I, Kelli Jette, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies.

It is entitled:
Socio-Economic Status: A Determinant of Perceptions and Responses to Bullying

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Socio-Economic Status: A Determinant of Perceptions and Responses to Bullying

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Abstract

Bullying has been examined by a variety of international professionals, all intent upon stopping this unmanageable problem in the school setting. Many experts have designed and implemented strategic whole-group, anti-bullying campaigns that are purchased by school administrators in the attempt that bullying will be thwarted by a one-size-fits-all “fix” of the pervasive and troublesome behaviors. Bullying continues to impede the efforts of school officials, regardless of the program by which they are educating students. The reason? There are no anti-bullying campaigns that adequately address the dynamics of class, race, and gender. These factors act as a catalyst for different manifestations in the definition of bullying, the perceptions of bullying, and the reactions of teachers and staff towards bullying situations. These factors also account for the differences in behavioral manifestations among students. Race, class, and gender are major determinants of “how” and “why” and “what” perpetrators and victims experience when faced with a bullying incident. Therefore, it is necessary to understand these complex dynamics in order to develop a more substantial and pertinent solution to the bullying epidemic.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study initially began as an investigation into the elevated rates of suicide among Appalachian males in a rural community located an hour west of Cincinnati, Ohio. The average age of the victim was twenty-two years old. Interviews with the families and friends of the seven victims revealed an important commonality shared by these young males. They had all reported being bullied at the local school on a continual basis during the seventh through twelfth grades. The discussions with sources close to the victims revealed the need for further investigation into the world of bullying and the school environment.

Not all physical violence constitutes bullying, nor does all bullying involve physical violence. The following are four essential components of bullying. The federal and state governments have delegated these factors to define bullying as aggressive behavior that:

- Is intended to cause distress or harm
- Exists in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power and strength
- Is repeated over time (Limber, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993)
- Involves physical actions, words, gestures, or social isolation

Although bullying has been a persistent problem, it attracted national media attention when there was a school shooting at an upper middle class predominantly White school in Columbine, Colorado. Michael Moore, then infamous documentary filmmaker, eventually produced a film about the tragedy. As other school shootings followed, it was observed that the prior bullying of the shooter was a common element. (see Appendix for details of press reports on other school shootings)
The threat of litigation by parents loomed largely over the minds of school administrators who rapidly sought “one size fits all” anti-bullying programs to protect themselves. A thorough examination by Rachel C. Vreeman and Aaron E. Carroll in the Pediatric Adolescent Medicine Journal demonstrated only four out of ten of the most widely-used anti-bullying curriculums decreased bullying. (2007) Such an approach was supported by the seminal work on bullying by Dan Olweus, who took the position that bullying occurs at a similar rate, frequency, and duration across the globe. (Olweus, 1991)

Although the viability of “one size fits all” programs was questionable, the strategy was perceived as protection from litigation by school administrators. The focus of the present research is to question whether or not teachers and administrators define bullying and respond to the problem in a uniform fashion regardless of the socio-economic status of their student body. Although the whole school bullying prevention program by Olweus has been tested in school districts in suburban areas, no studies have examined the efficacy of the program in low-income areas, thus far. Likewise, few studies of the program’s impact have been conducted in inner-cities with high level of neighborhood and family poverty (Reynolds, 2001).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has failed to consider the socio-economic situation of parents in impoverished communities, particularly African-American and Hispanic parents. Due to welfare reform legislation passed as early as 1996, many low-income, single African American and Hispanic mothers are required to seek employment with involves long working hours. Therefore, the demands leave little or no time to properly monitor children’s behavior. Since the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program designates parental involvement as a
major and key component for successful implementation, these contradictions contribute to the failing success rates in low-income schools.

Across the nation, entire industries of consultants and businesses have formed with curriculums, workshops and pep talks to combat bullying in schools. Although well-intentioned, a new “war on bullying” will have limited success for the same reason our earlier “wars” have come up short. Such “wars” lack a coordinated strategy. They focus on symptoms instead of causes and short-term interventions instead of the needs and capacities that emerge throughout the long arc of a child’s growth and development. (Stephens and Villano, 2007)

Laws do set boundaries and educational campaigns do raise awareness. Both are good starting points, but what do you do with them is what really counts, and without a fundamental shift in "thinking" these efforts are weakened. Turning the other cheek or ignoring the bullying problem also doesn’t work and places more youth and our nation at risk each day. Whoever coined the phrase, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” was wrong. (Slover, 2011)

The ongoing news reports about bullied youth dying by suicide has precipitated a national response laden with emotion to pressure officials to enact anti-bullying legislation and stricter policies from the statehouse to the schoolyard. While understandable and necessary, in many of these cases, the abuse was not physical harm, rather an emotional harm that is not easily detected, healed, or undone. That is why bullying is a societal weed that must be uprooted. What is wrong with just a legislative and educational approach? Nothing – except it is a topical treatment, just like spraying pesticides in a garden. Through science and research, we now know
that some of the pesticides (once thought harmless or technological advances) that were used to yield better crops have resulted in more environmental harm than good. (Slover, 2011)

Before taking this topical approach to the bullying issue, I am suggesting we root out the problem and go back to human nature to determine the kind of societal change that would make a difference. Putting that change into daily practice doesn't take money or much time, and the reason I coined the term “leader-friendly gardening practices.” (Slover, 2011)

The University of Regina education professor has been quoted in the past as saying school anti-bullying programs don't work. Not so, this veteran academic, actually says, "I can't find any evidence that they work." That's an important distinction. Dolmage has heard anecdotal reports of one program that has parents bring babies into schools, with students permitted to hold them and thus develops empathy for other human beings. But anecdotal reports are a long way from well-researched evidence. There's no shortage of anti-bullying programs and policies. Since several high school students committed suicide as a result of bullying, Saskatchewan school boards have been required to have them. (Dolmage, 2011)

Once school teams identify bullying behavior as a problem, the most common response is to implement a standalone, anti-bullying program. Such programs commonly include holding school assemblies with speakers who highlight the harmful effects of bullying and teach students how to identify bullies, then follow up with a focus on catching such students in the act and providing increasingly severe punitive measures… Unfortunately, these practices have shown to be generally ineffective—they may actually be as likely to exacerbate problems as solve them. Students who engage in bullying may obtain social prestige or desired attention from their targets, and these rewards are often immediate and outweigh later consequences. In addition,
children who are labeled as bullies may draw self-confidence and self-identification from that label, which may, in turn, cause them to use such behavior more often. Moreover, school discipline programs that rely on zero tolerance policies and increasingly severe punishment procedures for offenders have shown to increase instances of aggression.

The efforts of students, teachers, administrators and parents are often directed towards creating a safe and supportive learning environment. Bullying and peer victimization incidents undermine the positive determination of all involved. Research has shown that more than 160,000 children miss school each day to avoid direct (physical) and indirect (non-physical) violence at school. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation has made the recommendation to our schools that: bullying and peer victimization must be systematically addressed at the individual and school-wide level. The inclusion of students, parents, staff, and community members is an integral necessity for the reduction and elimination of peer violence in schools.

The American Medical Association reported that fifty-percent of United States school children are bullied at some time during their educational lifetime. Even more disturbing is the research finding that ten percent of U.S. schoolchildren are bullied and/or victimized on a regular basis throughout their academic lifetime (Scarpaci, 2006).

A study by Brown, et. al., 2005, revealed that one in five elementary school children and one in ten middle school students in the United States are bullied on a regular basis. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that thirteen percent of all sixth through tenth grade students bullied classmates and eleven percent had been bullied regularly (Scarpaci, 2006).
The following chapters will present the reader with previous works of researchers, administrators, medical professionals, and psychiatrists that have contributed to the current knowledge base in the area of bullying. The latter chapters define the methodology, sample details, and analysis techniques employed. Finally, the results are documented, analyzed, and future recommendations are made.

Upon deconstruction of this pervasive bullying problem, several key elements were determined troublesome. That, in fact, students of lower socio-economic status experience more physical and blatant bullying than that of their upper socio-economic counterparts. The upper SES students, teachers and administrators reported problematic behaviors arising from covert, or hidden use of technology as well as social isolation techniques.

In addition, lower SES students were prone to strict enforcement of the zero-tolerance policy, while upper SES students rarely experienced punishments or deterrents of this nature. Although the federal guidelines of the definition of bullying are offered below, the micro level definition is subjective and varying at the school and classroom level. Administrators of lower SES schools, ultimately urban/majority African-American, enforce the zero-tolerance policy with required expulsion more so than the upper SES school administrators. This expulsion based on a convoluted and conveniently expanded bullying definition exacerbates the exclusion of a majority percentage of black males from the urban, low-income public school setting, thus reinforcing a cycle of structural violence and institutional racism.
Definition of Bullying

First and foremost, the question that must be posed is: What constitutes bullying? Researchers have come to define bullying as aggressive behavior that...

- Is intended to cause distress or harm
- Exists in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power and strength
- Is repeated over time (Limber, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993)
- Involves physical actions, words, gestures, or social isolation
- May be direct or indirect

Some states understand bullying as the above listed, but include additional criteria such as: spreading rumors, ridiculing, humiliating, or the infliction of any physical or mental harm (Georgia, 2001).

Bullying may take several forms. However, there are four basic types that are most useful for identification purposes:

- Physical Bullying- This can include unwanted contact or “pretending” to harm a victim by doing things that make a person flinch.
- Verbal Bullying- This includes teasing, name calling, taunting, threats, intimidation demeaning jokes, spreading rumors, gossiping, slander, and texting/using cyberspace in demeaning manners.
• Emotional or Social Bullying- This also includes gossip and rumor spreading, but emphasizes texting, cell phones, instant messaging, picture messaging, U-tubing. Posting humiliating or personally embarrassing materials/pictures on the internet.

• Sexual Bullying- This includes inappropriate comments, gestures, physical contact, exposure, or assault.

There are four main constructs of bullying and peer victimization. They are as follows:

• Victim

• Bully

• Victim/Bully

• Bystander

The victim is identified as a target of intentional physical, emotional, or social harm by one or more persons due to an imbalance of power or status (Jette, 2009). The bully is described as a perpetrator; a person or persons that inflict unwanted contact- sometimes resulting in physical injury or the threat of. It also encompasses verbal threats and gestures that lead to fear and/or anxiety of harm (Jette, 2009). Bullies often exhibit aggressive behavior- even towards adults, are easily frustrated, seem to enjoy dominating and teasing others, and are eloquent in disciplinary situations. The victim/bully is a dangerous and dynamic situation that begins with an individual experiencing bullying and then exercising the bullying behavior on a second party; as noted by school shootings. Lastly, the research of Deborah Prothrow-Stith demonstrates that students who
witness recurring violence, labeled “the bystander,” experience serious negative side effects such as post-traumatic stress disorder.¹

A common myth about bullying equates these negative peer experiences to standard “growing pains.” However, in recent years the dangers of bullying left unattended have rendered catastrophic consequences that leave students, parents, schools, and communities scrambling for solutions. Disastrously, Americans have come to the understanding that no one is exempt from the dangers of bullying. (See appendix)

**Trends in Bullying Prevention**

Fatal school shootings have forced the adoption of policies and procedures in our schools in an attempt to thwart catastrophic consequences of bullying and peer victimization. School bullying has been found to be most prevalent between the ages of nine and fifteen, during the stages of late-childhood and early-adolescence (Carney & Merrell, 2001). This being the case, the responsibility falls mainly upon the elementary and middle/high school teachers as well as administrations to prevent violent occurrences within the school walls.²

State lawmakers and politicians have historically attributed to the curriculum development of our public school systems. Theoretically, federal mandates are passed to the individual states, and filtered down to individual counties and districts- always with the best intentions. However, in the case of bullying, there appears to be disconnect between the administration and the needs of the students.

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¹ Deborah Prothrow-Stith: *Deadly Consequences* and Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard R. Spivak: *Sugar and Spice and No Longer Nice: How We Can Stop Girls’ Violence*

Upon federal and state mandate, school districts across America were required to adopt and implement anti-bullying strategies for use in the school setting by 2012. Many companies rushed to produce “one-size-fits-all,” expensive, non-research based plans that have proven ill-effective among our student populations. While these “one-size-fits-all” curriculums generate hearty revenues for a number of publishers, and provide school districts with the necessary liability protection, the needs of our students remain unaddressed. Yet, some districts use yet another strategy to alleviate the problematic bullying behaviors in their school settings. This controversial method is referred to as Zero Tolerance Policy.

**Zero Tolerance Policy Regarding Bullying**

The term “zero tolerance policy” refers to punishments in the school setting for specific infractions of rules, regardless of accidental mistakes, ignorance, or extenuating circumstances. These infractions are commonly targeting misbehaviors such as possession or use of drugs or weapons.³

Historically, these policies have been typically promoted as drug and weapon prevention methods. The data collected in this study demonstrates an abuse of this policy, ergo the inflated ratio of black male expulsions in the lower income, urban schools for physical and non-physical offenses conveniently grouped under the guise of bullying. There exist vast amounts of research denouncing the implementation of any type of zero tolerance policies among American schools.⁴ In fact, zero tolerance policies have been continually struck down by U.S. courts and by the Department of Education.

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⁴ “Zero Tolerance Policies Lack Flexibility” www.usatoday/educate/ednews3.htm
Since there is no credible evidence the zero tolerance policies are reducing violence and/or drug use in the school systems across the country, there continues to be heated debates on the legitimacy of such policies.\textsuperscript{5}

School suspensions and expulsions as a result of the zero tolerance policy, have resulted in an increased number of documented negative outcomes. What initially was designed to offer rigid rules that ensured equal treatment for all students has in turn, created racial and economic barriers for low-income students and students of color.\textsuperscript{6} The American Psychological Association concluded, “The available evidence does not support the use of zero tolerance policies as defined and implemented, that there is a clear need to modify such policies, and that the policies create a number of unintended negative consequences, including making schools ‘less safe.’”\textsuperscript{7}

According to the APA and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), zero tolerance policy and the majority of school policies treat aggression, specifically bullying behavior, as a crime rather than psychological and environmental issue. Of course it is understood that it is the school’s responsibility to ensure safety of students, however, that does not mean that perpetrators are best served through punishments. Oftentimes, the victim is the sole individual reported and considered innocent, while failing to consider the environmental victimization of the bully and/or bystanders.


\textsuperscript{6} United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights

\textsuperscript{7} American Psychological Association- Zero Tolerance Policy Task Force- www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/zero-tolerance.pdf
The APA developed a task force to investigate the zero tolerance policy trend that swept through the United States school systems. They found that "all they (school administrator and teachers) deal with is expulsion for aggressors, as though expulsion is the only way of expressing zero tolerance." Ronald Steven, executive director of the National School Safety Center stated, "Zero tolerance and expulsion don’t have to go hand in hand. Zero tolerance simply means all misbehavior will have some sanction. It doesn’t mean you bring the maximum punishment for every transgression."  

Zero tolerance policies became popular in the United States in 1994 after Congress required states to adopt laws that guaranteed one-year expulsions for any student who brought a firearm to school. All fifty states adopted such laws, which were required to receive federal funding. Many states expanded legislation to include the definition of weapon and to further limitations on the discretion of school administrators.

October 2, 2011- Rick Rojas of the Los Angeles Times writes:

In the decade since school districts instituted “zero tolerance” discipline policies, administrators have increasingly suspended minority students, predominantly for nonviolent offenses, according to a report released prior to this statement.

The National Education Policy Center found that suspensions across the country are increasing for offenses such as dress code violations, cell phone and personal media violations. Researchers expressed concerns that the overuse of suspensions and expulsions could lead to dropouts and even incarceration.

Given the bureaucratic model in which public schools are grounded, the implementation of defensive strategies against litigation is one of the highest priorities of school administrators. (Katz, 1976) Thus, the school shootings associated with bullying prompted them to go on record

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9 “Gun Free School Act” (GFSA) education-law.lawyers.com/school-law/Whats-a-Zero-Tolerance-Policy.html
as having implemented anti-bullying programs. “One size fits all” programs, which were commercially developed packages, were most expedient. In a survey of these programs, Vreeman and Carroll (2007) found that their efficacy was limited.

However, the standardization and uniformity typical of such programs was bolstered by the seminal work of Olweus, whose theoretical model and programming remain classics in the scholarship of bullying. Olweus (1991) specifically asserts that “bullying occurs at a similar rate, frequency, and duration across the globe.” Despite its popularity, Olweus’ work has been significantly called into question in the last decade.

The Bias of Olweus’ Techniques

Dan Olweus, PhD, is generally recognized as a pioneer and founding father of research on bullying problems and is considered a world-leading expert in the areas of community research and society at large. In 1970, he started a large-scale project that is now generally regarded as the first scientific study of bullying problems in the world, published as a book in Scandinavia in 1973 and in 1978 in the United States under the title Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys. In the 1980s, Dr. Olweus conducted the first systematic intervention study against bullying in the world, which documented a number of quite positive effects of what is now the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). He was also the first to study the problem of bullying of students by teachers. Since 2001, he has been the leader of a government-initiated national initiative implementing OBPP on a large-scale basis in Norwegian elementary and junior high schools. Olweus continues to propagate that bullying scenarios occur at the same frequency across all cultures throughout the globe.
While many administrators are expected to initiate an effort, such as the adoption of the Olweus program, the reality is prevention plans such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Plan are aimed to stop violence and bullying among middle class students. The middle class students and the middle class problems are drastically different from the poor and urban school issues. The rate, frequency, and duration at which low-income children are exposed to violence are much greater than those of their middle to upper class counterparts. There is the potential to exacerbate the problems of urban school children when enforcing the middle class prevention plan. Although the whole-school bullying prevention program has been tested in suburban districts, no studies have examined the efficacy of the program in low-income schools.

(Hong, 2007)

**Objective and Contribution**

Overall, some methods appear to be comprehensive and thorough. However, they fail to address the particulars of a rapidly-increasing diversity found in school populations. The most common error, a “one-size-fits-all” response to bullying- continues to act as a detriment in school systems whose attempts to thwart bullying behaviors have failed. Many of the school-based intervention programs were researched and developed prior to the infiltration of media and electronic devices accessible to today’s typical middle class student. In order to develop a more effective approach to the multi-faceted and complex dynamic of the current school environment, one must address the issues of race, class, gender and the differing behavioral manifestations of bullying across these sectors of the student population. The access to technology allows for secretive, continued, covert bullying among the middle and upper class student populations. Lower class student populations experience overt, blatant, physical manifestations of bullying. Teacher and administration responses differ drastically as a result. Zero tolerance policies are
strictly adhered to in lower class populations and have been found to promote institutional racism and structural violence. On the other hand, zero tolerance policies were rarely enforced in the upper class school districts. Rather, students were more likely to be offered support services for their indiscretions instead of out-of-school suspensions or expulsion. The majority of expulsions were assigned to black males, at a rate of 7 times more frequently than that of their white, upper SES counterparts. The punitive nature of consequences experienced by black students only, for physical and non-physical offenses exacerbate the notion that structural violence fosters frustration, thus creating a cycle of institutional racism.

The subjectivity of the definition of bullying among school districts has provided an expansion opportunity on the enforcement of the zero tolerance policy, thus providing more possibilities for the expulsion of students deemed “problematic.” To some, it appears as a pro-active method of “pushing out” students who may be disruptive or intimidating to un-prepared teachers and whom are ultimately the students with the greatest needs. In addition, these needs are not recognized and/or addressed- typically those of the mental health or behavioral nature and potentially stemming from the issues of poverty. Instead, the zero tolerance policy demonstrates the pervasiveness of racism in our school disciplinary actions in regards to bullying and violence and ultimately sanctions the refusal to instruct students, especially those in the urban environment.

**Socio-Economic Status: A Determinant of Perceptions and Responses to Bullying**

There is consensus in the literature on bullying that the incidence of bullying is equally across race, class, and gender. However, the possibility that the forms of bullying - that is, he behavioral manifestations, vary as a function of race, class, gender, and cultural issues has not been adequately addressed. Is it possible that teachers and administrators working with children
of low income households define, perceive, and respond differently to bullying behaviors when compared with the definition, perception, and responses of teachers and administrators offering educational services to children of middle class families? Teachers often respond to acts of violence with limited action—why? Do white teachers understand the physical violence of black students as a function of the cultural differences fostered in an urban environment? Or, when compared with rural counterparts, do the physical manifestations prove a function of poverty regardless of race and are the bullying behaviors comparable? Are the behaviors occurring at a similar rate and level of intensity/duration when comparing black and white poverty-stricken children? This study aims to prove that the bullying behaviors involving students of poverty and middle class students differ drastically in the manner by which they are conducted. It is not impossible that the higher the socio-economic status, the more diminished physical bullying behaviors appear. Instead, the increase of technology, and the financial accessibility of technology among the middle class has contributed to increased covert bullying behaviors that can be determined to be as damaging, if not worse, than the physical incidents experienced at a greater rate among the poverty students.

**Statement of Problem**

The problem of school bullying is pervasive and caustic for administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The targeted issues are not limited to schools in the United States, nor are they confined to one particular age group. Historically, bullying behaviors have been addressed on a situational basis focusing on only perpetrator and victim. Recently, more effective strategies to combat bullying have been designed and implemented with a focus on whole-school approaches. (Junoven, 2005; Whitted &Dupper, 2005; Reid et al., 2004)
One of many crucial elements that has been ignored is that of the importance of bystanders in neutralizing bullying behaviors in school settings. A variety of comprehensive, anti-bullying programs have incorporated this component and are commercially marketed to school districts on a national level. Such programs include: “Quit It!” created by the National Education Association-and designed as an early intervention strategy to be implemented in elementary settings. “Bully-proof” also developed by the National Education Association aims to admonish bullying behaviors in middle school-aged student populations. Great Britain utilizes “The Whole School Response Program,” while Norway has experienced success practicing “The Bullying at School Program,” developed by the innovative school-bullying researcher, Dr. Dan Olweus (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Scarpaci, 2006).

Each of these methods for combating bullying behaviors in school settings (whole school) is comprised of three initial steps. First, the school engages in an assessment which is used to determine baseline data in order to measure future effectiveness. Next “awareness” among the student body and teacher/administration is formed and finally, students and teachers receive training on the subjects of bullying recognition and intervention.\(^\text{10}\)

Overall, these methods appear to be comprehensive and thorough. However, they fail to address the particulars of a rapidly-increasing diversity found in school populations. The most common error, a “one-size-fits-all” response to bullying- continues to act as a detriment in school systems whose attempts to thwart bullying behaviors have failed. Many of the school-based intervention programs were researched and developed prior to the infiltration of media and electronic devices accessible to today’s typical middle class student. In order to develop a more

\(^{10}\) Source: http://principalsessentials.com/benefit_bullystop.html?gclid=CJbP3PEP
effective approach to the multi-faceted and complex dynamic of the current school environment, one must address the issues of race, class, gender and the differing behavioral manifestations of bullying across these sectors of the student population, which may employ electronic media.

**Thesis Statement**

There is consensus in the literature on bullying that the incidence of bullying is equal across race, class, and gender. However, the possibility that the forms of bullying - that is, the behavioral manifestations, vary as a function of race, class, gender, and cultural issues has not been adequately addressed. Is it possible that teachers and administrators working with children of low income households define, perceive, and respond differently to bullying behaviors when compared with the definition, perception, and responses of teachers and administrators offering educational services to children of middle class families?
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Department of Education, in accordance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has issued a mandate that all public schools implement an in-school anti-bullying/anti-peer victimization program by 2012. The attitudes, identification of incidences, and response to this overwhelming problem vary among individual schools, districts, and states. The development of a cohesive, yet dynamic, anti-bullying campaign is necessary to meet the requirements mandated by federal and state governments.

Specifically, policy makers have provided educators with four basic components upon which anti-bullying programs are to be developed. First, administrators are to operationally define the term “bullying” and/or “peer victimization.” Secondly, an analysis of purpose for federal and state regulations is necessary. Third, a comparison is to be made between states in order to ensure continuity among states in program design. Lastly, recommendations (fostered by educators and educational administrators) are to be made to policy makers to ensure ease of transition between legislative actions and educational implementation (Ohio Department of Education, 2003).

“Historically, bullying among school children has not been a topic of significant public concern,” (Limber, 2002,) Bullying has, in fact, been considered a rite of passage- an unpleasant, yet unavoidable, growing pain experienced by children and students in various settings. These settings include, but are not limited to, school, playgrounds, hallways, bathrooms, cafeterias, school busses- virtually any place that offers freedom and a lack of direct adult supervision. Discipline for such offenses has often been inconsistent, if at all executed.
The media has exposed the reality of the situation, which demands urgency for education in the area of aggression and victimization.

The topic of bullying should be addressed in a number of perspectives of analysis, with an emphasis on student perspectives. Crothers, Kolbert, & Barker conducted a study in 2006 which determined that students ‘sometimes’ or ‘almost always’ found anti-bullying strategies helpful. Teachers with the best classroom management techniques were ranked highly by students in regards to lessening the anxiety caused by peer aggression. The results also determined that students desired teacher intervention in attempting to solve bullying problems (Crothers, Kolbert, Barker, 2006). Due to the bulk of previous research, an effective means of organizing prior studies required the development of five key areas: gender, academic, medical, psychological, and social- as well as an additional section clarifying what teachers are doing positively to promote peaceful educational settings.

Recently, in response to the increased awareness of bullying, The Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology published an article entitled, ”Beyond the Class Norm: Bullying Behavior of Popular Adolescents and its Relation to Peer Acceptance and Rejection.” It is a common myth that students demonstrating high levels of resilience (the ability to maintain self-concept) escape bullying patterns. On the contrary, this study establishes that in many cases, popularity fails to determine whether or not a student will fall victim to a bully; rather, the study identified the prevalence of bullying based on the normative behaviors within the school setting. Bullying that was readily accepted, with little intercession by teachers or figures of authority became the strongest determining factor of peer violence (Dijkstra, Lindenberg & Veenstra, 2008).
Gender as a Factor in Bullying

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, a nationally recognized public health leader, championed the prevention of physical violence among our nation’s youth. Having practiced emergency medicine in Boston, Massachusetts, Dr. Prothrow-Stith authored the work "Sugar and Spice and No Longer Nice: How We Can Stop Girls’ Violence." Dr. Prothrow-Stith, along with Howard Spivak, legitimize the claims that female on female violence has increased. The authors examine the underlying causes, initially finding that female violence is often ignored, excused, or minimized to appease public comfort. Because female fighting and violence incidents have yet to reach mass levels of media as male violence has, national concerns have not yet emerged regarding female violence, thus creating unfortunate delays in prevention development methods.

According to Prothrow-Stith, school personnel were the first to voice concerns in the areas of female violence. Community leaders have been quick to follow. Students echo similar complaints about increased incidents of female violence. Prothrow-Stith states that the media images surrounding aggressive female personality types, when coupled with environmental factors such as parenting styles, power displays within the home and community, and the basic needs of empowerment and self-defense have created a female version of aggressive male counterparts.11

Prothrow-Stith also mentions a very important piece Odd Girl Out published in 2002. This article reflects the hazards of covert violence among the middle and upper class females.

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11 Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard R. Spivak: Sugar and Spice and No Longer Nice: How We Can Stop Girls’ Violence
An in-depth examination offers a glimpse of the hidden-style of white middle class girls’ bullying tactics which include social isolation, back-stabbing, humiliation, use of social media, intimidation and fear tactics. It was stated that females of the working class and African American females preferred the “mouthiness” and direct assertive styles to those hidden, mean, and un-relentless styles of the upper and middle class females.

**The Academic Model**

There are numerous methods of analyzing the problems caused by bullies in the school setting.\(^{12}\) The academic model is a systematic approach to dissecting the negative consequences of peer victimization on academic achievement and academic success. “School bullying is a pervasive problem found in elementary, middle, and high schools across the United States and around the world. As an international phenomenon, school bullying occurs at similar rates in disparate cultures, countries, and educational settings.” (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

Fatal school shootings have forced the adoption of policies and procedures in our schools in an attempt to thwart catastrophic consequences of bullying and peer victimization. School bullying has been found to be most prevalent between the ages of nine and fifteen, during the stages of late-childhood and early-adolescence (Carney & Merrell, 2001). This being the case, the responsibility falls mainly upon the elementary and middle school teachers, though as previously stated, bullying occurs across the entire age span.

Research has shown a positive correlation between bullying and failing academic success. Disruption of classroom activities is not only a nuisance, but causes deviation from a

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\(^{12}\) Developed by Kelli Jette as an organizational method of deconstructing masses of pertinent and related information.
prescribed mode of input which has been found to most effectively create success in the learning environment. Bullying has been shown to cause truancy and drop-out rates to escalate (Scarpaci, 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Although not every episode of violence is severe, the underlying effects of continuous harassment or victimization foster unsafe, tumultuous climates which lend the school setting to vulnerability of more severe forms of violence (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). The negative effects of bullying on bystanders has been proven damaging—both psychologically and academically. Students feel intimidated, distressed, fearful, and worried that the violence they have witnessed could later be aimed at them. This causes mental strain which robs the student of the ability to focus on academic tasks (Reid et al., 2004; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Research has shown that anti-bullying campaigns have been factors in the overall improvement of academic achievement in schools in which they were implemented (Scarpaci, 2006).

Stan Davis, a school guidance counselor, authored a book entitled, “Schools Where Everyone Belongs: Practical Strategies for Reducing Bullying.” The strategies offered by Davis are based on the research of Dr. Dan Olweus of Norway. Davis has developed the program, “Stop Bullying Now,” which has shown to be effective in school settings. The method is strategic, accessible, and based on research, meeting the criteria of most schools. Davis has combined six strategies:

- Clear expectations and school-wide consistent consequences for behavior that is likely to hurt others with words or actions
- Positive staff-student communication
- Staff spends designated time with students
School staff helps aggressive youth change

Staff supports targets of bullying

Staff helps bystanders discourage bullying (2006)

Special attention should be placed on students placed in gifted programs and special needs programs. “Sixty-seven percent of gifted students have experienced bullying by the eighth grade,” (2008). A recent poll, conducted by Davis, included thirty parents of special needs students. Parents were asked, “Did their child(ren) experience bullying, and if so, in what grade(s) did the bullying occur?” Twenty-two families responded that their child had been the victim of bullying, and that the bullying had began in elementary grades (Davis, 2008).

The Medical Model

The American Medical Association reported that fifty-percent of United States school children are bullied at some time during their educational lifetime. Even more disturbing is the research finding that ten percent of U.S. schoolchildren are bullied and/or victimized on a regular basis throughout their academic lifetime (Scarpaci, 2006).

A study by Brown, et. al., 2005, revealed that one in five elementary school children and one in ten middle school students in the United States are bullied on a regular basis. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that thirteen percent of all sixth through tenth grade students bullied classmates and eleven percent had been bullied regularly (Scarpaci, 2006).

Frankel operational-ized several key indicators for children at-risk or suffering from the negative effects of bullying:
• A child’s grades begin to fall

• A child shows a decrease in interest for school in general

• A child feigns illness, such as frequent headaches or stomachaches

• A child who chooses ubiquitous routes home may be hiding the fact that he or she is a victim of a bully

• A child who claims to have lost books, money, or other belongings without a good explanation

• A child is caught stealing or asking for extra money

• A child has unexplained injuries, bruises, torn clothing; bullying may be the cause for any or all of these indicators (1996)

The American Medical Association (AMA) warns that the effects of bullying are often similar to the effects of child abuse (Ritter 2002). A deliberate effort has been made by the AMA to request that doctors remain vigilant for signs and symptoms of bullying and peer victimization. The psychological trauma that is endured by the victim is often an impetus towards depression and low self-esteem (Ritter, 2002).

Identifying factors, as determined by the AMA, can be best diagnosed by asking the following prescribed questions:

• Have you ever been teased at school? How long has it been going on?

• Do you know of other children who have been teased?
• Have you ever told your teacher about the teasing? What happens?

• What kinds of things do children tease you about?

• Do you have nicknames at school?

• Have you ever been teased because of your illness, disability, or for looking different than the other kids?

• At recess, do you usually play with other kids or by yourself?

In contrast, the bully actually suffers from deficits in social skills and adaptability. They tend to manifest more violent behaviors, suffer from depression, exhibit suicidal behavior, abuse alcohol and/or drugs, and live in abusive or neglectful homes (Olweus, 1998). Bullies in the school age sector often perform poorly at school. Research shows that by the age of 24, 60% of former school bullies are convicted of crime (Olweus, 1998). In 2008, White & Loeber found, “substantial continuity between early aggression and special education placements, bullying, and serious delinquency.”

Victims of bullying often develop documentable symptoms that may require medical treatment. It is known that bullying and peer victimization creates havoc in all areas of development. However, issues can and may occur for both the bully and the victim. Such documented physical and psychosomatic ailments include, but are not limited to, sleep difficulties, bed-wetting, headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, low-self-esteem, anxiety, depression,

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and suicidal ideation as a result of social rejection and social isolation (Brown, Birch, Kancherla, 2006).

Moreover, bullies (and possibly victims) suffer from low bonding and adjustment resulting in decreased self-efficacy and school success. Self-destructive and/or anti-social behaviors such as fighting, vandalism, carrying weapons, stealing, and involvement with the criminal justice system are not uncommon manifestations (Brown, Birch, Kancherla, 2005).

Most victims of bullying suffer in silence. However, there is one particular subset of victims whose reactions can be catastrophically violent. Retaliation can take murderous forms, as witnessed by Columbine High School. The overall likelihood of serious school violence is drastically increased by the victim’s tendency to bring a weapon to school for protective measures (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

Self-destructive behaviors are so prevalent among bullies that specific interventions are often needed to deter dangerous actions. “There is evidence that school bullies also suffer from their own behavior. However, it is difficult to establish whether these negative consequences are direct results of bullying or are products of the psychological issues that led to bullying.” (Rigby, 2003) Previously, males labeled as “bully,” were sixty percent more likely to be convicted by the age of twenty-four; forty percent of bullies had three or more convictions by age twenty-four. In comparison, only ten percent of males with a non-bullying label were convicted of a crime (Whitted & Dupper, 2005).

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The National Threat Assessment Center found that, ”attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, or had been previously attacked.” The number one factor in school shooting incidences is bullying- two-thirds of school shooting rampages were the result of a vengeance sought by a victim. As of 2003, there were thirty-seven school shootings since 1974 (Viadero, 2003).

Sexual harassment is a specific means of bullying and typically involves male-female violent behaviors. Sexual insults, sexual threats, as well as innuendos can be included in sexual bullying. Female victims usually appear angry, distrustful, and self-conscious. Males often act passively after a sexual bullying incident (Scarpaci, 2006).

**Psychological Model**

The psychological and medical models are similar, yet the psychological model offers an in-depth portrait of the long-term negative effects of bullying and peer victimization, whereas the medical model emphasizes the physical ramifications of injury sustained by bullying.

Lynn Addington (2009) of the American University, conducted a study in which she compared bullying to a criminal victimization. The results indicated that the on-going nature of bullying created far worse consequences than an isolated violent incident. (Addington, 2009) Specifically, bully victims self-reported that the violent situation within the school interrupted and negatively affected their grades, as well as their aspirations to attend college/university. Self reports also indicated that students chose to avoid areas in and around the school building, which further alienated them. Students were likely to engage in avoidance behaviors, based on fear and anxiety caused by the perpetrator (Addington, 2009).
Aaron Taylor, author of, ”The Pumpkin Goblin Makes Friends,” has reported that a bully is likely to be equally as traumatized as the victim. “The outcomes for bullies and victims are remarkably similar,” says Dr. Bennett Leventhal, professor of psychiatry and director for the Center for Child Mental Health and Development Neuroscience Institute for Juvenile Research at the University of Illinois at Chicago. “We used to think that it was just the victims who struggled as the result of bullying. But in fact, the kids who are also bullies have poor grades, higher rates of depression and are more likely to have suicidal ideas and behavior,” (Leventhal, 2008; Henderson, 2008).

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) “suggests that students’ perceptions of their school (e.g., feeling safe and connected), others’ bullying behaviors (e.g., whether bullies are popular or feared by other students), and the school’s prevention efforts (e.g., whether the school is doing enough to prevent bullying), as well as their attitudes toward aggressive retaliation, would influence their behavior at school. (Bradshaw, O’Brennan, and Sawyer, 2008) The concept that refers to students learning behaviors from watching and witnessing the behaviors of others is known as vicarious learning. Bradshaw, O’Brennan, and Sawyer (2008) argue that the attitudes of students within a school community will vary drastically depending upon how bullying and peer victimization is approached by students and teachers. Victims of bullying were determined to have very low and very poor perceptions of safety within the school environment (McAdams & Schmidt, 2007; Tobin et al., 2005).

According to Kelleher, Harley, Lynch, Arseneault, Fitzpatrick, and Cannon, the childhood trauma caused by bullying during the elementary years increases the risk of psychotic experiences in adults that already have experienced psychotic symptoms throughout their
lifespan. In other words, for those individuals who were borderline psychotic, the effects of bullying and peer victimization resulted in an increased risk of full-blown psychotic episodes.

The Department of Community Medicine, at the University of Zambia conducted a study of adolescents in Beijing in 2003. The purpose was to raise awareness of bullying in China, however, the results are generalizable. The findings revealed that twenty-three percent of males and seventeen percent of females had been bullied in the school environment. Risk factors that were associated with bullying included loneliness, worry, sadness, hopelessness, tobacco usage, alcohol consumption, and truancy. Protective factors were simultaneously analyzed, showing that close friends, parental supervision, and a lack of alcohol consumption stifled the bullying (Hazemba, Muula, Rudatsikira, 2008).

The Division of General Pediatrics, Boston University School of Medicine, conducted a longitudinal study which focused on self-rated health among U.S. adolescents. The study featured twelve to eighteen year olds from 1997 to 2004. The investigation determined the results of cumulative exposure to violence and its’ effects on health. The findings proved that witnessing gun violence, threats of violence, repeated bullying, perceived safety, and criminal victimization greatly reduced health and strength of relationship (Boynton-Jarrett, Ryan, Berkman, Wright, 2008).

Social Model

Aggressive behaviors have been found in children as young as one year old. 15 The resistance to treatment in matters of bullying and peer victimization lies in the fact that the behaviors are

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15 “Aggression During Early Years- Infancy and Preschool” www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov • • • v.14(1); Feb 2005
recurring and may be attributed to an imbalance of strength and power between perpetrators and victims (Birch, Brown, Kancheria, 2005). Previous research attributes bullying to harsh home environments occurring in lower socioeconomic class frameworks. Bullying may also occur as a result of divorce and/or separation of parents. Additionally, authoritarian parenting styles have been found to be positively correlated with bullying students. Additionally, child abuse is a predictor of bullying behaviors. Lastly, males of every age are more likely to be involved in bullying as perpetrator (Birch, Brown, Kancheria, 2005).

Students attending urban, low income schools of predominately black and Hispanic demographics had varying views on bullying. First, students who could be labeled a bully often felt that they were in a victim state. Secondly, boys of middle school-age were the most likely bullying targets. Three major findings were published:

- These students found bullying to be NOT serious

- Students believe that victims of adolescent age should be capable of coping with it on their own

- Students are less dissuaded by adult-delivered consequences

(Birch, Brown, Kancheria, 2005)

Common Myths
Many misconceptions have been formed by educators, administrators and parents in an attempt to mask and de-escalate the severity of bullying.\textsuperscript{16} Students considered “different” by peers are often a target of bullying. This can be as trite as wearing glasses or braces, however, is not limited to image. Students with special needs are often the target of victimization. Eighty-five percent of victims tend to be passive or submissive, while the remaining fifteen percent is comprised of students with aggressive tendencies and provocative behaviors. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with School Bully Online (Field 2005) and For Kids Sake (2006) has posted online myths about bullying (2003):

- Bullying is just teasing. “I was just kidding around!” is a refrain educators often hear from bullies
- Some people deserve to be bullied
- Only boys are bullies
- People who complain about bullies are babies
- Bullying is a normal part of growing up
- Bullies will go away if you ignore them
- All bullies have low self-esteem. That’s why they pick on others
- It’s tattling to tell an adult when you are being bullied
- The best way to deal with a bully is by fighting or trying to get even

\textsuperscript{16} “The Myths of Bullying” TIME: \url{www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2108030,00.html}; Myths and misperceptions about school bullying: \url{www.bullyonline.org/schoolbully/myths.htm}
People who are bullied might hurt for a while, but they will get over it

(Scarpaci, 2006)

Challenging these myths is a constant responsibility of teachers. The challenge needs to be accepted by students in order to implement an effective school-wide campaign.

**The Model Teacher**

Kristy Colwin, author of “Bullying in Schools—A New Perspective,” discovered that bullying occurs approximately every seven minutes on a school playground (2006). She also determined the adult intervened only four percent of the time, while peers intervened eleven percent of the time (2006). Teachers can reduce bullying by acting as effective models. Colwin recommends that teachers take responsibility for demonstrating appropriate interactions among peer groups. Colwin gives the following example:

- “Billy gets teased because he has a disability.”

The adult language is an imperative facet that cannot be ignored in the battle against victimization. By stating that Billy is being teased because of a disability, the adult sends a message that all students with a disability are subject to teasing. In addition to paying close attention to the nuances of the English language, teachers should cease language that is directly degrading, such as statements like, ”Those shoes are retarded.”

**Intervention Strategies**

Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are a strategy for embedding anti-bullying goals on the individual basis. *The Exceptional Parent Journal* published a list of IEP goals that promote
conflict free school socialization, although this list is by no means an exhaustive tabulation of available intervention strategies.

- Improve social skills such as sharing, taking turns, or thinking before acting
- Develop conversation skills so your child can express feelings and wants in a situation
- Identify social norms
- Participate in friendship groups to practice social skills with others under the direction of the school staff
- Improve speech intelligibility so the child can interact with other students
- Learn and practice direct and indirect ways to react to, handle, and avoid bullying
- The IEP can also address supplementary aids and services, program modifications, or supports
- Teacher-monitored hallways and playgrounds
- Allow child to leave class early to avoid hallway incidents
- Use social stories to help the child understand difficult situations when they occur
- Provide an in-service for staff to understand a child’s disability or vulnerability
- Educate peers about the school policies and procedures on bullying
- Set up a “no questions asked” procedure for reporting bullying.
Chapter 3: Methodology

It is imperative that studies include a dialectical approach to the all-encompassing study of bullying. This ensures an equalizing agent that allows for cultural sensitivity while rebuking falsehoods and nonsensical stereotypes that potentially impede the effectiveness of accurate and reliable practices. A dialectical approach which examines the interrelated functions of race, class, behavior, and culture among behaviors of school children guarantees the development of a systematic framework by which the cross sections of school age children can be taught the appropriate skills necessary to foster a healthy, non-violent response to adverse peer behaviors.

In order to expand on previous research and cultivate an improved, research-based technique for addressing bullying, a qualitative data analysis methodology was used. Qualitative data exposes the depth of emotional and psychological trauma incurred by victims and bystanders enduring bullying at school.\footnote{Jette; Necessity of narrative form versus quantitative format} Qualitative data collection reveals rich data that would otherwise be overlooked by quantitative data collection methods. In addition, qualitative data in the form of interviews, oral histories, and artistic renderings (for early childhood settings) gives holistic depictions of the focus of those involved. Qualitative data should include, but not be limited to, the student definition of the term “bully,” as well as descriptions of instances of violence witnessed or experienced by the student. Data also incorporates the perceptions of students in areas regarding teacher and principal interventions. Personal accounts of bullying incidences are included, along with familial and student reactions. Also, the issue of media outlets such as “Facebook” and “MySpace” as a potential device for harboring violent actions must be addressed. Subsequently, the use of handheld electronic devices as an outlet for
increased socialization opportunities must be questioned as to the potential negative capabilities of fueling covert bullying behaviors.\(^\text{18}\)

The following is a detailed description of the initial stages of investigation:

First, two groups were determined and divided based on socio-economic status. Group A (subset: Principals- Rollins, Fields, Cole/ Teachers- Haburn, Frye, Williams) consisted of lower socio-economic status (SES), which included student populations of more than thirty percent that qualified for free or reduced lunch. Group B (subset: Principals- Smith, Kaiser, Nelson/ Teachers- Wright, Hartwell, Carroll) was comprised of upper SES, consisting of student populations that yielded less than thirty percent that qualified for free or reduced lunch.

The data was recorded, transcribed, and finally coded. The resulting data was expected to show disparity in definitions, perceptions, and reactions between teachers/administrators in differing socio-economic school settings. The behavioral manifestations of the lower socio-economic group proved to be that of direct, physical and blatant confrontations when compared to covert, indirect, and social isolation techniques exercised by those in the upper socio-economic classes. Additionally, the methods of response among members of each group revealed drastic differences in definitions and strategies used by teachers and administration to alleviate the problems. Parental involvement was expected to differ as parents of lower socio-economic groups tend to confront the issues between children in comparison to upper socio-economic parents who tend to “brush it under the rug” or “play games” amongst themselves.

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\(^{18}\) Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY): Cyber-Bullying- jfcy1.blogspot.com/2012/02/cyber-bullying.html
The study included data collection about students in a school setting with diverse populations. Such populations would include an even distribution of students falling in the low, middle and upper-income brackets. In addition, the population included a racially diverse sample in order to galvanize the dialectics of a study based on race, class, and gender.

The purpose of this study was to examine the difference in behavioral manifestations of bullying as they pertain to race, class, and gender in order to better construct an improved method of addressing and ending bullying in the classroom.

Using a case-study design (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003) data was collected from multiple sources. These sources included observations, archival data and face-to-face interviews. Using this variety and range of data sources ensured triangulation while maintaining integrity and translucency in data results.

**Data Collection**

Data sources included individual interviews conducted at the end of the 2010-2011 school year. Each source was interviewed at a place of their choice, and all interviews were free of distraction, meaning that no students were present. The initial questions were presented at the onset of the interview. Teachers and administrators were told that their discourse is confidential and there will be no identifying information. All teacher meetings were audio-taped and/or computer-recorded for later transcription. Interviews were based on the aforementioned question set however teachers often deviated from these questions, administrators as well. Interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour.
Method of Analysis

The interviews were coded using two varying methods. First, the text segments were coded as addressing one or more factors involving race, class, or gender issues as they pertained to bullying behaviors and trends in their classroom or school. Second, the text was analyzed using an open-code scheme which indicated segments of text that were coded in regards to changing perspectives—definition, current regulations, and potential improvement ideas. This revealed the differences in perspectives as to how teachers define bullying taking into consideration race, class, and gender differences. It was equally informative in the area of prevention and trouble-shooting chronic bullying issues in the school settings; the comparison of current rules and continued mis-behaviors provided a segue into teacher perspectives regarding missing elements in current anti-bullying trends.

The methodology and interview questions were designed to prompt teachers and administrators to give detailed descriptions of the problematic behaviors they were witness to inside their school environment and what responses to incidents they deem appropriate. Teachers and administrators reviewed their personal records of conduct referrals, suspension and expulsion reports and included these conduct reports in their interviews. Is it possible that the behavioral differences are a result of access to monetary funds used to secure advanced technology systems in the home and for personal use that allows for covert bullying behaviors among the upper SES students, while proliferating physical violence among lower SES students who are not privy to the technologically advanced gadgets and personal computer social networks. Although evidence shows that upper SES students demonstrate covert bullying behaviors in the act of social isolation, computer bullying via Facebook, MySpace, and IM, is it reality to declare lower SES students violent in an overt physically aggressive mode because of
the lack of opportunity and access to computers and technology? And if so, would it not be necessary to devise anti-bullying strategies that address these differences in student manifestations of bullying behaviors?

**Sampling**

The participants of this study were certified teachers and principals serving the school and classroom no less than six years and as many as forty years. The administrators are responsible for monitoring and reporting bullying incidents to the school board and superintendent. They are also enforcers of school-wide rules based on the district guidelines. Teachers maintain the rules specified in the individual school handbook, determined by the administrators, as well as designing micro-level classroom climate techniques to manage bullying behaviors among students they oversee.

Participants of this study will include three administrators and three teachers serving two distinct populations of differing income status; a total of twelve participants. Study Group A will consist of three administrators (Mr. Rollins, Mr. Fields, Mr. Cole) and three teachers (Mrs. Haburn, Mrs. Frye, Mrs. Williams) serving school populations consisting of: more than thirty-percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch (a *poverty school*). Study Group B will also consist of three administrators (Mr. Smith, Mr. Kaiser, Mr. Nelson) and three teachers (Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, Mrs. Carroll) however, they serve student populations in which less than thirty percent of students qualify and receive free or reduced lunch (a *non-poverty school*.) The following list details the demographics of each school in the study and includes state averages.
**Sample**

1. AAA Elementary (Poverty) (Subset A)  Principal D  Teacher D  
   Ethnicity:  White-62%  Black-37%  Hispanic-<1%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 79%

2. Top Academy (Poverty) (Subset A)  Principal E  
   Ethnicity: White-1%  Black-97%  Hispanic-<1%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 79%

3. Donovan Elementary (Non-Poverty) (Subset B)  Principal A  Teacher A  
   Ethnicity: White-94%  Black-2%  Hispanic-2%  Asian/Pacific Islander-2%  Native American-<1%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 28%

4. Mitchell Elementary (Non-Poverty) (Subset B)  Principal B  Teacher B  
   Ethnicity: White-100%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 28%

5. Missouri Hill Elementary (Poverty) (Subset A)  Principal F  Teacher F  
   Ethnicity: White-99%  Black-0%  Hispanic-<1%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 48%

6. Dillensberg Elementary (Non-Poverty) (Subset B)  Principal C  Teacher C  
   Ethnicity: White-99%  Black-0%  Hispanic-0%  Asian/Pacific Islander-<1%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 24%

7. Arvada Elementary (Poverty) (Subset A)  Teacher E  
   Ethnicity: White-99%  Black-0%  Hispanic-<1%  Asian/Pacific Islander-<1%  
   Economically Disadvantaged: 51%

**Schools with more than 30% economically disadvantaged are considered “poverty schools” according to Federal Public School Guidelines.**

State Averages:  
**Ohio Ethnicity:** White-76%  Black-16%  Hispanic-3%  Asian/Pacific Islander-<1%  
Native America-<1%  
**Ohio Economically Disadvantaged:** 36%
Indiana Ethnicity: White-75% Black-12% Hispanic-7% Asian/Pacific Islander-1% Native American-<1%
Indiana Economically Disadvantaged: 42%

Setting

The study will take place in 2011 in several Midwestern school districts. There will be seven individual schools with varying degrees of diversity within the populations, including rural, suburban, and urban classifications. All schools serve kindergarten through eighth grade. The demographics are accurate as of 2011-2012 school year statistics. Principals A, B, and C are representative of administrators serving the non-poverty schools along with Teachers A, B, and C. Principals D, E, and F, along with Teachers D, E, and F( are representative of administrators and teachers serving school populations with at least thirty percent poverty students.) The study represents racially diverse populations situated in urban, suburban, and rural districts.

Participants

The following are fictional names assigned to each principal and teacher, with factual descriptions applicable to the administrators’ and teachers’ careers.

1. Principal A: Mr. Smith has been a principal at Donovan Elementary for fourteen years serving a suburban population located near the western portion of Cincinnati, Ohio. He has been a long-time resident of the area. Mr. Smith was satisfied with his position and the direction in which the school is moving in areas of test scores and behavior improvements. This was a non-poverty school.

2. Teacher A: Mrs. Wright taught elementary school music and music education for six years at a suburban middle school located near the western portion of Cincinnati, Ohio. Mrs. Wright works with Mr. Smith serving the same population at Donovan Elementary. Mrs. Wright enjoys the majority of her classes, but did express concerns in the areas of behavior management in one particular class. This was a non-poverty school.

3. Principal B: Mr. Kaiser has been principal of Mitchell Elementary for seventeen years. This is a rural elementary with no diverse populations. It was described as a generational school- meaning that the families in that area have attended this particular school for many family cycles. Farming is a major industry in the area, and Mr. Kaiser recognizes the unique challenges of the families and their resources. This was a non-poverty school.
4. Teacher B: Mrs. Hartwell has been a teacher for forty years. She has taught all grades in Mitchell Elementary during her tenure. She was very descriptive and told many stories. Her portrayal of education throughout the years showed the changes that have occurred since she began teaching in 1970. Mrs. Hartwell was extremely concerned with growing problems in the area of school violence, especially female violence. This was a non-poverty school.

5. Principal C: Mr. Nelson has been a principal for forty-two years at Dillensberg Elementary. He planned to retire within three years. Mr. Nelson was proud of the “Excellent” rating that the school attained in 2007. This is a non-diverse school located in a small town in an otherwise rural setting in Indiana. This is considered a non-poverty school.

6. Teacher C: Mrs. Carroll has worked under the leadership of Mr. Nelson for thirty-three years. She has a reputation for extremely high expectations and strict discipline in her classroom. She instructs an inclusive classroom with students label emotionally disturbed. Mrs. Carroll was eager to discuss the successes and improvements that have occurred in her school. This is also a non-poverty school.

7. Principal D: Mr. Rollins, AAA Elementary, has been a principal at this urban, diverse school for twelve years. The school serves a population ranging from kindergarten to eighth grade. It has a majority of white, Appalachian immigrants with a large population of African-Americans and Guatemalans. The school has community supports that maintain safety and also contribute to the general welfare of the student body. Mr. Rollins was quick to recognize that the behavior problems are severe in his school and places blame on family and poverty issues. This is a severely impoverished school.

8. Teacher D: Mrs. Haburn, AAA Elementary, has been an elementary and middle school teacher for nine years and has an intervention specialist license as well. She instructs a diverse classroom, with several children on an IEP. Her concerns also revealed an increase in female violence at this school. She was a supporter of the zero tolerance policy, which was strictly enforced at the school. This is a severely impoverished school located on the west side of Cincinnati.

9. Principal E: Mr. Fields has been principal and founder of the charter school, Top Academy, for eleven years. She boasts the “Excellence in Academics” award for four years. The population is diverse, majority African American. This school attracts the brightest students through testing and pre-acceptance interviews. The emphasis is on parental involvement and community outreach. This is an urban school located North of downtown Cincinnati. It is a poverty school.

10. Teacher E: Mrs. Frye taught for thirty-five years at Arvada Elementary, a large suburban elementary serving a non-diverse population in Southeastern Indiana, approximately forty-five minutes from Cincinnati, Ohio. There are approximately 2,500 students in what is considered a poverty school. The students range from kindergarten to sixth grade. Mrs. Frye taught primarily second and third grade. There are no African-American students and less than 1% Hispanic. Considered poverty school.
11. Principal F: Mr. Cole has been principal at Missouri Hill Elementary for twenty years. MHE is an extremely rural school with high levels of poverty and majority white, Appalachian students. Mr. Cole expressed concerns with the community, the families, and the prospect of the village (which total population is 324). The major concerns were lack of work, drug and alcohol use, and physical/sexual abuse and neglect.

12. Teacher F: Mrs. Williams is a first grade teacher at Missouri Hill Elementary and has worked for Mr. Cole for eleven years. Mrs. Williams attended Arvada Elementary, but secured a job at MHE. She is vigilant about parental involvement and also expressed concerns about the violence in the small rural community that has been worsening over the past five to seven years. Mrs. Williams was eager to talk about situations she had witnessed that proved her theory about increased violence. Considered a poverty school.

**Omissions in Research**

The nature of bullying can be difficult to accurately target, as the perpetrators attempt to conceal, quite often, the violent behaviors in an attempt to avoid punishment. Therefore, a longitudinal study based on student perceptions of bullying and how those perceptions change over an extended period of time would be fascinating and informative. Such studies are currently lacking in the present literature on bullying. Time and growth are the two major determinants of increasing and decreasing instances of reported bullying. Research shows that bullying is at the lowest during early childhood and secondary school, with a dramatic peak during the middle school years. There are currently no studies mapping children’s perceptions as they progress through the school system. Although these points will not be addressed in this study, it is necessary to mention that the student perceptions cannot be ignored.

**Participant Research Questions**

Do the behavioral manifestations of bullying vary as a function of race, class, gender, and culture? Olweus suggests that incidents of bullying occur at a similar rate and duration across all cultures and age groups at the international level. Therefore, the question arises: how does the
bullying behavior manifest itself when comparing urban, suburban, and rural school environments with embedded socio-economic differences?

In order to address the above mentioned inquiry, the definition of bullying among teachers and administrators must be operational-ized. Since it is the teacher and administrator who report and respond to bullying incidences, the data regarding the details of violence in the classroom can be skewed due to the subjective nature of identification of problematic behaviors.

This problem necessitates the creation of an improved method of combating these negative behaviors, bullying definitions must be realigned to target differences in student culture as it relates to socio-economic status. Therefore, the independent variable represented in this study is income as a predicting factor of bullying behaviors and the perceptions and responses of administrators and teachers (dependent variable).

Once the two subject groups are established, the following questions were administered to the teachers and administrators/principals of each socio-economic group.

1. Please define bullying as it pertains to you.

2. What are your personal thoughts regarding bullying?

3. What attempts do you make to thwart or alleviate bullying behaviors?

4. What effects have you witnessed as a result of bullying? Psychologically? Physically? Socially? Academically
5. What actions have you witnessed or expected from teachers and administrators when confronted with peer on peer bullying behaviors?  

Significance of Study

The richness of data and the comparative nature of the research design will create the possibility for further research agendas. The deconstruction of definition, perception, and response is a fundamental and necessary element in proper design of future anti-bullying campaigns. Prior to the composition of this study, there are no published studies to be accessed indicating the importance of race, class, and gender in anti-bullying strategy design.

Delimitations

This study focuses primarily on the teacher and administrator perspective. Parents and students were excluded, aside from comments recalled by teachers and administrators. Participants in this study are from the Midwest only. Convenience sampling was necessary for this project, therefore there are no claims of generalizability.

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19 Questions designed by Jette post pilot study
Chapter 4: Findings

Every individual participant of the study declared “bullying” a major problem in their school and classroom setting. Administrators and teachers recognized that bullying is a major problem and can be damaging to the students mentally, physically, and academically. Both groups determined bullying to be dangerous to the welfare of individual students and the collective school climate. Every school was equipped with an anti-bullying strategy and some type of protocol for addressing incidents. There were no teachers or administrators that reported zero bullying in their building and/or classroom. This important declaration is evidence that the problem of bullying is pervasive and affecting all students in every socio-economic environment. The administrators and teachers participating in this study agreed that bullying can be “tricky” to pinpoint and this fact makes intervention difficult. Participants agreed that physical bullying was the “easiest” to combat, as the situations were blatant enough to determine a bully, a victim, and bystanders. In such cases, the bully is punished, the victim is offered in-school supports, and preventative measures are taken to thwart future attacks. These could include but are not limited to: in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions, proximity adjustments, parent/teacher/administrator conferences, and psychological screenings.

The participants described problematic interventions for “sneaky” bullying, or covert bullying. Behaviors that included social isolation were most vehement due to the intense mental damage sustained by victims. Participants described victims of covert bullying as becoming depressed, withdrawn, and anxious. Teachers and administrators viewed loss of interest, dropped or failing grades, and general malaise as the main symptoms of students experiencing covert bullying. Participants also reported that the negative effects of covert bullying long outlasted those of outward physical aggressions between students. Participants went so far as to
say that students engaging in overt bullying behaviors in the form of physical outbursts found their victims recovered much quicker than those of their covert counterparts. Students were apt to become “friends” or “be cool with each other” in the cases of physical bullying while students experiencing covert bullying violence never recovered while in that school setting. Participants cited instances of students resorting to alcohol, drugs, and/or self-harming behaviors as a result of depression and anxiety prompted by bullying experienced in and out of school.

Teacher and administrator definitions were typically similar, and any variances were due to elimination of behaviors that may have not been experienced in detail within their school setting. All physical aggression on a repeated basis was defined in the school policies as the basic example of bullying behavior, regardless of student population SES. Schools of the upper SES, (Donovan Elementary, Mitchell Elementary, and Dillensberg Elementary) determined that technological bullying was problematic and incorporated clauses in the handbook addressing the behaviors of students in and out of school. The student handbooks required student behaviors to reflect the school mission of community and responsibility at all times. Students (Donovan, Mitchell, Dillensberg Elementaries) were required to sign technology contracts requiring appropriate actions on all social media outlets, including personal computer usage, Facebook, MySpace, IM, cellular phones, YouTube, and texting. Students of lower SES schools, (AAA Elementary, Top Academy, Missouri Hill Elementary, and Arvada Elementary) were not offered or required to sign and abide by any such rules. Upon further probing, it was determined that the economic disparities were the contributing factors for such rules. For example, the teachers of the lower SES schools (AAA, Top, Missouri Hill, and Arvada) were instructed by administrators to avoid homework assignments and projects requiring internet and/or computer usage-as the majority of the student population lacked access to such technology. On the other hand, the
teachers of the upper SES schools (Donovan, Mitchell, and Dillensberg,) were encouraged to promote technology use in their classroom with extended enrichment opportunities in the form of homework requiring home computer usage. These facts have a profound impact on this study. The upper SES schools reported high levels of covert bullying, while the lower SES schools reported escalated incidents of physical/overt bullying, thus supporting the initial hypothesis that the behavioral manifestation of bullying behavior will differ in accordance to economic status of student populations.

**Findings of Low Income Schools (Group A)**

Upon further analysis, the economic disparity amongst the schools revealed the details of deviations in behaviors among students of poverty and students of non-poverty. Mr. Rollins and Mrs. Haburn (poverty school) reported a decline in malicious and violent bullying, however, the remaining incidences remained at a higher level than that of the upper SES counterparts. Mr. Rollins and Mrs. Haburn, though interviewed separately, both attributed the decline of violence to an initiative taken throughout the school to promote diversity acceptance issues and a zero-tolerance violence policy. One basis of the zero-tolerance policy that contributed to its’ success is that a student found guilty of physical aggression/bullying behaviors will be issued an out-of-school suspension, beginning with three days for the first offense. This poses a significant problem to parents, especially single-parent families that must make considerable adjustments to provide child-care for those days the student will be on home suspension. Payment for child-care services, or a failure to work during those days not only causes economic issues for the household, but also requires parents to address the situation and prevent it from occurring on a regular basis. Because the student population of AAA Elementary consists of 79% economically
disadvantaged, this zero-tolerance policy can prove financially devastating to students’ families who must contend with this policy. Although the school is of high poverty demographics, the population reflects an urban, extremely diverse atmosphere. The neighborhood consists of black, white, Hispanic, and Guatemalan populations that are essentially mirrored in the populous of the school. Mr. Rollins and Mrs. Haburn place blame on community, or lack thereof, as well as parenting techniques as a reason for elevated overt bullying behaviors. They reason that a lack of supervision, due to the breakdown of the nuclear family and lack of resources, as the number one factor is increased violence in the community and school. Single parents forced to work, yet unable to pay for adequate child care services, often leave large numbers of children/minors in the care of elderly relatives that are not capable of meeting the needs—socially, mentally, or academically of school age children. A number of students are left in the care of relatives due to the incarceration of parent(s), or mandated drug/alcohol treatment programs. Another large percentage of students are placed in foster care due to neglect and/or abuse investigations. Mr. Rollins and Mrs. Haburn also chose to acknowledge this lack of familial cohesiveness as a factor in the elevated violence among community members. Rival gangs and clan disputes cause community violence to infiltrate the school setting. Mr. Rollins and Mrs. Haburn credit the anti-social behaviors of the adults surrounding the children as the confounding factor of increased violence in their school. Students lack a positive model, thus failing to develop healthy coping skills which lead to anger, frustration, and physical bullying among the student body.

Alike in their struggles, Mr. Fields (Top Academy) sounded the same frustrations as AAA Elementary. Most commonly, Mr. Fields addressed problems of conspicuous consumption, or lack of, among students. Students were regularly bullied or “beat up” for issues regarding clothing and looks—either owning expensive shoes such as “Nikes” and “DC” brand
clothing (of which these items would be a point of contention) or not having stylish clothes and
brand name shoes. Children would verbally assault those who were slated as having “nappy”
hair, a lack of motherly care/nurture, body odor, or poor oral hygiene. These verbal assaults
always escalated into physical attacks. And, Mr. Fields noted, they were repetitious in nature.
Once a child is termed “nasty”, the title affixes itself to not only that child, but the siblings and
parents/family. Mr. Fields’ school also is demonstrative of a racially and ethnically diverse
urban population, whose poverty level lingers at 79%. The main issue that Mr. Fields deems as
problematic is lack of basic care at home. The students who are bullied in Top Academy are
bullied because of a failure by parents/guardians to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and
adequate clothing. Mr. Fields cited many examples of students arriving at school hungry, un-
bathed, and wearing completely inappropriate clothing- such as a young girl wearing an old, used
“flower girl” dress from a wedding or a provocative outfit obviously commandeered from
someone else’s closet. These examples establish economic hardships as the number one cause of
bullying behaviors in Top Academy. It also validates the fact that households that are unable to
provide basic needs, i.e. clothes, food, medicine, for children are ultimately unable to provide
advanced technology such as computers and cell phones for children’s usage, thus preventing
covert bullying behaviors like texting, YouTubing, and Facebooking that the upper SES schools
find so problematic. Rather, the poverty students resort to physical altercations and verbal
assault as a means of defense and aggressive output.

While the two aforementioned schools prove to paint a typical picture of poor, urban
school settings experiencing blatant, overt bullying behaviors, their poor, rural counterparts are
experiencing similar tribulations. Mr. Cole and Mrs. Williams (Missouri Hill Elementary), along
with Mrs. Frye (Arvada Elementary) are currently serving student populations that
demographics show to be between 48% and 51% poverty. Although the racial diversity is limited in the rural school, 99% white/Appalachian students, the problems of violence within the school and communities are perpetuated by exasperating economic downturns. Mrs. Williams was explicit in her comparisons of students from poverty homes and students from middle class households. “The bullies in my school are usually angry and frustrated children. They may not even be aware that the way they are expressing themselves is the result of mental issues and crappy home lives.” Examples of instances of overt physical bullying in the rural schools included students hitting, punching, fighting, hiding necessary personal belongings such as books, coats, purses, etc., mock slapping, verbal assaults, and writing slanderous notes. All of the complaints occurred on school property or on the school bus. Many student complaints were pre-empted by out-of-school skirmishes between families regarding a variety of non-school related issues such as property feuds, money issues, and adult-related circumstances. Mrs. Williams continued to delve deep into the issues at the heart of violence and bullying amongst children in the small, rural school system. In comparison, the middle class students attending the school, though the minority, have been placed into bullying situations either as victim or bystander. Mrs. Williams describes bullying behaviors as “contagious” and as having a “trickle-down” effect. The school has policies and interventions currently in place to combat the bullying, which has been described as “on the rise” over the past several years. Portions of the intervention have embedded family services, for example, students that are found to be exhibiting bullying behaviors are required to attend an evaluation meeting with the administrator, teacher, parents, and counselor. Mrs. Williams concurs that while this is very helpful, in many instances, this policy is punitive rather than preventive in nature and most of the time the damage has already been done. In addition, Mrs. Williams finds irony in the policy, citing that it is often
the poorest students who hail from the broken families- the broken families are the people refusing assistance and experiencing addiction and mental illness issues, modeling poor behavior and coping skills, and thus proliferating issues among their children, other family members, and the community. All of this culminates in the bullying behaviors at school which are rarely solved by an evaluation meeting between administrators and school officials which are already viewed as “enemies” by these children and their parents/families.

Mr. Cole, Mrs. Williams, and Mrs. Frye all claim that the lack of resources for these geographically isolated communities is an irresponsible oversight by local and state government officials- or possibly a direct deprivation of government involvement at the local level. Regardless, they are disillusioned by the disparity between families in their communities. Mrs. Frye and Mrs. Williams describe instances that the negative behaviors of poverty stricken peers have forced students into defensive behaviors. Students are often aggressive at home, and they continue their aggressions at school. Students who are well adjusted find themselves becoming aggressors as a mode of defense in order to “survive” the un-pleasantries and jeering of their peers. According to Mrs. Williams, the entire argument as to how to fix the problem is much larger than what can be done by teachers in a school. Mrs. Frye is certain that the underlying issue is the age old argument of nature versus nurture. Children are not born to be manipulative and violent. They learn these behaviors and use what defenses are at hand in order to cope and survive situations in the home. “Most often, and you can ask the kindergarten teacher, it is obvious that a child comes from a rough home life by the way they act in kindergarten.” Further exploration of teacher perceptions proved that by second grade, these behaviors are automatic—hitting, being abusive, acting out first—these are symptoms of “get or be gotten.” Students from households that have nurturing environments would never consider aggressive behaviors as a
method of getting what they want. Those students are accustomed to sitting down and conversing, giving and taking, understanding empathy and the feelings of others. They have had those behaviors modeled for them by parents, they have practiced these behaviors and experienced positive feedback which has ultimately reinforced these desired peer interactions.

A reiterating problem among rural and urban, poverty situations is that of supervision. Mr. Cole, Mrs. Williams, as well as Mr. Rollins, Mrs. Haburn, and Mrs. Frye all claimed to understand supervision as a number one determining factor in bullying behaviors. While rural students are geographically isolated in comparison with their urban counterparts, stopping bullying behaviors requires more than student/teacher/principal collaboration. The absence of hands-on parenting is making it difficult for teachers to effectively teach positive behavior modifications. Where urban parents have access to public transportation and government outreach programs, the rural parents are left to “figure things out on their own.” With little or no transportation options, obvious lack of employment opportunity and industry, increasing cases of drug and alcohol abuse in both rural and urban landscapes, and rising trends in domestic violence, teachers feel that the bullying behaviors are a direct manifestation of institutional violence perpetrated by omission of adequate government aide.

Administrators and teachers in both poverty and non-poverty populations reported that bullying behaviors were present in their school settings, and all school policies regarding violent physical behavior included bullying as an intolerable action that would result in variety of punitive actions/punishments. Interestingly, the lower SES schools did not feel the need to include covert bullying in their definitions, as they perceived this type of bullying as reserved for computer and cell phone use, to which the majority of their students lacked access. The term “covert” was not the definitive term used by teachers and administration in upper SES schools to
describe the growing “nuisance” of technology in the school… rather it was referred to as “technological” bullying

Covert bullying is any type of bullying behavior that includes, but is not limited to, psychological or social violence without the onset of physical violence resulting in physical or intended physical injury. (Jette. 2011) While the majority of lower SES school officials are contending with “cut and dry” incidents of fist fights and blatant physical aggression, the upper SES schools are coming to understand the ramifications of covert bullying violence which is not nearly as transparent- resulting in definition, recognition, and intervention dilemmas.

**Findings of Upper Income Schools (Group B)**

Group B, consisting of Mr. Smith, Mr. Kaiser, and Mr. Nelson (principals at Donovan, Mitchell, and Dillensberg) and Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, and Mrs. Carroll (teachers at Donovan, Mitchell, and Dillensberg) are serving student populations consisting of poverty levels less than 28% and in one case, 24% (non-poverty). Demographically, these schools are 94% to 100% white, exhibiting an obvious lack of diversity. Administrators and teachers at these schools reported a decline in overt bullying behaviors, often struggling to remember any instances of physical violence not only in their personal classroom, but in the entire school. Teachers and administrators at these schools describe the downward trend in physically aggressive student outbursts as “understandable.” The administrations, including school boards, have targeted the plight of aggressive bullying behaviors by pinpointing students exhibiting these behaviors and prescribing thorough evaluative psychiatric and counseling services be put in place for these students and their families. They have also implemented support services for victims and bystanders (and their families) of violent attacks. Teachers and administration
agreed that these measures were prompted by Columbine, Virginia Tech, and similar school catastrophes of the past.

While the upper SES schools are thwarting the outwardly physical bullying within their schools, they voiced grave concerns about the increasingly relentless assault of students via computer technology—specifically social media outlets used to slander, humiliate, isolate, and psychologically damage/abuse peers on a public stage such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, or the use of texting/sexting via cell phone and smart phones. The hindering of covert bullying is infinitely more difficult than the obstruction of outward peer to peer aggression. Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, and Mrs. Carroll described their experience with covert bullying as difficult due to the “sneaky” nature of the actions or lack thereof. When they had discussions with their classrooms regarding bullying, students overwhelmingly responded that, although they were not necessarily “beat up” or physically abused, they had felt bullying due to comments, conversations, and innuendos posted on computers or text messages. The majority of students felt that they were bullied by others at least once in their school life. Students also revealed to Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, and Mrs. Carroll that they more often experienced cases of social isolation which, to the students, was more disturbing than a peer to peer confrontation.

Group B (non-poverty school administrators and teachers) discussed the specific difficulties in countering peer to peer complaints that consisted of out-of-school occurrences. Mr. Kaiser and Mr. Nelson described occasions of student misbehaviors occurring on home computers that forced school officials to react with enhanced bullying definitions in the student handbook. Mr. Smith cited that problems of computer and cell phone use had at one time not been a problem, but recently—within the past five years—could no longer be ignored. Mr. Smith
experienced several situations within the past year that resulted in parent conferences. Mr. Smith was made aware of bullying behaviors by students when two particular children made increasingly aggressive threats on Facebook. In an attempt to confront the situation, he was forced to involve parents whom had not been aware of the ensuing clash. The situation was resolved by administration and parents, however, the same type of incident occurred at Mitchell Elementary school, resulting with law enforcement intervention, prompted by parents. The issue of technology, though not a targeted problem for the lower SES schools, has become a prominent distraction in the upper SES classrooms. Although administrations have enforced the anti-bullying regulations regarding bullying via technology, teachers and administrators alike admit that “catching students in the act” is difficult and often borderline infringement of rights. Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, and Mrs. Carroll allude to the fact that they are not responsible for the behaviors of students while they are under parental supervision… only while they are at school. But, the ever-complicating dynamics of technological bullying is making the partition between school behaviors and home behaviors more opaque than in the past. The discord between parental responsibility and teacher responsibility has become further blurred by the continuing nature of bullying behaviors and the negative impact these covert aggressions are having on students’ school endeavors. Students suffering from the effects of technological bullying, or covert bullying, are apt to demonstrate anxiety, depression, self-injury, and isolation. Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, and Mrs. Carroll reported that students felt that social media outlets were used as a vehicle for the would-be bully to propagate their personal vendetta and generate damaging rumors for the purpose of further socially isolating the victim and deliberately inflicting maximum mental torment. Students reported to them that “there is no escape” from a bully. Students reported that if they were bullied at school, or isolated by a student or group of
students, that it continued at home via computer and texts. Students told teachers that the bullies had “ways” of making life miserable - all of the time. Examples included sending “listserv-style” invites to large groups of students about upcoming events or parties, with a disclaimer at the bottom which included a list of those “not invited.” Students described being anxious about the potential for bullies to take a cell phone picture of them doing something in school that they were not exemplary at, i.e. push-ups and pull-ups in gym class, and posting the picture or video to YouTube with a link to Facebook. Mrs. Wright and Mr. Smith (Donovan Elementary) stated that cell phones were never allowed on school grounds, a rule that was met with disdain by parents who specifically purchased phones for their children to use in case of emergency. Mr. Kaiser and Mrs. Hartwell (Mitchell Elementary) stated they also supported a no cell phone policy, though understood why parents would be upset, especially in the case of latch-key kids. Regardless, they spoke of an instance that a particular student exhibiting covert bullying behaviors took a cell phone picture of another student’s “less than cool” clothing and shoes and posted it on the Facebook - which in turn prompted other students to “comment” on the posting. According to Group B administrators and teachers (non-poverty schools), the participants determined from their personal experience in governing classrooms and schools, that the damages inflicted on victims and bystanders of covert bullying behaviors were as brutal, if not worse, than that of the physical bullying experienced by low SES teachers and administrators.

Group A (poverty schools) and Group B (non-poverty schools) outwardly described the on-going battle to prevent and intervene in both covert and overt bullying situations. There are explicit variances in the two bullying methods, and the behavioral manifestations have been found by this study to be a direct function of socio economic status. In spite of this, Group A
(poverty schools) and Group B (non-poverty schools) expressed additional concern at the
alarmingly high rates of increased female violence among student populations.

**Participants Speak on Female Violence**

There have been arguments relating to the increase of female-female violence which has
not gone overlooked by Group A (poverty) or Group B (non-poverty). Both groups described a
startling account of never-before seen physical and non-physical fights involving two or more
female students. Veteran teachers, those having taught more than ten years, clearly stated that
the incidents involving females has increased. Mrs. Frye (Arvada Elementary- poverty school)
pointed out that female students are appearing more brazen, probably as a result of television and
media. She stated that female students found it necessary and suitable to physically defend
themselves against both physical and non-physical personal attacks. Females who refused to
take part in aggressive behaviors were considered “soft,” or other choice words. Mr. Cole and
Mrs. Williams (Missouri Hill Elementary- poverty school) also agreed that it was common for
females to engage in physically aggressive behaviors, in and out of school. Many students
informed teachers and administrators that this behavior was considered acceptable in their
household and even promoted by parents as a means of “sticking up for yourself” or “getting
someone back.” (Retaliatory violence) Mr. Rollins and Mrs. Haburn (AAA Elementary- poverty
school) stated that female to female violence had always been a problem at their school, but
more troublesome was the female to male violence. Mr. Rollins declared that historically, it was
nearly unheard of a female attack on a male victim; however, he currently had numerous (three)
behavioral demerits from the 2010-2011 school year involving violent physical attacks in which
a female was the perpetrator and the male was the victim; an attack involving a non life-threatening weapon.

Many experts propose that female perpetrators of violence have historically been present, yet the media has, for the first time, focused on and fueled the female violence trend. Shows like “Entertainment Tonight” and “Access Hollywood” go to great lengths to search out unfortunate bullying situations involving female on female violence, paying extra air time to those situations that have been recorded and placed on Facebook or Youtube. Experts argue that this attention to female on female violence is not a result of increased levels of this particular violence, rather, it is the first time in history that the incidents are gaining notoriety due to camera phones and social media outlets. Therefore, the attention makes it appear as though there is an increasing problem of female violence, when in all actuality it is an increase in media exposure. While the debate rages on amongst media, the many participants of this study were certain that the female attacks have increased.

Group A (poverty) and Group B (non-poverty) are of a differing opinion. The veteran teacher in this study ranges from six to over forty years of experience, and the consensus of the twelve participant panel is that, yes, female violence has increased over this decade. Administrators and teachers are unsure of whether or not the media has influenced the increase in female on female or female on male violence, but regardless of the inherent reasoning, all participants agreed that female violence is on the rise. Each participant was able to give at least one example of female violence within the last five years, with some participants capable of citing multiple examples and recurring examples of female violence. Participant attitude was similar across all school settings, in that being female students learned inappropriate behaviors
from their surroundings, mostly home and community environments. Female students of Group B (non-poverty) are expected to act traditionally, in accordance with the white, middle class standards to which they are accustomed. Alternatively, Group A (poverty) female students have very different standards of behavior by which they are expected to follow. The normative behaviors within a household and/or community determine how children, specifically females, respond to violence; if the normative behaviors, or baseline behaviors, are such that female violence is acceptable, then it is the beliefs of school officials that the behaviors are again, a result of economic and cultural expectations. Ultimately, the data illustrated that increased overt female violence was not a function of race, since the increase occurred among poor schools with either 99% Appalachian populations, or a more diverse demographic, rather, female violence increased as socio economic status decreased, thus establishing that the increase in violence among females (gender) is a function of class.

**Participants Speak on Racial Violence**

This is not to say that the cultural and economic norms vary as a function of race, alone. Surprisingly, there is a lack of evidence to establish that race and/or ethnicity serves as a catalyst for increases in either covert or overt bullying. With a twelve participant panel and over 150 years of combined teaching experience, the instances of bullying behaviors based on race were fewer than five. There were outward acts of violence as a result of racial and ethnic differences, but the occurrences were isolated situations. Bullying is a repetitive, deliberate behavior with intent to harm, therefore isolated incidents of violence are not included in this study. On the other hand, there was one anomaly worthy of mention, which occurred at the rural school of Mr. Cole and Mrs. Williams. Although the demographic of the school is 99% white, several years
ago a bi-racial female moved from an urban school to the rural school. Initially, the students were unaccustomed to any race or ethnicity other than white, and the bi-racial student was met with suspicion and avoidance. Within two weeks, the bi-racial female was “ruling the roost” as the teachers termed it. The white students viewed the racial difference as “modern” and “cool” thus allowing for what once was described as tolerance, to morph into acceptance. The bi-racial female became “popular” among classmates, and eventually, yet unfortunately, took on the persona of bully in the school.

Teachers and administrators from both groups determined that students no longer viewed racial and ethnic differences as reason enough to bully. Mrs. Haburn and Mrs. Frye cited instances of African American students bullying each other on the basis of skin color (the depth of pigment- how dark) and complexion. Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hartwell, Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Frye, and Mrs. Williams cited instances of white students bullying each other based on monetary issues and referring to one another as “white trash” or “trailer trash.” The teachers and administrators of both groups accredit the non racial discrimination to the permeation of racial and ethnic acceptance of famous musicians, actors, sports celebrities, etc., as having a positive impact on the manner in which all students view people of differing race and ethnicity.

**Participants Speak on Zero Tolerance Policy**

On the other hand, lower income schools are most likely to implement and strictly enforce the “zero tolerance” policy; thus expelling students for instances of violence, or threats thereof. While upper socio-economic schools do include a zero tolerance policy, either embedded or strategically listed in the school handbook, rarely did the administrators or teachers recall enforcing full-out expulsion as the rule implies. On the other hand, lower income school
administrators and teachers were commended for upholding the literal definition of the “zero tolerance” policy; thus, exacerbating the population of non-compliant black students, or black students expelled from public schools. Teachers from Group A (poverty) felt it was necessary for safety purposes. They also complained of disruptions and disrespectful attitudes and comments. Group A felt that it was best policy and practice to remove students who were infringing on the rights of others by exhibiting the aforementioned misbehaviors through the enforcement of the zero tolerance policy. As a result, this elevated the number of black male students having been eliminated from the student population, therefore reinforcing the notion of institutional violence while sanctioning expulsions that contribute to a disproportionate amount of black student expulsions. Ultimately, the intent of the “zero tolerance” policy- to protect and prevent violence- is supporting an undercurrent of violence that is all too often unrecognizable.

Public School Discomfort

Recently, Tucson, Arizona school systems have banned books written by scholars such as, but not limited to: Paolo Freire, Zinn, Rosales, Shakespeare, Abu-Jamal, Skolnick, Urrea, and so on. The commonality shared among these literary works is that they give accurate portrayals of race, ethnicity, oppression, and civil rights. These literary works share the following themes: Furthermore, they can be closely aligned with Marxist theory, of which has been deemed “unsuitable” and “inflammatory.”

Public school systems are uncomfortable and unwilling to address the underlying causes of varying behavioral manifestations of bullying behaviors in the school setting. By ignoring the rudimentary societal causes, it will be infinitely more difficult to combat the problems. The result will continue to be punitive rather than preventative measures.
Chapter 5: Analysis of Findings

The results chronicle the similarities and differences among teachers and administrators serving diverse populations and how they perceive and respond to bullying. Teachers and administrators are experiencing some of the same disturbing trends, yet strategizing in drastically diverse manners in an attempt to accomplish the goal of ceasing bullying behaviors. The goal of the study was to understand the perspectives of teachers and administrators accommodating diverse student populations that are experiencing bullying in and out of the school setting. By initiating discourse with in-service teachers and administrators, it was possible to deconstruct the definition of bullying- which first and foremost- is the most important element in creating effective, research-based methods of combating the problem. The investigation revealed that teachers and administrators are understanding bullying and the effects of the student population, very differently. While some teachers incorporated all types of bullying, such as technological and texting violence, other teachers felt that this problem was a moot issue, and as a result did not address the issue in the classroom. Teachers and administrators commonly reflected that the problems occurring with violence and bullying in their school setting was a result of lack of supervision, or community violence that was acting as a model of behavior for students. Parental involvement was a major factor, according to all of the teachers and administrators. The involvement, or lack thereof, could be partially to blame for recurring violence, and a lack of coping skills for the bully, victim, and bystander. The obvious finding that supports the hypothesis, is that of socio-economic status contributing to the method and nature of bullying incidents. Clearly, the upper economic schools were not experiencing blatant physical violence at the rate and duration commonly experienced by lower economic schools. While the lower economic schools experienced higher levels of physical altercations/bullying, they did not report
experiencing high levels of technological bullying as the upper economic schools reported. Also noteworthy, is the increase in female violence reported by all subjects. Although this one factor could potentially generate another study, it is an important factor that contributes to the overall increase in both covert and blatant bullying behavior. Lastly, expected results in the area of racial bullying were surprisingly reported to be a non-factor with the exception of a few isolated incidents. The initial expectation was that the lower socio-economic schools would rate physical/blatant bullying behaviors higher, with a higher demographic of black students. Although this was true in most cases, the rate of physical/blatant bullying behaviors was reported equally in the lower socio-economic, Appalachian/majority white schools as well. This factor equates the fact of physical violence/bullying with socio-economic status, specifically lower, rather than with racial or gender issues.

The complexity of bullying via technology is perplexing to teachers and administrators. The teachers reported that the ramifications of students activity on social media outlets such as Facebook and MySpace has increased tension and bullying among student populations in the higher SES schools. Although it has not yet affected the lower SES schools at the same rate as the upper SES, teachers and administrators view the unsupervised usage of technology in the home as a major contributing factor, or perhaps the number one mode of covert bullying behavior. The anti-social behaviors occurring via computers, cell phones, Ipods is seriously impeding the learning environment. As a safeguard to teachers and administrators, the school boards of many of the schools have placed clauses in student handbooks requiring students to sign technology agreements or waivers. Administrators have explained this movement as a “contract” between student and school in an attempt to promote positive behaviors that reflect the school’s mission of integrity in and out of the classroom.
There have been numerous attempts to construct an effective method for teachers and administrators to use in the school setting to thwart bullying behaviors. Although many of these methods focus on the actual bully and the behavior of the perpetrator, few emphasize the bystander, which can be the most integral element of the situation. There must be a paradigm shift that focuses on prevention. Currently, teachers and administrators are acting punitively—this is an understandable reaction since parents of victims are insisting on retribution for their child. However, it is imperative that anti-bullying campaigns are designed for the specific needs and dynamics of each school rather than addressing generalized behaviors of students across all cultures, SES, and racial backgrounds. The “one-size-fits-all” bullying solutions are not working, nor are they equipped to resolve the issues generated by covert bullying in the technology era. In order to act in accordance with state and federal mandates, administrators are apt to establish the “one-size-fits-all” bullying solution in order to relieve pressure from other administrators and school boards. The requirement to implement an anti-bullying campaign in schools by embedding the topic into general content is overwhelming to teachers and administrators who are already buckling under pressure to improve standardized test scores. Therefore, an easy “fix” is to purchase one of the bullying prevention programs. The bullying prevention programs that are currently being offered may be initially effective, but have proven no long-lasting positive outcomes. Teacher education programs should place intense emphasis on socio-cultural foundations and require future teachers to have a command of history, philosophy, and social elements of schooling and society. Peace-building strategies are often overlooked, or undermined by false theories in areas of multi-cultural education and positive school climate. Unless preventative, peace building strategies are embedded into the educational process, legislators and administrators will continue to fight battles of school violence without
determining and targeting the underlying causes; ineffectively “placing a band-aid on a gunshot wound.”

In his book, “When Work Disappears,” William Julius Wilson goes on to delineate programs for ameliorating the underlying problems of the “underclass” which go far beyond school based programs. In specifically addressing the prevention of violence among adolescent inner city youth, Deborah Prothrow-Stith also discusses antecedents of violence which are beyond the scope of educational policies.

**Patterns of Discrimination by Class**

Data analysis revealed emerging patterns among the participants of this study. Obviously, teachers and administrators all responded unanimously that the policies in place at their school were not effective in stopping bullying behaviors and acts of aggression and or violence via physical or covert means.

Teachers and administrators at the lower SES schools stated that the rates of bullying had decreased, in particularly with Teacher D and administrator E, both urban schools and majority African American. However, upon further investigation it was revealed that both schools implemented a zero tolerance policy that was meticulously enforced. The policy requires expulsion of violent students, thus increasing these rates- almost always black males. Administrators and teachers claimed exhaustion from attempting to manage behaviors in order to keep students from being expelled. Due to the necessity to improve school attendance, thus improving standardized test scores, administrators were hesitant to expel or out-of-school suspend students. They preferred in school suspension, referred to as ACP. The student is placed in lock down- isolated from the rest of the student body- and assigned homework from the days’ classes. Students were monitored and “forced” to complete work correctly. Therefore,
the school does not receive penalties for lack of classroom management, as judged by the number of expulsions/suspensions by the state government. However, the administrator and teacher did acknowledge that the expulsion rates were higher for their school than those of any suburban or upper-class school.

On the contrary, the upper socio economic schools (majority white student populations) reported that they did, in fact, publish a student handbook that included zero tolerance policies regarding drugs, weapons, and violence. Administrators and teachers declared that it was extremely rare—less than once a year—that “such extreme measures were necessary to resolve conflicts.” When asked to expound on this anomaly, participants explained that it is usually not necessary to carry out such punitive consequences because once parental involvement in the situation was established, the families and the schools were able to “work it out.” Sometimes, school psychologists or counselors could assist parents in promoting healthier choices. And, as the explanation continued, their school really didn’t have problems with extreme violence. The worst case scenarios were dealing with social isolation, face book issues, texting…”things of that nature.” Occasional fights resulted in detentions, Friday schools, elimination from school functions such as field trips and sporting events.

**Implications for Institutional Racism**

As recently as 2008, the dropout rate was estimated at 8% of individuals ages 16 to 24 either enrolled in school or without their diplomas/GEDs. When deconstructed by race, the estimated dropout rates were 4.8% for whites, 9.9% for African Americans, and 18.3% for Latinos. The dropout rates for American Indians age 16 to 24 were hovering at 15%. These rates increased approximately 3% based on two year prior statistics, and were expected to
continue to increase. Gender differences were also pervasive. Overall, males dropout more frequently than females, 8.5% to 7.5%. This difference was markedly notable for Latinos, 19.9% male to 16.7% female. (American Psychological Association, 2008) Poverty had the strongest correlation with high school dropout rates: in 2007-2008, the National Center for Educational Studies estimated that dropout rates for students living in lowest quartile of family income were more than seven times higher than those of students in the highest family quartile to drop out of high school- 16.4% to 2.2%. Further research demonstrated an increased likelihood of drop out for students living in poverty stricken communities. These drop out rates particularly correlate with high poverty rates, poor school attendance, poor academic achievement, grade retention, and forced/non-forced disengagement from school. Furthermore, African American students in particular are disciplined or suspended/expelled at disproportionate rates for reasons that include lack of teacher training in areas of classroom management or culturally competent practices, racial stereo-typing, and failing to engage non-white students. Children of color that struggle academically or act out have commonly been met with police intervention, suspensions, expulsions and “pushed-out” rather than receiving appropriate academic intervention in schools of poor quality.

Casella (2001) began research in the areas of school violence and community violence. Casella found that crime in neighborhoods surrounding schools has been identified as a large contributor to violence in schools. Violence from the outside is being brought in to the classrooms. Secondly, classroom violence is often attributed to over crowding, such is the case in economically disadvantaged school systems. Thirdly, when school administrators do not consistently enforce school policies between racial groups, violence is often a manifestation. Lastly, as a result of the prior findings, Casella determined that discipline procedures established
in many schools are in fact, discriminatory. In addition, minority students are more likely to be suspended/expelled from schools for non-violent offenses such as class disruption, threats, or disrespect to teachers. (Fenning and Rose, 2007) As a result, Casella continued examination of the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies among urban students. The findings revealed that the policy promotes punishments of zero tolerance, i.e. expulsion, for those students needing the most assistance- the poor, underachieving, socially isolated students coming from violent homes and neighborhoods, inevitably Latino and African American students.

Experts are also stating that exclusive discipline has negative side effects that cannot be ignored. Stinchcomb, Bazemore, and Riestenberg (2006) argue that “increasingly well-documented side effects of this remedy may be worse that the cure.” They review the work of Costenbader and Markson (1998) who found that the side effects of in-school and out-of-school suspension were harmful. They contend that students in these contexts exhibited increases in socio-emotional behavioral issues, such as withdrawal and avoidance of school staff and stigmatization among peers, and decreased academic performance. Suspensions, in essence, did more harm than good.

These policies appear to be widespread throughout American schools. A lack of a single definition of zero tolerance makes it difficult to accurately estimate how prevalent the policies may be and with how much conviction they are carried through. Zero tolerance policies assume that removing students who engage in disruptive behavior will deter others from disruption (Ewing, 2000) and create improved climate for those students who remain. (Public Agenda, 2004.) The National Center for Educational Statistics (2004) reviewed data that indicated school violence and disruptions have remained stable since the widespread implementing of zero tolerance policies. In fact, data shows that increased suspensions and expulsions had the
opposite effect. Schools with higher rates of school suspensions/expulsions appeared to have less satisfactory ratings of school climate.

Research shows (Constenberg and Markson, 1998; Kaeser, 1979; McCarthy and Hoge, 1987; McFadden, Marsh, Price and Hwang, 1992; Raffaele-Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson, 2002; Wu, et.al., 2002;) that such disproportionality is not due entirely to economic disadvantage, nor are there any data supporting the assumption that African American students exhibit higher rates of disruption or violence that would warrant higher rates of discipline. Rather, African American students may be disciplined more severely for less serious or more subjective reasons. This being due to a lack of teacher preparedness, lack of classroom management techniques, and lack of training in culturally competent practices and racial stereotyping—it is quicker, and less hassle to expel, than to prevent and intervene.

Teachers of inner city schools are more reluctant to intervene when witnessing bullying (Junoven et al., 2003) than teachers in suburban schools due to low levels of confidence (Walter et al., 2006). Although students in several studies about low income neighborhoods and schools (Cunningham and Henggeler, 2001; Qi and Kaiser, 2003; Talbott, Celinska, Simpson, and Coe, 2002) have identified major risks and specific protective factors of youth violence, little has been accomplished in the realm of teacher preparedness and teacher responses. Inner city students were rated as highly aggressive with significant deficits in academic and social skills (Atkins et al., 2002). School officials respond to aggressive behaviors, direct bullying and physical fights by suspension or expulsion only. Therefore, rates are elevated among the African American demographic. (Talbott et al., 2002). In this same study, teachers were adamant that mental health supports were needed in the schools, as well as better teacher education that
prepares instructors for how to successfully deal with classroom disruptions, aggression, violent outbursts and increasing teacher confidence.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program fails to address the needs of poverty schools and their surrounding neighborhoods, while focusing primarily on middle-class suburban type schools. Because Olweusn focuses primarily on student, classroom, and school- with additional parental supports, Olweus fails to consider struggles of the poor and under classes. Single-parent households often lack supervision. Parenting styles differ drastically from those of white suburban parents. Harsh discipline is likely to promote aggression in children, still, parents are more likely to employ this type in lower SES than higher SES.

Parental disconnect, whatever the reason, is a contributing factor to increased expulsion rates due to in-school violence. Unless parents are extremely active, it is unlikely that they will be aware of options in instances of violence or bullying (Ender, 2009). Zero tolerance policies also play a role in driving teachers out of the profession, since evidence shows that the policy is clearly ineffective and damaging (Brownstein, 2009). According to the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, currently African American students are suspended at nearly three times the rate and expelled at 3.5 times the rate of white students (Brownstein, 2009). It is evident that zero tolerance policies are perpetuating inequality within the American educational institution and are ineffective in serving the needs of under-privileged students.

Administrators and policymakers are given the precarious assignment of implementing a program that is culturally diverse, sensitive to the needs of exceptional students, and accessible to the entire school population. Administrators and legislators must be aware of the concerns of
the parents and students they are serving. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) recommends the following:

- Widely publicize anti-harassment statements and procedures for handling discrimination complaints
- Provide training for staff and students to recognize and handle potential harassment
- Counsel both the victim and the bully
- Implement monitoring programs
- Regularly assess and monitor harassment policies and procedures (2006)

The design, implementation, and review of anti-bullying strategies are a key component of sustained success in a school environment. The success is invariably dependent on the adoption of a system by all involved- students, parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and community.
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, it is essential that bullying behaviors are targeted at a very early age, preferably pre-kindergarten thru second grade. The need to establish bullying as “not cool” with these youngsters will prevent bystanders from acting as bullies by omission. Bystanders, who are often overlooked, are the most powerful weapons in targeting bullying in the school setting. When a negative affect about bullying is established as a social norm among the school population, students acting as bystanders are likely to report and not tolerate bullying behaviors by a peer. Early intervention is crucial, since it is evident that bullying behaviors peak during the middle school years. Once bullying has been established as a pervasive problem among the student body, the majority of efforts to stop behaviors are punitive, like “putting a band-aid on a gunshot wound.” Therefore, students who have been trained from early childhood to regard bullying behaviors whether blatant or covert, as unacceptable are the best method for stopping bullying. The behaviors specific to each school environment must be clearly defined and made age-appropriate so as to ensure children are capable of recognizing these undesirable actions. Children must also be instructed in the area of reporting peer misbehaviors. Students need to be aware of what to look for, how to report incidents, and to whom they should report. Most importantly, children should be positively reinforced for their personal initiative. Ultimately, other students will learn vicariously through the actions of other individuals. When coupled with parental and community initiatives to promote this early and strategic intervention style, the anti-bullying campaigns of the future will have little need for punitive actions.

These are very specific designs that have the potential for effectiveness, but only when the school systems have properly addressed the notion that a much larger, pervasive problem is at fault. The notion that institutional violence is a legitimate cause for frustration cannot be
disputed. Students that are assigned a “one size fits all” anti-bullying/prevention plan often find these ineffective strategies offensive. Many students have difficulty pinpointing their frustrations, but the reality is prevention plans such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Plan are aimed to stop violence and bullying among middle class students. The middle class students and the middle class problems are drastically different from the poor and urban school issues. There is the potential to exacerbate the problems of urban school children when enforcing the middle class prevention plan. These plans, as previously discussed, often incorporate zero tolerance policies. Again, zero-tolerance policies have been found to unfairly isolate and impede the academic growth of African American, particularly male, students by sanctioning school expulsions through the misuse of the bullying definition. In addition, while middle and upper class students enjoy bargaining powers and parental intervention with school officials when misbehaviors have occurred, the lower SES students are often unsupported by parents and unable to refute the inconsistency of bullying definitions and the manipulation of these definitions as a means of expelling students in accordance with the zero-tolerance policies. It is evident that the implementation of the “one size fits all” bullying prevention plans that incorporate zero tolerance can be designated ineffective and damaging.

The historical dominance of public education by the bureaucratic model Katz 1975…promotes uniform, “one size fits all” solutions to problems, which have as their primary objective, protection from liability. In the case of bullying, this is promoted by the seminal work of Olweus who, along with Stan Davis, views bullying as a global problem occurring at similar rates, duration, and frequency around the world. In contrast, the major contribution of the present study is to expand the conceptual framework of bullying to recognize variations
introduced by recognition of the input of variables including socio-economic status, institutional racism, and gender.
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Appendix A

A multitude of confirmed bullying cases have culminated with fatal school attacks. The infamous Columbine School shooting tragedy on April 20, 1999, prompted the most explosive anti-violence campaign in United States school history. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, two seniors at Columbine High School embarked on a massacre fueled by vengeance and vindication that left twelve students and one teacher dead. Twenty-four others were injured; Harris and Klebold committed suicide after an hour long rampage later determined to be the result of bullying and obvious mental illness.²⁰

²⁰ Columbine Massacre-1900s History: history1900s.about.com/od/famouscrimesscandals/a/columbine.htm
Appendix B

The deadliest school shooting occurred on the Virginia Tech campus on April 17, 2007. Seung-Hui Cho, a senior English major at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University had been previously diagnosed with a severe anxiety disorder. On April 17, 2007, Cho, armed with two handguns, set out on a killing spree that left thirty-two dead and many others injured. Cho committed suicide, leaving behind a suicide letter that included comments such as “You forced me into a corner and gave me only one option… You just loved to crucify me… You loved inducing cancer in my head… terror in my heart and ripping my soul all this time.” Cho had previously placed blame in a suicide note on “deceitful charlatans” and “rich kids.” Cho continued to place blame for his personal downfalls and shortcomings on the wealthy, likening himself to a savior of the poor, downtrodden, oppressed, and rejected. 21

Appendix C

Heath High School, in West Paducah, Kentucky, experienced the horror of school shootings on December 1, 1997 when Michael Carneal, fourteen years of age, opened fire on a school prayer circle. Carneal claimed that he was the victim of a school bully, and as a result, shot and killed three students and injured five others. 22

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22 Missy Jenkins- I Choose to be Happy [www.missyjenkins.com](http://www.missyjenkins.com) and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_shooting
Appendix D

On July 3, 2009, after sending a nude picture to a boyfriend, high school student Jessica Logan was bombarded with internet responses. Although the picture was meant for the eyes of only one boy, the picture escaped onto the internet and humiliation and taunting quickly followed. Logan hanged herself in her bedroom on July 3, 2009 as a result of victimization via electronic media.23

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23 “Her Teen Committed Suicide over ‘Sexting’” Today Parenting: MSN/MSNBC.com
Appendix E

Ryan Halligan, age 13, a student at Hiawatha Elementary School in Poughkeepsie, New York, did not want to go to school. He complained to his parents of relentless bullying attacks for his lack of good grades and his lack of athleticism. Ryan endured the bullying for several years, beginning in the fifth grade. At the beginning of eighth grade, after Ryan had attempted to “fight” his way out of the seventh grade turmoil, the bullies were back with a vengeance. This time, bullies were equipped with online access and it was at this point, Ryan committed suicide on October 7, 2003.24

24 “Ryan’s Story Presentation” www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org
Appendix F

Not all bullying situations are fatal. In the case of Tatum Bass, every asset of popularity appeared in place. She was a resident student at Miss Porter’s School, a preparatory boarding school in Connecticut that boasts of alumni rosters including women such as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Gloria Vanderbilt, Dorothy Walker Bush, and many others. Bass was pretty, popular, and athletic. Tatum, at the time a senior, had undergone the typical hazing rituals targeting juniors, sophomores, and freshmen. She had been elected to the Nova Nine, the student government organization in charge of social gatherings. It was not until she suggested that the school allow area high school guests be invited to the Miss Porter’s Prom that she was attacked. The result was a bombardment of emails, text messages, and Facebook entries stating Miss Bass was “stupid,” “retarded,” and threats of a boycott due to her negligence. Bass returned to her room on several occasions to find her clothes and belongings strewn on the floor and a “for rent” sign posted on her bed. As a result, Bass skipped classes and remained in her room. She admitted to few transgressions- once cheating on an art history test and skipping a class. Punishment from the exclusive preparatory school, “Miss Porter’s School” was swift and just. However, a secret society of girls, nicknamed after a 16th century Russian torture squad, commandeered matters into their own hands. They continued harassment until Bass was forced to leave the school. A lawsuit ensued, claiming that the necessary requirements could not be met, therefore hindering Miss Bass’ abilities to pursue college application processes. It is currently unresolved.25