



## RESEARCH BASIS FOR SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOLS

---

### **BULLYING AFFECTS MOST STUDENTS.**

- When asked if they had been bullied in the past month, about 30% of elementary school students say, “Yes.” But, if asked if someone has repeatedly tried to hurt them or make them feel bad by name-calling, pushing/shoving, spreading rumors/lies or other specific actions about 70% of the children say, “Yes.”<sup>1</sup>
- While the majority of the school staff estimated that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of the students actually said they were frequently bullied.<sup>2</sup>
- Over 30% of students who are bullied report that it happens in the classroom.<sup>3</sup>
- Elementary school girls who identify as African-American or Hispanic report less bullying and harassment if you ask if they have been “bullied.” BUT, if you ask specifically about name-calling, mean teasing or rumors they report higher levels of mean behaviors than girls who identify as Caucasian.<sup>4</sup>
- In up to 85% of bullying episodes at school, there are other students witnessing or joining in.<sup>5</sup>

### **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE ARE LINKED.**

- Students who experience acceptance at school are more highly motivated, engaged in learning and committed to school.<sup>6</sup>
- When students report a more severe bullying climate in their school, up to 5% fewer students pass state mandated standardized tests.<sup>7</sup>
- Both children who are targeted and children who exhibit bullying behavior have lower academic achievement in school.<sup>8</sup>
- On average, about 6% of students skipped school at least once during the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school. The average ranges from 1 in 25 for white boys to almost 1 in 10 for Hispanic girls.<sup>9</sup>



### **BULLYING HAS SERIOUS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES.**

- Both students who bully and students who are targeted are at a higher risk for suicide than students who are not involved in bullying.<sup>10</sup>
- Children who are bullied fare worse on an extensive list of measures: anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, poor social self-competence, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, social withdrawal, school refusal, school absenteeism, poor academic performance, physical health complaints, running away from home, alcohol and drug use, and suicide.<sup>11</sup>

### **BULLYING IS LINKED TO HURTFUL BIAS.**

- Over 75% of students who are harassed are targeted because of their identity including race, national origin, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, religion or ability.<sup>12</sup>
- Multiple studies indicate that students with disabilities and those who are perceived to be LGBT are most likely to experience bullying.<sup>13</sup>
- An elementary student who is significantly overweight is over 60% more likely to be bullied and harassed than other students, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status.<sup>14</sup>
- Nearly one-third of middle school students have been the object of sexual jokes, comments or gestures.<sup>15</sup>
- In the 28 random shootings in U.S. schools between 1982 and 2001, nearly all the boys who committed the violence had stories of being constantly bullied, teased and “gay-baited” – not because they were gay, but because they were different from the other boys: shy, artistic, theatrical, musical, non-athletic or geekish.<sup>16</sup>

---

## BIAS BASED BULLYING HURTS MORE.

- Compared with students harassed for other reasons, students who feel harassed for their race, religion, ability, gender, or perceived sexual orientation:<sup>17</sup>
  - have higher rates of drug use;
  - are up to twice as likely to have attempted suicide;
  - are more likely to skip school; and
  - are up to 4 times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon at school.
- In a nationwide survey, children said they feared anti-gay harassment more than any other kind of name-calling.<sup>18</sup>
- Students targeted with anti-gay putdowns are more likely to report higher levels of depression and anxiety and a lower sense of school belonging regardless of their sexual orientation.<sup>19</sup>

## BULLYING CAN BE STOPPED.

- When bystanders intervene, they are often effective. Based on observation, 57% of the interventions stopped the bullying within 10 seconds.<sup>20</sup>
- Student and adults who perceive that others in their school would jump in to stop bullying are more likely to intervene when they witness bullying.<sup>21, 22</sup>
- The most effective strategies to stop bullying involve the whole school working together to change the school climate and norms of behavior. Based on research, key strategies include: school wide rules and consequences for bullying, educator training, parent engagement, classroom management, playground supervision, and cooperative group work.<sup>23</sup>

## GENDER NON-CONFORMITY AND HARASSMENT

- Almost one-quarter of students in California are harassed because they are not “as masculine as other guys” or “as feminine as other girls.”<sup>24</sup>
- Parents of gender nonconforming children fear for their children’s safety because of their gender identity or expression.<sup>25</sup>
- Middle school students regardless of their sexual orientation who are targeted with anti-gay slurs are more likely to report higher levels of depression and anxiety and a lower sense of school belonging.<sup>26</sup>
- In a study of gay and bisexual teens, over half reported that they were labeled as sissies by the time they were only 8 years old.<sup>27</sup>



## CHANGING FAMILIES → DIVERSE STUDENTS

- About 1 in 6 children in the U.S. live with a grandparent or other relative in their home.<sup>28</sup>
- Almost 2.5 million fathers are the primary caregivers for their children.<sup>29</sup>
- More than 1.8 million children are adopted and almost 40 percent of those children are of a different race, culture or ethnicity from their parents.<sup>30</sup>
- In nearly every U.S. County, there are gay and lesbian headed households according to the U.S. Census. In rural states, such as, Wyoming and Alaska, and in southern states households headed by same-sex couples are more likely to have children than same-sex households in other states.<sup>31</sup>
- Hispanic and African-American same-sex couples are about twice as likely to be raising children as white non-Hispanic same-sex couples.<sup>32</sup>
- 16 percent of all children live in blended families including stepparents and step- or half-siblings.<sup>33</sup>
- Over 4 million children identify as being of more than one race.<sup>34</sup>
- As of 2012, almost 1/4 of children in the U.S., have at least one parent who was born in another country.<sup>35</sup>

---

**ENDNOTES:**

---

1. Anne Sawyer et al. (2007) *Journal of Adolescent Health*.
2. Catherine Bradshaw et al. (2007) *School Psychology Review*.
3. Jill Devoe and Christina Murphy (2011) U.S. Department of Justice.
4. Anne Sawyer et al. (2007) *Journal of Adolescent Health*.
5. Wendy Craig and Debra Pepler (1998) *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*.
6. Karin Osterman (2000) *Review of Educational Research*.
7. Virginia High School Safety Study, 2008.
8. Joseph A. Drake et al. (2003) *Journal of School Health*.
9. Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 2011.
10. Suicide Prevention Resource Center (2011) *Suicide and Bullying: Issue Brief*.
11. Patricia McDougall et al. (2009) *Bullying Special Edition, Education.com*.
12. California Healthy Kids Survey, Student Well-being in California, 2009-11: Statewide Results.
13. Bonnie Carter and Vicki Spencer (2006) *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*.
14. Julie Lumeng et al. (2010) *Pediatrics*.
15. California Healthy Kids Survey, Student Well-being in California, 2009-11: Statewide Results.
16. Michael Kimmel and Matthew Mahler (2003) *American Behavioral Scientist*.
17. Stephen Russell et al. (2012) *American Journal of Public Health*.
18. Joseph Drake et al. (2003) *Journal of School Health*.
19. V. Paul Poteat and Dorothy L. Espelage (2007) *The Journal of Early Adolescence*.
20. D. Lynn Hawkins et al. (2001). *Social Development*.
21. Frances Aboud and Anna Joong (2008). In *Intergroup attitudes and relations in childhood through adulthood*.
22. Catherine Bradshaw et al (2011) National Education Association.
23. Maria Ttofi and David Farrington (2011) *Journal of Experimental Criminology*.
24. Stephen Russell et al. (2010) California Safe Schools Coalition Research Brief.
25. Darryl B. Hill (2009) *Journal of LGBT Youth*.
26. V. Paul Poteat and Dorothy Espelage (2007) *The Journal of Early Adolescence*.
27. Anthony D'Augelli (2006) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.
28. Rose Kreider & Renee Ellis (2011) *Living Arrangements of Children: 2009, Current Population Reports. U.S. Census Bureau*.
29. Timothy Grall (2011) *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2009, Current Population Reports. U.S. Census Bureau*.
30. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009) *Adoption USA: A Chartbook Based on the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents*.
31. Movement Advancement Project, Family Equality Council & Center for American Progress (2011) "LGBT Families: Facts at a Glance." Movement Advancement Project (2012) *Percent of Same-Sex Couples Raising Children*.
32. Gates, Gary J. (2012) *Same-sex Couples in Census 2010: Race and Ethnicity*. The Williams Institute.
33. Rose Kreider & Renee Ellis (2011) *Living Arrangements of Children: 2009, Current Population Reports. U.S. Census Bureau*.
34. Susan Saulny (2011) *Census Data Presents Rise in Multiracial Population of Youths*, New York Times. March 24.
35. U.S. Census Bureau (2012) *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012*.