are needed but they help prevent crime throughout the school district and help assist when crime occurs. School resource officers play a vital role for school districts so there should be proper funding set aside for the position.

The second recommendation for school districts is to have more education provided to parents, teachers and students in regards to school bullying. Parents and teachers need to be aware of signs to look for which could point to school bullying. These signs could trigger red flags and help victims who are being victimized. Teachers and parents also need more education on bullying prevention methods and what to do after the victimization occurs. Based on previous theories teachers can work with the students who are engaging in bullying and determine what could be the root cause for the aggressive behavior. Teachers and parents need to handle school

bullying in a detailed manner and in a way where the bully understands his/her actions. School districts should work closely with parents in regards to school bullying and have a planned approach when bullying occurs.

The third recommendation for school districts is to have a strict policy for school bullying. Within the school policy should be an in depth definition and explanation of school bullying. The strict policy should also include disciplinary actions that will be taken accounted for if students decide to engage in bullying. School districts should have a zero tolerance policy and there should be consequences for engaging in this behavior. With strict policies and guaranteed consequences for school bullying most students will be less likely to commit the incident on school property.

The fourth recommendation is for school districts to utilize a preventative bullying program that is offered specifically for school districts. A lot of the programs aren't just for students but also involve teachers and parents. With these programs in place students, teachers and parents are able to gain more knowledge on school bullying and learn how to manage, deter and/or resolve bullying at school districts. Proper and professional training on bullying should remain consistent at schools. Students should attend an initial bullying program as well as refresher programs throughout their education at the school district. The bullying programs should be taught at school districts within elementary, middle and high school. Different programs teach a different age range which allows younger children to understand the concept of bullying.

The fifth recommendation is for school resource officers to have proper training in regards to working in school districts and proper training on school bullying. School resource officers are one of the most important positions at school districts in order to help deter and

prevent crime. School resource officers don't only work with crime in the school districts but also play a vital role as educators and counselors. The more knowledge school resource officers have the more prepared they are to prevent and/or resolve school crimes. School resource officers need to have a close relationship with teachers employed at the school districts as well as parents. Parents should become familiar and gain a trusting relationship with the school resource officers.

Since school resource officers, teachers and parents all play a vital role on school bullying it's important for everyone to work together as one unit. School resource officers are important at the school districts not only for school bullying for every school crime. In today's society school resource officers play a vital role in a situation such as an active shooter inside the school district. School resource officers teach school faculty on how to prepare for incidents such as an active shooter since they conduct training and play out scenarios on school grounds. With the five recommendations listed above school districts will be able to help deter and/or prevent crime within the school districts which in turn makes for a safe learning environment for the students.

Conclusion

It's clear that school districts have set policies and rules in place in order to ensure a safe environment for students. Teachers, parents and school resource officers have to work together in order to create the safe environment and decrease school bullying. There are a number of reasons why students decide to engage and initiate in school bullying which is why it's important for every employee at the school districts and for parents to understand school bullying.

Due to the increase rate of school bullying in recent years, school bullying should be a focus point within every school district throughout the United States. School districts need to

have set policies, rules and procedures in place for students as well as a disciplinary policy if school bullying occurs. School districts also need to utilize prevention programs in order for students, teachers and parents to gain more knowledge of school bullying.

One of the most critical aspects in order to decrease school bullying is hiring school resource officers at the school districts. Schools need to ensure they have the proper number of school resource officers compared to the number of students that attend the school districts. School resource officers aren't only law abiding officers but are also counselors and mentors to students. School resource officers play a vital role on school bullying and can help not only the victims and bystanders but also help the bully and attempt to deter the aggressive behavior.

Throughout the United States school bullying has increased over the years. Students need to be aware of school bullying and how to defend themselves if an incident occurs. School districts need to ensure a safe learning environment for each student. Last, school resource officers need to continue to play a vital role working together with students, teachers and parents to decrease school bullying and ensure student safety.

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