

Williams County School District #8 Bullying Prevention Program

Bullying Solutions Manual is now available in each school office to the public: Universal and Individual Strategies takes a multi-tiered approach to bullying, providing both universal procedures designed to prevent bullying and ensure effective systematic responses to bullying concerns, and targeted interventions for small groups and individuals who perpetrate bullying or who are frequently targeted.

The book is divided into two main parts—strategies that can be used schoolwide (Part A) and strategies that can be used with individuals or small groups (Part B). The strategies are designed to help schools develop a plan to address factors contributing to a student’s chronic bullying behavior.

The complexities and contributing factors related to bullying can make it difficult to address. Research has yet to conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of specific bullying prevention or intervention programs. Therefore, the procedures in *Bullying Solutions: Universal and Individual Strategies* reflect best-practice research from:

- Behavioral studies on addressing schoolwide climate and safety
- Behavioral studies that address similar motivating functions for individuals with problematic behavior
- Studies that address factors shown to improve school connectedness
- Preliminary findings from research on prevention and intervention with bullying concerns

Research is more definitive on the effects of bullying. Studies indicate that all students involved in bullying are at increased risk of negative outcomes:

- Students who are bullied may experience increased levels of insecurity, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, sadness, and loneliness. They may also lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed, face increased difficulty in school that may lead to dropout, and experience more physical and mental health complaints and symptoms (Boivin, Hymel, & Bukowski, 1995; Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005; McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015).
- Students who bully others have increased likelihood of fighting, dropping out of school, and engaging in delinquent activities, alcohol and drug abuse, and early sexual activity (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Pepler et al., 2006; Sourander et al., 2006).
- Bystanders are at an increased risk of absenteeism and truancy, alcohol and drug use, and depression, anxiety, and other health problems (Carney, Jacob, & Hazler, 2011; Nishina & Juvonen, 2005; Salmivalli, 2010).

Research also indicates that bullying problems exist not in isolation but as part of larger concerns such as school climate, family and community environment and supports, peer ecology, and many other factors (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003; Swearer & Doll, 2001). Therefore, narrow approaches to intervention, such as those focused purely on consequences (e.g., zero-tolerance approaches) or on bystander intervention alone, are likely to have limited, if any, effect. Preventing and intervening with bullying problems must be part of a comprehensive, systematic approach that works to understand and address all of the factors that contribute to bullying behavior in a school.