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# Long Island Education Review

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## LONG ISLAND'S FIRST PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH JOURNAL FOR EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

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- ◆ Book Reviews - Making the Most of College  
Zero Tolerance  
The Truth About Testing

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**For the December issue, all submissions must arrive by September 1, 2002.**

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### About SCOPE

SCOPE is the Suffolk County Organization for the Promotion of Education. It is a not-for-profit, private, voluntary organization permanently chartered by the New York State Board of Regents to provide service to school districts. Founded in 1964 by school superintendents, it is a cooperative venture for sharing resources to deal with common concerns. It is governed by a Board of Directors of school superintendents and college representatives and serves as a regional School Study Council and School Board Institute.

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## Editor's Perspective

As this issue comes to press in June of 2002, dialogues around the world seem to be emerging that may lead to peace in several conflict-laden lands. We hope this is true. Certainly, the purpose of this publication is to advance the dialogue among educators and the communities they serve so that all learning environments may connect learners, mentors and teachers.



We are very proud to have Commissioner Richard Mills open this issue with his view of the schools and their relationship to the New York State Regents Reforms. In addition, we have important reports about bullying and teasing behavior in our elementary and secondary schools to share with the help of Laurie Mandel and Cindy Pierce Lee who offer insights into the world of children and teenagers at school. Jerrold Stein gives us another look into the college campus and its environment for young adults. Mary Sweeney takes us behind the hospital walls to interview nurses about diabetic education for patients. These studies offer unique information about education related environments that we rarely observe.

Many questions have been posed about what makes good schools. In this issue, we present authors who care about the quality of our public schools and the dialogue to improve them. Richard Bernato compares Blue Ribbon Schools with Non Blue Ribbon Schools to identify the characteristics that might be unique to award winning Blue Ribbon Schools. Questions abound about technology in schools. Gail Borruso examines the role of principals in technology applications and Steve Farenga, Beverly Joyce and Daniel Ness ask what benefit technology has brought to students.

In each case, we witness researchers and practitioners who share profound concerns for the well being of students and other learners contributing to the informed dialogue we need to advance learning in every social setting.

We invite you to participate in the conversation of reform and service within schools, colleges and other social agencies by sharing your research and insights with us. If you have an interesting book, join the scholars in this issue like Myrka Gonzalez, James Brucia and Jerrold Stein and review a book for us.

Most of all, keep hope alive within your self and within others.

*Robert J. Manley*

Editor

## **Future Themes for this publication:**

**December 2002:**  
Diversity and School Success

**June 2003:**  
School Governance

**December 2003:**  
Teaching and Learning

## Seeing a School's Future in Good Practice

- By Commissioner Richard Mills

The ground rules for the school visit were simple. I wouldn't glance into every classroom and there would be no tour. I wanted to spend enough time in a few classrooms to really understand a school and the teachers, the students, and the leader's work.

"So what is going on here?" I asked. "Our focus is literacy," said the principal; "Let's see a kindergarten." She is in her second year as a principal in an urban school that is not yet meeting standards in mathematics or English. She and the staff have initiated many good practices that should guide the way to a bright future for the students. In the kindergarten class, the teacher read a book to very attentive children.



"What might happen next," she asked. "How do you think she (the girl in the story) felt then?" On and on the questioning went, and somehow the teacher elicited full sentence answers from most of the children. Just as the students reached the end of their attention span, the teacher broke off and used the story line to assign the students a task involving the creation of a chart. The pace was relaxed, but a lot happened in this class: new words, listening, and doing. One could see that an urgent desire to read was growing among the children. This didn't happen by accident. The schedule that guided this splendid class segment was on the outside of the door – so parents and colleagues could see the process.

We moved on to a first grade class in the process of writing compositions. Drafts covered small tables surrounded by children. One child approached us to show his story that was several pages in length.

"Is that word spelled correctly?" I asked him. He borrowed my pen and carefully fixed the problem on his own. Then, we read his story together. We shared a sense of satisfaction at the end of the story. My visit took place on a Wednesday, the day everyone brought a book to lunch.

"Do you read as many as 25 books a year?" I asked one table of boys. "Way more than that!" was the consensus. I asked to see the library. This elementary school

actually had a librarian. I couldn't talk to her at the time we entered the library because she was reading to a group of sixth graders in the corner.

The principal wasn't exaggerating when she talked about focus. It takes a clear vision and relentless effort to create a culture that makes readers of all children at an early age. In this school, curriculum, professional practice, and student learning were evolving along a deliberate pathway, a route that the Board of Regents has outlined with its public policies.

Over the last several years, the Regents built a policy framework to support this kind of effort. Recall the elements:

Standards define what students should know and be able to do. The Regents listened to thousands of citizens before they decided to promulgate new standards. The tests – not only Regents exams but several approved alternatives – measure or certify achievement of the standards. Two additional purposes of testing are to hold schools, districts, and the whole state education system accountable for student achievement and to evaluate students' preparation to achieve at the next level of schooling.

Curriculum guides outline in general terms the scope of material that students should understand in order to meet the standards. These guides are not grade by grade descriptors. They are not intended to be detailed curricula. They offer professional guidance to educators.

Graduation requirements ensure that all students pass at least 22 credits in a rigorous curriculum.

Standards for teachers ensure that teachers know the subject they will teach, understand how children learn and grow, and stay current in their field.

Accountability systems provide information to the public and parents about student achievement in relation to the standards, and identify schools as meeting or exceeding standards, below standards, or farthest from standards.

Academic intervention services require school districts to provide extra help to students who are not yet meeting the standards. One approach was not specified. Rather, the Regents provided a lengthy question and answer format intended to give schools wide latitude.

State aid proposals to the Executive and Legislature are intended to compensate for districts with varying levels of financial capacity to provide an education that enables students to meet the standards.

We are far from done. What are the challenges? They are obvious to everyone engaged in this work: We have to close the gaps in student achievement – the gaps between the standards and current performance. A certified teacher in every class, well-prepared leaders, and help for every child to meet the standards are needed. And we must do this in spite of uncertain finances. Is this difficult? Yes, but it's a task within the capacity of the leaders I have seen across New York.

The teacher shortage is with us now, and in every part of the state. CUNY, SUNY, and the Independent Colleges have stepped up to higher Regents requirements for teacher education. District Superintendents have engaged the college and university presidents to strengthen local relationships. The alternative certification route has attracted thousands, and now those programs are appearing in several parts of the state. The Regents seek \$28 million to strengthen that capacity. This is the bottom line: we see people every day who should become teachers. We must recruit them one by one. And then we must make sure that they learn the reliable practices that can be seen in any improving school.

How do we intend to transform a school? Start with the principal. A district that tolerates incompetence and non-performance at the principal's level has chosen the path of micro-management from a distance. It won't work for the children. Last year, superintendents and district superintendents demonstrated that many people want to lead. They introduced me to 1700 aspiring leaders across New York State. A new approach to leadership education is emerging in this state and it melds the best of theory and the best of practical tradecraft. The aspiring leaders whom we met expect to become the best-educated class of school leaders there ever was. It's up to us to make it so.

It would be difficult to do this in good times, but we serve now in uncertain times. Everyone in school leadership must describe the need to legislators in plain words. At the same time, we owe it to the children to listen to those among us who led schools during the last economic downturn. They protected the core programs and they protected the children. As many of them told us at the 2002 mid-winter conference of school superintendents, hard times are temporary. What isn't temporary is the need to educate all children to higher standards. That is an ancient task in New York and our duty now.

Richard Mills is Commissioner of Education for New York State.



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# Study of High Involvement Behavior among Shared Decision Teams in Long Island Elementary Blue Ribbon and Non-Blue Ribbon Schools

- By Richard F. Bernato, Ed.D.



## **ABSTRACT**

This study compared the extent to which the factors of Wohlstetter and Mohrman's High Involvement Management model of shared decision making were present in the shared decision making practices of five Long Island, New York Blue Ribbon elementary schools and in five Long Island, New York Non-Blue Ribbon elementary schools. A survey of forty-seven questions asked shared decision-making team members of each school type to describe their perceptions of these seven elements: power, knowledge, information, leadership, instructional guidance, resources, and rewards. A factor analysis revealed that these seven elements were not present. Instead three elements emerged. These were Organizational-Structure, Communications, and School-Community Relationships. ANOVAs and Chi-Square analyses revealed that Blue Ribbon Schools in this study practiced those activities associated with Organizational-Structure to a greater extent than Non-Blue Ribbon schools. It also revealed that Non-Blue Ribbon schools in this study practiced those activities associated with School-Community Relationships to a greater extent than Blue Ribbon schools. Neither school type appeared to practice those activities specifically associated with shared decision making to a significant extent.

## **Introduction**

America's recent dissatisfaction with its schools is traceable to the Sputnik era, when our collective dismay for falling behind in the space race caused some commentators to blame our educational system. In the Reagan era, the national committee authoring *A Nation at Risk* declared our schools in crisis. In the 1990's, there were many attempts at school reform. Some focused on the school; others attempted to reengineer entire school systems. School vouchers, home schooling, national and state standards, high stakes testing programs, and charter schools represent some of these initiatives. School reformers have also sought to recognize exemplary schools for others to emulate such as Edmonds' Effective Schools and the Federal Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence.

Shared decision making in school based management teams has been touted as a successful reform alternative (Drury, 1999). By decentralizing authority and increasing responsibility to a school's stakeholders, reformers hoped to improve schools.

In an age of democratization, shared decision-making in school-based management was popularly embraced. Authority figures throughout America lost their perceived right to decide for others as diverse groups challenged decisions others formerly made for them. The democratization of education has been evolutionary, and administrators lead the way as they include more input from teachers, staff, and parents in their approaches to shared decision making. By the early 90's many forms of shared decision-making in schools were operating across the country (David, 1995). New York instituted its shared decision making system under Commissioner's Regulation 100.11, A New Compact for Learning, in 1994, under the leadership and direction of Commissioner of Education, Thomas Sobol.

Research in the early nineties did not demonstrate that shared decision-making raised student achievement (Murphy & Beck, 1995). Drury (1999) identified a variety of reasons for this apparent failure to raise student achievement: political and institutional restraints, limitations on authority, lack of trained leadership, deficiencies in crucial resources – information, knowledge, rewards, and a lack of focus on achievement. In addition, Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1996) pointed out that shared decision making often fails to affect learning because it is viewed as an end in itself rather than as a process by which schools can improve themselves. Wohlstetter adapted Edward E. Lawler's research about high involvement of workers by applying his model of power, knowledge, information, and rewards and adding three additional factors that should exist in schools in order for shared decision making practices to be effective: leadership, instructional guidance, and resources. Her research about the presence of "restructuring" and "struggling" schools appeared to

demonstrate the presence of these factors in models of restructuring schools (Wohlstetter, 1997).

## Methodology

Shared decision making has been considered a factor that distinguishes schools as worthy of Blue Ribbon recognition. For example, there are eight criteria for Blue Ribbon Schools. The seventh criterion specifically addresses school, family, and community partnerships (Marske, p.12).

This study sought to use the Wohlstetter-Mohrman model of high involvement and shared decision making to compare the perceptions of stakeholder members of shared decision making teams in Blue Ribbon and Non-Blue Ribbon schools. A factor analysis performed on the survey data revealed that the intended seven original factors were not replicated in the data from the schools studied. New factors were identified as a result of a data reduction statistical procedure. These factors were: Organizational-Structure, Communications, and School-Community Relationships.

Organizational-Structure was defined as those aspects of high involvement behaviors that reflect knowledge about how schools operate, principals' leadership, and the schools' adherence to a strongly defined curriculum. It also consisted of stakeholders' perceptions of the degree to which schools set a mission statement and goals, shared a common understanding of the instructional direction of the school, used

district and state frameworks to guide their curricula, and the strength of leadership principals play in the schools.

Communications addressed issues of information and communication from the school to stakeholders. This factor also represented how information about the school's activities, performance, and goals were disseminated to all school stakeholders.

School – Community Relationships addressed how a school interacts with its community stakeholders. Examples of this factor include whether a school's shared decision making team seeks and obtains business partnerships and grants, surveys its community for input, exerts influence on budget and personnel, extensively involves parents and students, and uses reward systems.

## Subjects

This study divided ten schools into two groups. The first group consisted of five award winning Blue Ribbon schools. The second group consisted of five similar schools that had not sought nor been recognized as Blue Ribbon schools. The respondents were the stakeholder members of the shared decision making teams in each school that agreed to participate in the study. For Blue Ribbon schools, there were thirty-eight respondents and thirty-three for Non Blue Ribbon schools who represented parents, teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff.

**Table 1: Mean Scores for Involvement in Shared Decision Making Between Two Types of Schools**

	<b>BLUE RIBBON STAKEHOLDERS</b>	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	<b>NON BLUE RIBBON STAKEHOLDERS</b>	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	ALL	3.11	.42	ALL	2.88	.51
	PARENTS	3.08	.19	PARENTS	3.06	.35
	TEACHERS	3.08	.44	TEACHERS	2.78	.61
	ADMINS.	3.43	.65	ADMINS.	3.05	.34
COMMUNICATIONS	STAFF MEMBERS	2.96	.39	STAFF MEMBERS	2.69	.65
	ALL	2.47	.63	ALL	2.53	.58
	PARENTS	2.15	.54	PARENTS	2.52	.43
	TEACHERS	2.43	.70	TEACHERS	2.53	.73
SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	ADMINS.	2.83	.66	ADMINS.	2.46	.38
	STAFF MEMBERS	2.66		STAFF MEMBERS	2.64	.51
	ALL	1.99	.32	ALL	2.35	.61
	PARENTS	2.02	.50	PARENTS	2.25	.74
	TEACHERS	1.95	.29	TEACHERS	2.32	.63
	ADMINISTRATORS	2.07	.12	ADMINS.	2.3	.51
	STAFF MEMBERS	2.03	.27	STAFF MEMBERS	2.43	.75

## Survey and Description of the Questionnaire

A survey instrument was adapted from Wohlstetter and Mohrman's model and employed a Likert type scale, one through four. There were forty-seven-questions in the survey that offered each respondent four choices: A one indicated "not at all". A two indicated "to some extent". A three indicated "to a large, but not total extent". A four indicated "to a maximum extent". Surveys were mailed to each elementary building principal. All stakeholder members of the shared decision-making teams completed the survey, and sealed it in an envelope that was returned to the principal.

## Results

This study's three High Involvement Management factors that emerged as a result of factor analysis appear to exist in varying degrees in the Blue Ribbon Schools that were studied. In the Blue Ribbon schools, the Organizational-Structure factor appears more frequently than Communications and School-Community Relationships factors. The mean for all stakeholders for the Organizational-Structure factor was 3.11 on a 4.0 scale.

The mean for all Blue Ribbon stakeholders for the Communications factor was 2.47. All stakeholder respondents reported a mean that was between to "some extent" and "a large but not total extent."

The mean for all Blue Ribbon stakeholders for the School-Community Relationships factor was 1.99. This was below the "some extent" level. Parents and staff members rated this factor at just above the "some extent" level. Teachers and administrators rated this factor at just below this level. **Table 1** describes the mean scores and standard deviations comparisons for each stakeholder between the Blue Ribbon Schools and Non Blue Ribbon Schools studied.

This study's three High Involvement Management factors appear to vary in the Non-Blue Ribbon Schools that were studied. The Organizational-Structure factor and the Communications factor were similar in both types of schools. The School-Community Relationships factor was significantly higher in the Non Blue Ribbon schools. The mean for all Non- Blue Ribbon stakeholders for the School-Communi-

ty Relationships factor was 2.35. This was above the "some extent" level. All stakeholders reported their perception of this factor in the above "some extent" level.

## Comparative Analysis

ANOVA analysis revealed statistically significant differences between the Blue Ribbon stakeholders' perceptions of the three High Involvement Management factors and the Non-Blue Ribbon stakeholders' perceptions of these factors in two of the three factors. Blue Ribbon stakeholders perceived the existence of those high involvement behaviors associated with the Organizational-Structure more extensively than did Non-Blue Ribbon stakeholders. Non-Blue Ribbon stakeholders perceived the existence of high involvement behaviors associated with School-Community Relationships more than the Blue Ribbon stakeholders. Table 2 below, demonstrates ANOVA differences between school types that were significant.

### Organizational-Structure differences

Stakeholders in Blue Ribbon schools felt their principals were the curriculum and instructional leaders of their school to a greater extent than Non-Blue Ribbon stakeholders. In addition, stakeholders perceived that Blue Ribbon staff members participated in professional development to a greater extent than their Non-Blue Ribbon counterparts.

### School-Community Relationships

Non-Blue Ribbon stakeholders reported the School-Community Relationships factor as evident to a greater extent than the Blue Ribbon stakeholders.

## Summative

**As a result of the descriptive and comparative analyses of the data, this study presents the following conclusions:**

1. Blue Ribbon schools in this study tend to practice the behaviors of the Organizational-Structure factor to a greater extent than did Non-Blue Ribbon schools.
2. Non-Blue Ribbon schools in this study tend to practice the behaviors of School-Community Relationships to a greater extent than did Blue Ribbon schools. Neither school type appeared to practice these activities more than to "some extent".
3. Non-Blue Ribbon schools tend to practice those activities typically associated with New York State's Compact for Learning expectations for shared decision making teams more than Blue Ribbon schools.
4. Blue Ribbon schools in this study earned recognition as exemplary schools and tended to emphasize behaviors within the High Involvement Management Organizational-Structure factor more than the School-Community Relationships and Communications factors.

**Table 2: Significant ANOVA Differences Between School Types**

	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	SCHOOL COMMUNITY	DIFFERENCE
BLUE RIBBON	**		.004
NON BLUE RIBBON		**	.003

## Discussion

### Organizational-Structure Practices of Blue Ribbon Schools:

The schools studied, both Blue Ribbon and Non-Blue Ribbon, appeared to practice those activities associated with the Organizational-Structure factor to “some extent.” Blue Ribbon schools emphasized the leadership role of the principal, staff development, goal setting, and the instructional mission of the school. Non-Blue Ribbon schools tended to emphasize community relations.

Significant differences were found in questions related to behaviors of Blue Ribbon principals. Six questions asked respondents to assess whether their principals: promoted staff development, obtained resources, promoted a positive school climate, were leaders of curriculum and instruction, managed change, and communicated with school and community about their schools.

The mean for the composite of these questions about principals’ leadership for Blue Ribbon Schools was 3.22. The mean for the composite of these questions about principals’ leadership for Non-Blue Ribbon schools was 2.92. The ANOVA, in **Table 3** below demonstrates a significant difference at the .048 level of confidence. This statistic indicates that members of the shared decision making teams perceived a statistically significant difference in the principals’ leadership behaviors related to Organizational-Structure for Blue Ribbon schools. Such data indicate that Blue Ribbon school principals tend to exert stronger leadership in the areas of staff development, obtaining resources, positive school climate, curriculum and instruction, managing change, and communication than Non-Blue Ribbon school principals.

**Table 3**

ANOVA Leadership Questions withing the Organizational-Structure Factor					
LEADER					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.519	1	1.519	4.069	.048
Within Groups	23.883	64	.373		
Total	25.401	65			

These findings support the criteria for Blue Ribbon selection that emphasize leadership and organizational vitality. Rogers’ (1993) study of the 1991-1992 Blue Ribbon School winners found that Blue Ribbon School principals perceived themselves as being strong transformational leaders. In this study, shared decision making team members reported that their principals engaged in activities that were associated with organizational structure more than the Non-Blue Ribbon schools’ team members did.

This study also indicates that Blue Ribbon schools engage in professional staff development to a greater extent than Non-Blue Ribbon schools. The responses to a survey question which asked respondents to assess the extent to which their schools conducted professional development activities, indicated that Blue Ribbon schools conducted staff development activities more frequently than Non-Blue Ribbon schools. The Chi-Square analysis of the response to this question demonstrated that the difference between the two school types was significant at .013 (Table 4).

**Table 4**

Question four; extent to which staff participated in professional development			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.744 <sup>a</sup>	3	.013
Likelihood Ratio	11.185	3	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.346	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	71		

<sup>a</sup>. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.32.

In addition, statistically significant differences emerged in an ANOVA procedure, that asked respondents to assess whether their schools delineated their mission and goals and adhered to state and / or district curriculum frameworks. Respondents assessed the extent to which their teachers shared a common understanding of the instructional direction of the school. The mean for the composite of these three questions for Blue Ribbon Schools was 3.35. The mean for the composite of these three ques-

tions for Non-Blue Ribbon schools was 3.01. The ANOVA, in **Table 5** below demonstrates a statistically significant difference at the .037 level. This statistic substantiates that this set of High Involvement school-behaviors should be given consideration as an element for the Blue Ribbon / exemplary school recognition.

**Table 5**

SYS					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.900	1	1.900	4.544	.037
Within Groups	26.762	64	.418		
Total	28.662	65			

The composite variable of the seven questions demonstrated a mean of 1.84 for Blue Ribbon Schools and 2.12 for Non-Blue Ribbon schools. Although the ANOVA in Table 6 shows a statistically significant difference at .037 for the responding groups in the two types of schools, the actual difference is slight. Nonetheless the data suggest that Non Blue Ribbon schools appear to emphasize School-Community Relationships activities related to specific

Wohlstetter (1996) compared schools with academic success to struggling schools and found that successful, actively restructuring schools operated according to a set of curricular guidelines. Schools that were successful in both enacting a shared decision making model and in positively affecting student achievement had school stakeholders who knew and shared the vision of the instructional goals towards which they commonly strove. The fact that these practices tend to be more prevalent in the Blue Ribbon schools in this study gives further support to Wohlstetter's premise.

shared decision making functions to a slightly greater extent than do Blue Ribbon Schools. **Table 6** below demonstrates the difference.

**Table 6**

SDM					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.192	1	1.192	4.565	.037
Within Groups	16.190	62	.261		
Total	17.383	63			

**School-Community Relationships Practices of Non-Blue Ribbon Schools**

Non-Blue Ribbon schools appear to practice School-Community Relationships behaviors more than Blue Ribbon schools. An analysis of individual questions that asked stakeholders to assess the presence of the School-Community Relationship factor offers points for discussion.

The School-Community Relationship questions specifically asked for stakeholders' assessment of their schools' shared decision making teams' activities in curriculum and instruction, budget, and personnel, the level of parent, student, and community member participation, and the use of ad hoc committees.

Wohlstetter originally labeled each of these questions as Power questions. Wohlstetter (1994) indicated that power issues might dominate shared decision-making systems in schools. These data appear to substantiate that assertion. In this study, neither school type appeared to practice those activities associated with formal shared decision making beyond "some extent". This suggests that neither school type had accepted and practiced the premise of shared governance to any great extent.

The Wohlstetter and Mohrman 1996 and 1997 studies of "struggling" and "restructuring" schools showed that restructuring schools acted to decentralize power within the school. Wohlstetter and Mohrman proposed that power

needed to be decentralized and extended beyond the formal shared decision making team. They pointed out that ad hoc committees are a good example of the decentralization of power. Neither school type studied appeared to use ad hoc committees in matters of high involvement shared decision-making. This suggests that high involvement shared decision making practices were not disseminated among school stakeholders to a significant extent other than to those limited activities of their schools' shared decision making teams. It appears that shared decision-making authority exists with a small group of decision makers.

Shared decision making systems in schools do not necessarily result in quality schools. Peter Robertson, a Wohlstetter associate and colleague in her UCLA Center for Educational Governance, confirmed this point of view to the researcher.

A key feature of Lawler's high-involvement model is that the decentralization of power must be accompanied by decentralization of information, knowledge/skills and rewards to be effective. Historically, many organizations attempted to decentralize, only to experience little in the way of process improvements, the diagnosis being that they focused primarily on the power variable with little attention to the other variables needed to support the decentralization of power. (phone interview June 20, 2000).

This point of view raises other questions. Is it possible that Non-Blue Ribbon schools spend more time on the human relations aspect of school governance in order to build constituent support for the school in spite of low student achievement? This Long Island study suggests that Blue Ribbon leaders tend to emphasize structural matters such as setting clear goals and that Non-Blue Ribbon school leaders tend to emphasize school community relations.

Perhaps the most salient applications of shared decision making depends on what may be called situational variables calling for such activity. Not all situations require nor benefit from shared decision making efforts. As Hoy and Tarter pointed out (1993) in their "zones of acceptance" concept, shared decision-making is appropriate in several, but not all administrative situations.

In like manner, Daniel H. Kim (1999) stated:

Fundamentally, empowerment is about the distribution of power. In organizations, this is most tangibly represented by decision-making authority - who has the power to make what kinds of decisions. But empowerment does not magically turn everyone into great decision makers, nor does it suddenly equalize differences in skills and experience. Unless the organization's decision processes are designed to ensure the quality of the deci-

sions, empowerment efforts are doomed to fail. Even worse, that failure can lead to bitterness and disillusionment (p.34).

Bolman and Deal (1996) stated that lateral coordination strategies appear related to the premise of "situational shared decision making." They wrote that:

Every lateral strategy has strengths and weaknesses. Formal and informal meetings provide opportunities for dialogue and decisions but may absorb excessive amounts of time and energy. Task forces provide a vehicle for creativity and integration around specific problems but may divert attention from ongoing operating issues.

The optimal blend of vertical and lateral strategies depends on the unique coordination of challenges in any given situation. Vertical coordination is generally superior when environments are stable, tasks are predictable and well understood, and uniformity is crucial. Lateral communications work best for complex tasks performed in turbulent, fast changing environments (p.67).

These points of view suggest that a major reason for the reluctance or inability of school systems to implement effective shared decision making practices may be the result of poor training for the school stakeholders.

In addition, Deborah Stone in *Policy Paradox* (1997) questions the premise of consensus, a component of most shared decision making models: "We can argue about whether consensus implies unanimity or only majority, or whether apparent consensus masks suppressed dissension" (p.86).

This assertion underscores the question of whether school reformers who advocate shared decision making have recognized that shared decision making does not guarantee collaboration, communication, and mutual support for the decision. Secondly, could the shared decision making teams have different purposes in Blue Ribbon schools and Non-Blue Ribbon schools? If shared decision-making is occurring to improve interpersonal relationships, the *quality* of the decisions may not be an issue. Only when the purpose of shared decision-making is to improve the teaching and learning will student achievement be an important factor. In the Blue Ribbon schools, there appears to be a focus on student achievement and organizational structure whereas the Non-Blue Ribbon schools seem to emphasize relationships.

This study demonstrated that a planned system for high involvement includes all of "us" as educational stakeholders. It also suggests that high involvement requires a specific design and commitment to implement elements essential to effective organizational structure. These elements include clear goals, transformative leadership, a col-

lective sense of mission, and a strong, focused program of staff development. These elements may create an environment that encourages our schools to become more effective places in which to learn.

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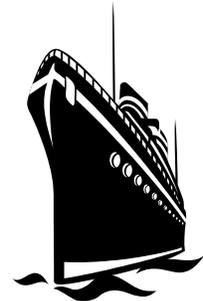
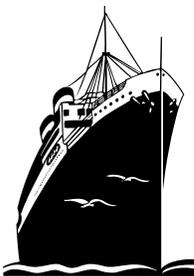
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# MEETING THE STANDARDS: STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR DIABETES EDUCATORS, MEDICAL CARE, AND DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

- BY MARY SWEENEY, ANP, CDE, Ed.D.

There are nearly sixteen million people in the United States with diabetes. More than half of these people are not aware that they have the disease. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States and has been declared an epidemic in the United States. In 1999 there was a seventy percent increase in diabetes amongst people between the ages of thirty and forty. Twenty-five percent of hospitalized patients have diabetes. The American Diabetes Association estimates that diabetes costs the nation more than \$98 billion annually in medical care and lost wages.

Persons with diabetes are responsible for greater than ninety-eight percent of their diabetes care. A person with diabetes who has not been educated about self management of diabetes relies on constant advice from health care providers and risks becoming overly dependent on them. Much of the burden of diabetes, such as heart disease, strokes, amputations and blindness, could be prevented with early detection, improved delivery of care, and diabetes self management education.

## **Standards**

In the early days of standardization, the main objective was to permit quantity with the aim of reducing costs (Deming, 1986). Standards represent a core of information that people should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of his/her education. Health education, guided by professionally developed standards is an effective approach to reducing and/or preventing diabetes and the complications associated with the disease. Voluntary standards avoid economic waste and hindrances to technical advancement (Deming, 1986). Deming states that the framework of standardization provides greater clarity of expression between all the parties concerned and is much more flexible than the consultation process of regulation-making, where the number of people that take part is strictly limited. One of the advantages of standardization is that it limits outside regulations.

## **The Standards of Practice for Diabetes Educators (SPDE)**

The specialty of diabetes nursing originated from the extensive and unique self management needs of people with diabetes. In the 1960s diabetes nursing roles developed in acute care settings where a large percentage of inpatients had diabetes (AADE, 1998). New nursing knowledge and skills were needed to simultaneously assess the precipitating causes of admission, manage blood glucose level, and provide the necessary education, care, and discharge planning (AADE, 1998).

Changes in the health care system that occurred in the 1980s meant that nursing care/education expanded into the outpatient setting, so that the skills of physical status monitoring and the therapeutic regimen management were added to the repertoire of skills needed by diabetes nurses (Nettles and Kreitzer, 1994).

The goal of treating diabetes is to prevent its complications by keeping blood glucose (sugar) levels as close to normal (70-110mg/dL) as possible. The Standards of Practice for Diabetes Educators (SPDE) were developed by a multidisciplinary task force of the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) (1998) and are endorsed by the American Nursing Association. The purpose of the SPDE is to provide a nationally acceptable level of practice for diabetes educators and to assure quality in the professional practice of diabetes education.

The SPDE provide diabetes educators, patients, health care professionals, insurers, policy makers, purchasers, employers, government agencies, industry, and the general public with:

- Direction to improve the quality of practice
- A framework within which to practice
- A means of assessing the quality of diabetes education services provided

- A basis for forming expectations of the educational experience
- An understanding of the role of the diabetes educator
- A means of assessing the quality of diabetes education service provided
- An understanding for diabetes education as an integral component of diabetes patient care
- A description of specialized educational services provided by a diabetes educator
- Information about the benefits of diabetes education in developing self care management skills
- An awareness of the importance of diabetes education in improving the quality of life and health care outcomes of people with diabetes

Today, instruction to persons with diabetes guided by the SPDE is individualized for persons of all ages. The Standards of Practice incorporate cultural preferences, health beliefs, and preferred learning styles (Funnel, Hunt, Kulkarni, Rubin, and Yarborough, 1998). Each diabetes educator is responsible for adhering to the Standards of Practice.

### **Standards of Medical Care for Patients with Diabetes (SMCPD)**

Primary care physicians treat the majority of people with diabetes in the United States and thus are in a key position to implement new treatment advances but little is known about their practice behaviors in treating this patient population.

Despite the availability of published standards diabetes care/education falls short of national standards. Marrero (1996) reported significant gaps between reported behavior in the Standards of Medical Care for Patients with Diabetes (SMCPD) and the published recommendations of the American Diabetes Association, the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Board of Family Practice. The SMCPD recommendations seek to provide:

1. Physicians and other health care professionals who treat people with diabetes with a means to:
  - set treatment goals
  - assess the quality of diabetes treatment provided
  - identify areas where more attention or self management training is needed
  - define timely and necessary referral patterns to appropriate specialists
2. People with diabetes with a means to:
  - assess the quality of medical care
  - develop expectations for their role in the medical treatment
  - compare patient treatment outcomes to standard goals

Marrero (1996) found that there was need to improve the quality of care being delivered by primary care physicians and suggested that it will be necessary to address the physicians' knowledge, skills, and attitudes concerning diabetes treatment. Stone (1997) writes of cost as a double edged sword and states that people think of high costs as bad and that it is better to pay less for something than more. Stone asserts that for many types of goods and services, high cost is itself a symbol of high quality; one such example is physician's services. According to Stone people think that the more efficiency and productivity, the better the outcome. In health services where the output of the job is personal attention and individualized care, efficiency is not always a virtue.



### **Standards of Diabetes Self Management Education (SDSME)**

Working with professionals from other disciplines, nurses have helped develop and test the Standards of Diabetes Self Management Education (SDSME). The SDSME provide a process for the person with diabetes that includes the knowledge and skills to perform self care on a day-to-day basis. The SDSME establish specific criteria against which diabetes education programs can be measured.

Self management education teaches the person with diabetes to assess the relationships between medical nutrition therapy, activity level, emotional and physical status, and medication and then respond appropriately and continually to those factors to achieve and maintain optimal glucose control (American Diabetes Association, 1997). These standards are designed to define quality diabetes self management education that can be implemented in diverse settings and facilitate improvement in health care outcomes.

To meet the standards an educational program needs to include:

- General facts about diabetes
- Psychological adjustment to diabetes
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Medications
- Monitoring
- Acute complications of diabetes
- Chronic complication associated with diabetes
- Sick day rules
- Hygiene
- Foot care
- Community resources available for people with diabetes

The dynamic health care process obligates the diabetes community to periodically review and revise standards to reflect advances in scientific knowledge and health care.

## Conclusion

Health care has entered a new paradigm, an area where standards can drive up quality and contain costs. Standards guide planning, have the potential to increase productivity, avoid outside regulations, and form collaboration by fostering input from other disciplines. Health care providers must establish the highest educational standards that will be recognized by the public and all of our health care colleagues.

Nurses are challenged to meet the demands of delivering quality diabetes care/education to populations who are older, have more chronic disease, are sicker when admitted to hospitals, have shorter hospital stays, with reduced nursing staff. Nurses at all levels are expected to play a major role in the change efforts and to contribute innovative ways to solve both old and new problems.

It is crucial for health care providers to have the most current information available to make it easier for patients to have success in managing their diabetes and avoid the complications associated with the disease. The profession of nursing must take up the charge to standardize diabetes care/education throughout the nation.

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# Bullying Behavior in Long Island Schools

- By Laurie Mandel, Ed.D.  
and Cindy Pierce Lee

## Abstract

This is an exploratory study in three Long Island school districts in which the Superintendent permitted students to complete a survey instrument about bullying and teasing behaviors in their schools. The overriding conclusion in this study is that bullying and teasing behaviors need to be addressed as a pervasive problem at school.

"I am popular in my school. I sometimes  
tease people. I think it's a serious problem to solve."  
8<sup>th</sup> grade girl

## Introduction

Bullying and teasing have effects on all kids at all ages across all grade levels. Studies tell us that an estimated 160,000 children miss school because of fear of their peers and that five million elementary and middle school children are bullied each year (National Association of School Psychologists). One-third of middle school students feel unsafe at school because they fear being bullied (Batsche & Noff, 1994; Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver; Slee, 1994) and ten percent of high schools dropouts reported fear of being harassed or attacked (Greenbaum, Turner and Stevens, 1988). Bullying is most prevalent and severe in grades 7-9 closely followed by grades 4-6 (Hazler et al, 1991; Hoover et al., 1993; Whitney et al., 1993). Further, the cumulative effects on students over time is perhaps best evidenced in a national study of school shootings which found that two-thirds felt they were victims of harassment and bullying by their peers in school (US Secret Service Report, 2000).

While in secondary schools bullying appears to take place largely in the corridors, classrooms and playground, in elementary schools bullying is most widespread on the playground (Branwhite, 1994; Hazler et al., 1991; Hoover et al., 1993; Whitney et al., 1993).

Though there is not a specific profile of bullies or victims factors such as interpersonal and peer socialization skills, self concept, presence of (or lack of) adult role models, per-

ceived gender identity, and friendships in children's' lives are key when looking at who is likely to bully or be bullied. For instance, children who lack the ability to use non-violent conflict-solving strategies or who feel ineffective in interpersonal problems with peers tend to bully (Kumpulainen et al, 1998; Slee, 1992; University of Illinois). Victimization is more likely when a child has low self-regard, is typically anxious or insecure, has poor body image (Egan & Perry, 1998; Jaffee, 1995; Graham, 1998), doesn't fit into the group (Hazler, Hoover & Oliver, 1991; Hoover, Oliver & Thompson, 1993), and/or lacks social skills and friends (Boivin et al., 1998). A sense of social inadequacy among peers leads to increased victimization over time (Egan et al., 1998; Slee, 1992). Further, children who violate gender norms risk a greater degree of rejection and negativity from other children than those who are considered more acceptable within their respective gender peer groups (Crick, 1997). In contrast, children who have positive adult role models or who have a best friend are less likely to be targeted (Hodges, 1999).



While both boys and girls bully, boys typically engage in direct, overt bullying methods, while girls are more apt to utilize more subtle, indirect, yet no less harmful and in some cases even more harmful, relational forms of teasing and bullying such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Crick & Casas, 1999; Galen et al., 1997; Rigby, 1997, Tomada et al., 1997).

Students seem not to believe that adults will help or that telling a teacher will do anything except exacerbate the problem (Rigby, 1997). Adults often fail to take the problem seriously or respond with the appropriate intervention (Barone, 1997; Froshl & Gropper, 1999; Shakeshaft et al., 1997).

**Purpose of this Study**

Studies of bullying behavior have not been conducted in Long Island schools prior to this study. This investigation of bullying and teasing behaviors in three Long Island school districts in Suffolk County with students between 10 through 15 years of age, specifically compares elementary and secondary students' experiences. This study (March 2000) included a total of 1830 public school students from three districts in grades 4 through 9 – three elementary schools, two junior high schools, one middle school and one high school (9<sup>th</sup> grade only). Dowling College students in Dr. Mandel's education research course participated in the organization of this data as part of their action research project.

**Selection of Districts**

Select districts for this study represented three economic levels within the following categories: (1) the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch in 1999-00, (2) the adjusted gross income in each district, and (3) the expenditure per child in 1998-99. To assure district anonymity pseudonyms for each school and district were provided.

**Table 1 - Factors in District Selection**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Tanglewood</b>	<b>Santana</b>	<b>Raven Hill</b>
<b>% Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	2.3%	6.8%	28%
<b>Adjusted Gross Income</b>	135,000	89,000	83,600
<b>\$ Expenditure per child</b>	11,900	11,800	12,100

Selection of the Sample

In each district one elementary school and one junior high (or middle school plus 9<sup>th</sup> grade of high school) participated in this study. The elementary sample consisted of 981 students — 484 girls and 497 boys. In two of the three elementary schools 93 percent of the students participated; in the third elementary school 34 percent of students participated.

**Table 2 - Elementary Student Sample**

<b>District</b>	<b># Classrooms</b>	<b># Girls</b>	<b># Boys</b>	<b>Student Sample</b>	<b>% of Student Population</b>
Tanglewood	14 (4th-6th) classes	162	150	312	94%
Santana	15 (4th-6th) classes	139	159	298	92%
Raven Hill	10 (4th-5th) classes	183	188	371	34%
Total	39 classes	484	497	981	73%

The secondary sample consisted of 849 students – 466 girls and 383 boys. At the secondary level one discipline common to all students was selected from which to draw the most diverse sample of students by gender, grade, ability, and ethnicity. The principal of each school made these selections. In the first district 15 English classes were selected, in the second district 11 Health/Physical Education classes were selected, and in the third district 15 Global Studies classes were selected. In two out of three districts 25 percent of students participated; in the third district 40 percent of the students participated.

**Table 3 - Secondary Student Sample**

District	# and Type of Classes	# Girls	# Boys	Total # Students	% of Student Population
Tanglewood	15 English Classes	165	161	326	40%
Santana	11 Health/Physical Education Classes	178	86	264	24%
Raven Hill	15 Global Studies Classes	123	136	259	26%
Total	41 Classes	466	383	849	30%

At the elementary level 73% of the total student population participated.  
 At the secondary level, 30% of the population participated.

### Methodology

#### **How was “teasing and bullying” defined?**

Bullying, most widely documented by D. Olweus (1978, 1991, 1993), is a form of aggressive behavior with an imbalance of power in which a dominant person intentionally and repeatedly causes distress by tormenting or harassing another less dominant person. This aggressive behavior can be expressed physically (kicking, pushing, hitting) or verbally (name calling); it can be direct or indirect (psychological). Direct bullying refers to open attacks on the victim—kicking, pushing, teasing, taunting, threatening, mocking, intimidating (Olweus, 1991). Indirect bullying refers to social isolation, social ostracism, exclusion, nasty gossip, telling false stories about others, saying bad things behind people’s backs, telling others not to be someone’s friend, and trying to persuade others to dislike a certain person (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), Olweus, 1991). Indirect bullying further involves manipulating the social status of an individual within his or her peer group by changing the way others perceive and respond to that individual.

Thus, we defined the terms “joking”, “verbal teasing/bullying”, and “physical teasing/bullying” in the following ways: **Joking** is when a kid says something to you that is funny, your feelings don’t get hurt, you are comfortable and you’re having fun, and everyone is laughing. **Verbal teasing or bullying** is when a kid says mean things to you, calls you names, picks on you, threatens you, makes fun of how you look, or spreads rumors about you. When someone teases or bullies you, you may feel hurt, embarrassed, humiliated, bad, or rejected. **Physical teasing or bullying** is when a kid hits, kicks, pushes, punches, or pinches you.

### The Questionnaire

We created a 24-question survey adapted from The Bully Survey (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, and Short-Camilli, 1994) to understand the nature and extent of student-to-student teasing/bullying behaviors that occurred exclusively **this year in school**.

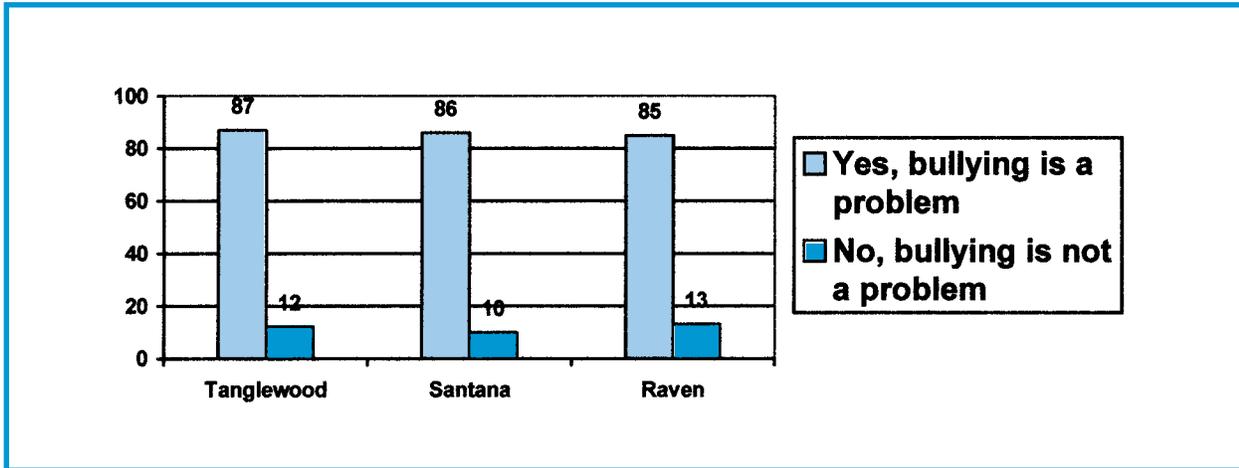
The survey comprised of ten forced choice questions to determine the number and type of incidents experienced by students (1=yes, 2=no), four likert scale frequency questions to determine the frequency of verbal teasing/bullying (i.e.: 1=once or twice a month, 2=once or twice a week, 3=once a day, 4=more than once a day), and we used six multiple response questions to help us discern intensity, location, and reporting patterns of bullying. Further, two open-ended questions asked students to anecdotally respond to the following: “If you have ever helped out a student who was the target of a bully, what did you do?” and “What are the two biggest reasons kids tease/bully each other in school?”

As part of this study, only two out of three districts gave permission to ask an ancillary question on the junior high school survey to ascertain whether students received verbal comments of a sexual nature. In these two districts the survey for the junior high schools contained one ancillary question.

Teachers were provided with written directions and definitions with which to administer the survey to students. The survey took between 15-25 minutes to complete.

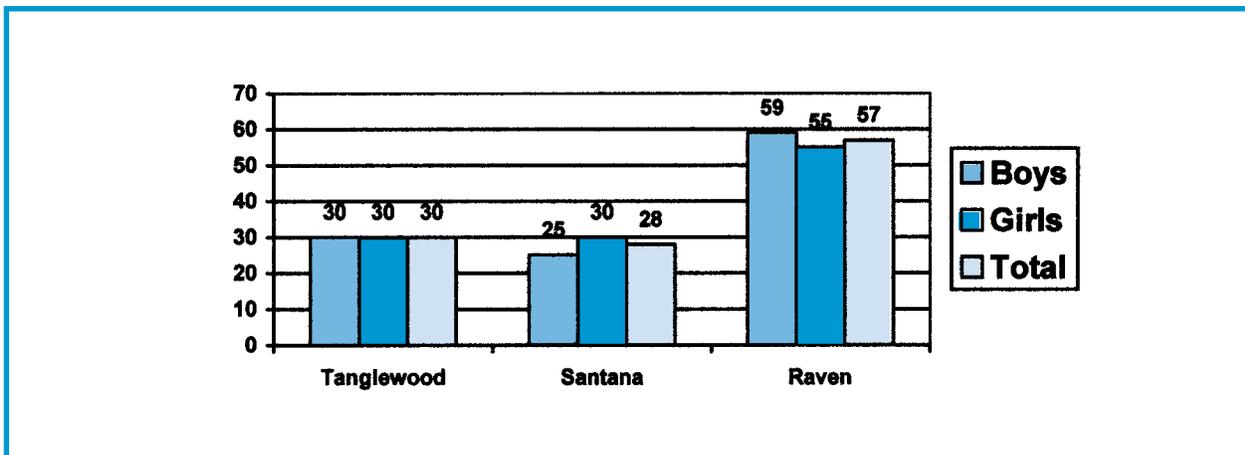
**Findings: Comparison of Three Districts**

**Figure 1 - Do you think teasing/bullying is a problem in your school?**



Of the 1830 students in grades 4 through 9 from all three school districts, 86 percent said, “yes, bullying is a problem in school” and nearly one-third think bullying is a “serious problem”. Only 12 percent of students said “no, bullying is not a problem in school.”

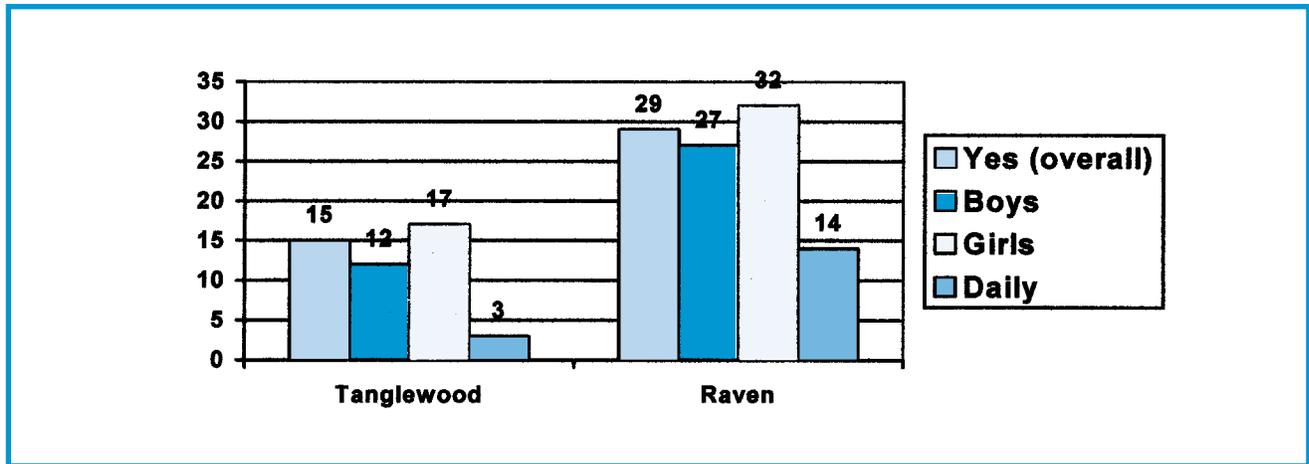
**Figure 2 - This year at school have you been verbally teased/bullied by another kid or kids who said mean things to you, called you names, picked on you, threatened you, etc?**



Overall our findings indicate that more than one-third of students (38%) or nearly 700 students in our sample reported being verbally bullied in school this year. Students’ experiences in Tanglewood and Santana were the same in that 29% reported being verbally teased/bullied this year. In Raven Hill more than 1-in-2 students (57%) report verbal harassment. A closer examination across all districts indicates that verbal bullying is highest for girls and boys in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Relatively no gender disparity in experiences exists.

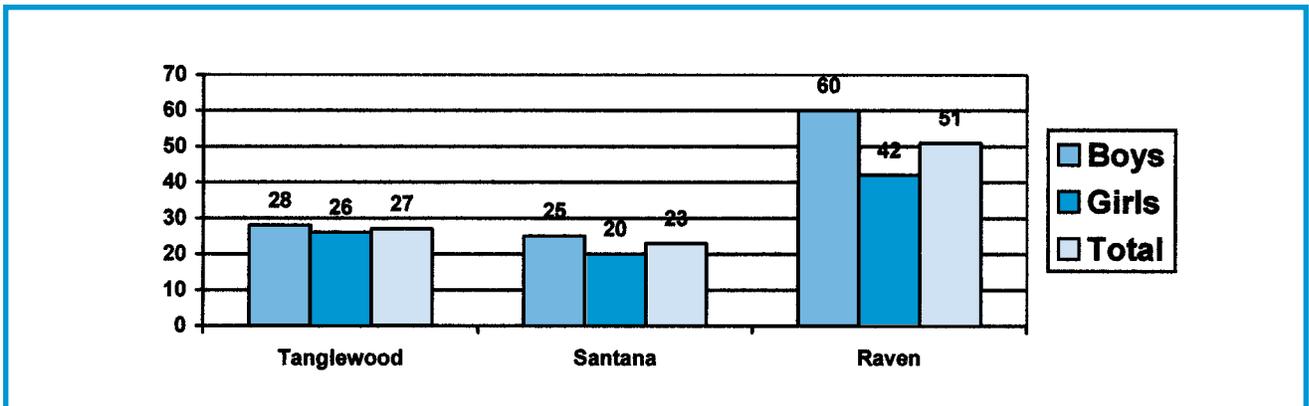
When we looked at frequency of verbal teasing/bullying across districts, we found that on a daily basis between 25%-35% of students reported being verbally teased/bullied daily. This means that an alarming 1-in- 4 students are verbally harassed daily.

**Figure 3 - Has anyone made verbal comments to you of a sexual nature?**



Of the 585 secondary students from two schools in grades 7 through 9 who responded to this question in Figure 3, 15 percent of students in Tanglewood (12% of boys and 17% of girls) and 29 percent of students in Raven Hill (27% of boys and 32% of girls) were targets of verbal comments of a sexual nature. Three percent and 14 percent of the students in two junior high schools indicated this occurred daily. In both schools approximately five percent more girls than boys reported being sexually teased/bullied.

**Figure 4 - This year at school have you been physically teased/bullied by another kid/s who hit, kicked, pushed, punched, or pinched you?**

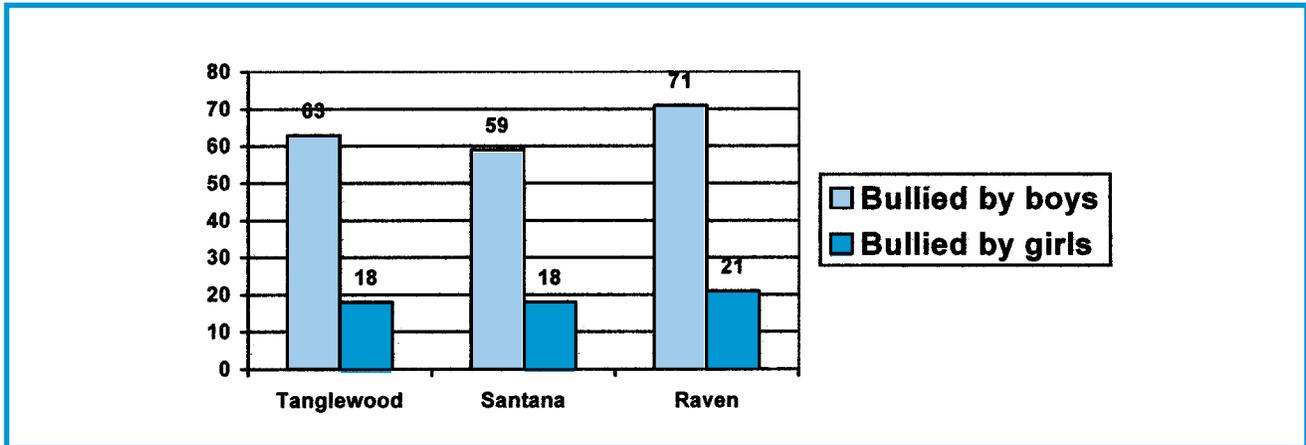


Physical teasing/bullying was also examined. On average 34 percent of students were physically bullied in school this year affecting one in four students in two districts (27% and 23%) and one in two students in the third district (51%). A comparison of building levels indicates that students experienced slightly more bullying in the middle/junior high school than in the elementary school. While there appears to be little to no gender differences in two out of three districts, we noted that boys in Raven Hill reported alarmingly high rates of physical bullying.

Further, we noted that in all three districts, boys experienced the most physical bullying upon entering the junior high and middle school in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades and not as much in the upper grades (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>) in all three districts. Girls however experienced the most bullying in Tanglewood in grades 4 and 5 and in Santana and Raven Hill in grade 8.

In looking at frequency, we found that on a daily basis, 26 percent of students say they are physically teased/bullied (22% Tanglewood, 21% Santana, 25% Raven Hill).

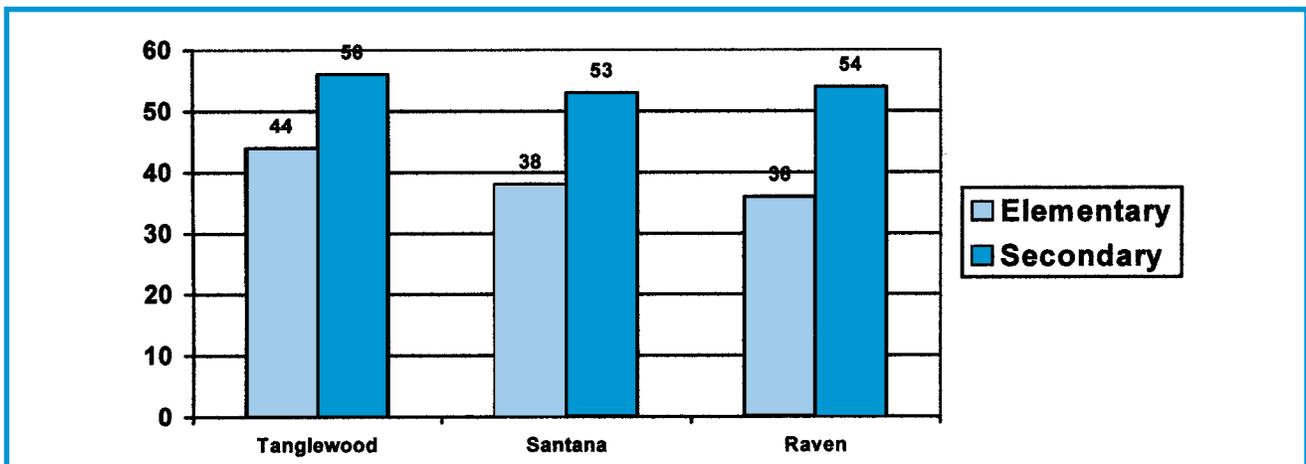
**Figure 5 - Who do you feel most teases/bullies?**



Two-thirds (64%) of all bullying is by boys and 18 percent is by girls (20 percent is by both boys and girls). **Table 4** further illustrates that 41 percent of bullying is boy-to-boy and 23 percent is boy-to-girl. Of the 18 percent of bullying by girls, 16 percent is girl-to-girl and only 2% is girl-to-boy in two districts and 6% is girl-to-boy in the third district.

	<b>Bullied by Boys</b>	<b>Bullied by Girls</b>
Tanglewood	42% of boys 21% of girls	2% of boys 16% of girls
Santana	36% of boys 23% of girls	2% of boys 16% of girls
Raven Hill	46% of boys 25% of girls	6% of boys 15% of girls

**Figure 6 - This year at school have you ever verbally teased/bullied another kid or kids (said mean things to them, called them names, picked on them, threatened them, etc.)?**



Students were asked if they verbally bullied other students in school this year. Of the 1830 students, nearly half or 46 percent of students (39% of elementary school and 54% of secondary school) said “yes” that they have verbally teased/bullied another student in school. Our findings also indicate that more students engage in bully behavior at the secondary level than in the elementary level.

**Table 5 - Where do students feel least safe in school?**

	Elementary	Secondary
Tanglewood	Bus Playground Bathrooms Gym Locker Room	Hallways Bathrooms Gym Locker Room
Santana	Bus Gym locker room	Bus Hallways
Raven Hill	Gym Locker Room Bathrooms Bus Playground	Hallways Bathrooms Gym Locker Room

As part of this study students were asked where they feel least safe in school, where teasing/bullying occurs most, and the extent to which adults intervene. At the elementary level the bus and gym locker room are sites where students feel least safe. At the secondary level the hallways are the number one site where students feel least safe, followed by the bathrooms and gym locker room.

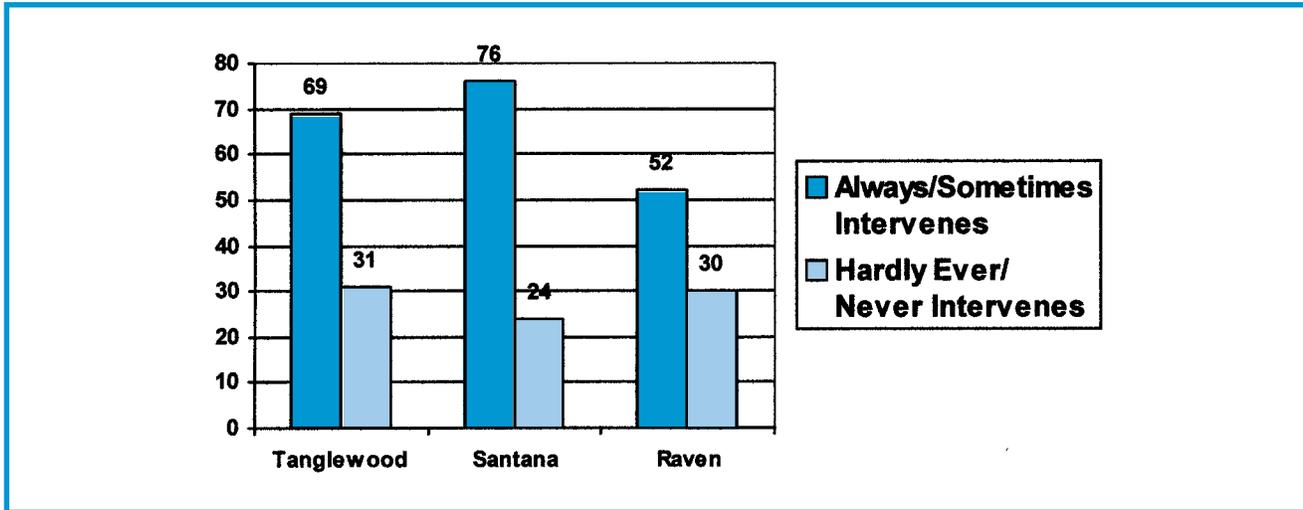
**Table 6 - Where does bullying occur most in school?**

	Elementary	Secondary
Tanglewood	Playground/Bus Classroom Gym Locker Cafeteria	Hallways Classroom
Santana	Bus Cafeteria Classroom	Hallways Cafeteria Classroom
Raven Hill	Classroom Bus Playground/Cafeteria	Classroom Field/Bus

While the classroom location is where students indicated they feel most safe, it is the site where students at all levels in every school reported bullying largely occurs. Additionally, the bus and cafeteria at the elementary level and the hallways at the secondary level are also locations of high teasing/bullying.

It seems that most teachers are generally unaware that bullying happens in their classrooms. It is often the more subtle types of hurtful behavior, but it may still be repetitive and intimidating. According to students, bullying occurs in the classroom when the teacher steps into the hallway, answers the phone, is working with a small group, has a group around the desk, turns her/his back, during indoor recess, or when a substitute teacher is in the classroom.

**Figure 7 - When kids are teased/bullied, what do teachers or other adults in your school do?**



Overall two-thirds (66%) of students feel adults in their school “always/sometimes” intervene in bullying situations, and one-third (32%) feel adults “hardly ever/never intervene.” As students move from the elementary to secondary levels, the number of students who feel teachers or other adults “hardly ever” or “never” intervene increases nearly two-fold. Additionally, the findings show that while nearly three-quarters of elementary students feel their teachers “always or sometimes” intervene, this number drops to less than half of the students at the middle school, and to one-third (34%) of students in the ninth grade. Thus, as students move to the secondary level, more than half the students feel teachers “hardly ever or never” intervene.

Further, when we asked students whom they tell or report to when they are teased/bullied, students indicate they are less likely to seek out the adults in school for help. In the younger grades—fourth, fifth, and sixth—students overwhelmingly tell a “parent/guardian”, followed by “another kid”, “principal/teacher”, or “no one.” In the upper grades—seventh, eighth, and ninth—the number of students who tell a parent/guardian drops considerably. Overall, only 14 percent of students tell a principal or teacher, and this number decreases as student grade level increases. Students do not feel safe to report bullying problems to adults at school.

**Discussion and Recommendations**

The findings indicate that bullying is a problem in these schools at all grade levels. Without a doubt kids tease, make fun of, pick on, and bully each other even if they don’t mean to hurt them. Teasing and bullying—largely under the guise of “kidding around” or “just fooling around”—are ubiquitous in peer interaction patterns and behaviors.

Effective measures of counteracting and preventing teasing / bullying problems in school is a systemic task. Unequivocally, creating a respectful climate includes measures taken at the district level, the school level, the classroom level, and the individual level (Olweus, 1993). Implementing prevention programs, for example, to teach a problem-solving approach to life, or changing a school’s culture while also improving student learning and achievement are the laudable tasks in front of us. Through our work on this study, our extensive work in schools, and especially in talking with students, we believe there are things schools can and need to do to bring about a more positive social atmosphere so that all students and staff members can feel comfortable, safe, and respected. There are several ways school personnel can intervene to reduce bullying and teasing behaviors in schools.

**For administrators:**

Administrators must agree not to tolerate bullying. This means they need to be visible and present to see and hear inappropriate teasing that occurs between kids and speak to kids not punitively but in a meaningful way. Administrators should intercept these inappropriate social behaviors in the hallways, in the cafeteria, on lunch lines, and as students come off and get onto buses. Not only do teachers need administrative support but administrators need teacher support to accomplish this. Additionally, in an effort to better understand what is happening in their schools, administrators can have a needs assessment done to survey students and then share the results with the faculty. Administrators can conduct focus groups with teachers, parents, and students to further examine the issue of bully and teasing behaviors. Other follow up activities can include a review of school records for referrals on anti-social behaviors quarterly. Clarify for staff and students the differences between

'tattling' and 'telling' or 'reporting' for safety. Establish classroom and building codes of conduct in which all students sign a pledge. Encourage students to tell/report about incidences, assure confidentiality when applicable. Teach character education curriculum as mandated by Project SAVE.

**For teachers, parents, and staff:**

Creating a classroom climate in which teasing is not tolerated lends itself to many opportunities for teachable moments. Teachers are one of the most powerful resources available to students. We need teachers to empower, support, and model appropriate, caring, empathetic behaviors in front of students so that students can become models for their peers. Our study tells us that the classroom is largely the site where teasing/bullying occurs which means such behaviors are happening right in front of them. Thus, teachers need to be vigilant to the social climate in their classroom. Sometimes what looks like fun and laughter among students may very well be at the expense of another student. For example, address students when they make comments such as "that's so gay!", or "she's such an idiot!" in a way that communicates such comments can be hurtful, offensive and are inappropriate. The adage "kids will be kids" is no longer acceptable.

Additionally, it is important to hold parent workshops and to keep lines of communication open with parents about their child's behaviors. Further, train aides, monitors, bus drivers, and non-instructional staff to not only be alert to the signs of bullying but ways to intervene when it happens under their watch in cafeterias, playing fields, and hallways. It might also be necessary to increase supervision in bullying problem areas such as on the playground, in the cafeteria, or on the bus.

**For students: The caring majority**

Many kids don't bully and are at a loss as to how to stop it from happening. While too many students see that teasing others actually serves to enhance their own group status and popularity, we believe schools must focus on the large group of students who are not bullies. A key to creating school-wide prevention is to empower the observers or bystanders, thus shifting the power from the few bullies to the "caring majority." This could mean to look for resiliency in students who have strong social skills, for example, a student who can naturally respond to teasing comments about them that stops the bully, or a student who isn't afraid to stand up to a bully when kids around them might be laughing. Look for these factors of resilience in students and talk with these students to find out how they develop these attributes. Share these skills with other students. Adolescents largely turn to peers for social support and there is an increased reliance on and acceptance by peers to attain social status. There truly is strength in numbers and a school climate that encourages support for one another creates bonds that impede bully and teasing behaviors.

**For bullies and targets:**

Both bullies and targets need to be taught anger-management, conflict resolution, and appropriate communication

skills. Social skills need to be modeled by both adults and peers. Bullies must be taught empathy, a skill often lacking. Many schools have developed a peer mediation program or a mentoring program for both bullies and targets whereby an adult in the school works one-on-one with a student in a caring capacity. Other suggestions include establishing a suggestion box, a hotline, and a messaging system that will allow students to confidentially share issues with their teachers and counselors. Basically, the school needs to create a community of learners in which adults and children of all ages learn and work together regularly.

**For guidance counselors/school social workers:**

School social workers and guidance staff can help to change the social landscape in schools. Counselors can hold weekly peer support groups and behavior modification groups with targets and bullies. Children who are often targeted will benefit by developing friendship skills and finding support from other kids. Counselors could also be making classroom presentations so students know whom to turn to and how to maintain confidentiality. Counselors are invaluable resources for staff members and can provide helpful information regarding specific students.

Creating a positive, respectful school environment takes time— but it may well be the most meaningful, well-invested time spent in the eyes, hearts, and souls of our children.

**Model Programs**

Bullyproofing Your School, Cherry Creek Schools, Englewood, Colorado,

Schools: Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways, Richmond, Virginia.

First Step To Success, University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior

Liberty Middle School, Ashland, Virginia: Currently testing a new model bully prevention program

No-Bullying Program, Hazelden-Johnson Institute: 1-800-328-9000

Quit it (grades K-3), and Bullyproof (grades 4-6), Wellesley College Center for Research on Women:

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# Responding to Violence on Campus: The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act

- By Jerrold L. Stein

## Introduction

In Kurosawa's classic film, *Rashomon*, a single incident is seen through the eyes of several witnesses (Bolman L. and Deal, T., 1997). Each of the four characters involved in the incident offers a different perspective of the event. The comments noted, by Dr. Stoner and Mr. Trujillo, offer different perspectives about crime and violence on college campuses. While both viewpoints may demonstrate regard for the truth, each perspective is a product of the biases each one possesses. Whether the increase in crimes being reported by college institutions is a result of increased criminal activity or enhanced reporting, college campuses, once thought of as being a safe refuge, are now under close scrutiny from students, parents, and employees, as well as by state and federal governments. Public policy drives this scrutiny and its effects need continuous analysis.

According to many campus leaders and data collected from recent research studies, violence has become a significant problem on college campuses (Palmer, 1992). Although institutions are generally under no duty to protect students from violent acts of third persons, there are certain special relationships that involve a duty to protect. One special relationship includes the university's duty to protect its residential students, a duty to protect them from foreseeable violence. Providing police services on campus is another duty related to care. The law recognizes that if an institution renders a service for the protection of others, reasonable care must be exercised in providing it (Gehring, D., 2000).

"College administrators want their campuses to be safe and secure. [However], to read recent news reports about crime on campuses, you would think that colleges are indifferent to security, interested only in projecting a bucolic image while they provide a safe haven for criminals and ne'er-do-wells" (Hartle, T. 2001, pp. A48). Hartle asks why there is such a disconnect between colleges' true intentions and how they are perceived? He reports that the answer lies

largely in the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, which was named in memory of Jeanne Ann Clery. Clery was raped and murdered at Lehigh University in 1986. This federal statute was designed to provide information to students and the public about incidents of crime on college campuses. Since its passage, the law has grown so complex and incomprehensible that it no longer serves the simple, straightforward purpose that motivated its creation (Hartle, 2001). The original act required all colleges and universities to provide, upon request, accurate statistics on all violent crimes, as well as provide sexual as-

sault prevention programs and intervention services for victims (McCormack, R. and Klepper, W., 1994).

## Federal Intervention

For most of the nation's history, higher education has not been a federal responsibility. However, the role the federal government has played has grown considerably during the last few decades. For over two hundred years, until about 1970, the federal government used higher education as a solution to addressing diverse national policy prob-

*"I think there has been a rise in violent crime around the country and here on campus."*

J. Trujillo, Former Director of Public Safety, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

*"There's certainly more crime being reported on campus, but I'd be hesitant to say it's all an increase in violence, or actual crimes. Some of it's just increased reporting. Increased reporting in date rape on campuses is one area where improvements in reporting may be leading to a perception of higher crime increases than may actually be occurring."*

Dr. K. Stoner, Director of Housing, University of Kansas

lems. As a result there has never been, and still is not, a clear and comprehensive federal higher education policy. Federal involvement in higher education has generally been an attempt to deal with non-educationally related problems. The last thirty years were marked by an expansion of federal funding to ensure access and choice to higher education. The 1990s have represented a period of increased federal intervention for the purpose of protecting students from a wide range of societal ills (Coomes, M., 1994).

The first of the protective regulatory policies was the **Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments** of 1989. This legislation was an outgrowth of the federal "war on drugs" and was intended to reduce drug and alcohol use through increased education and information dissemination (Buchanan, 1993). The Drug Free Schools and Communities Acts Amendments were followed in 1990, with the passage of the **Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act**. This legislation has as its fundamental purpose, the protection of students through the provision of information (Coomes, M., 1994). Since it was passed in 1990, Congress has amended this legislation three times.

In 1992, the law was amended adding a requirement that schools afford the victims of sexual assault certain rights. This legislation was introduced by Congressman Jim Ramstad of Minnesota and was referred to as the **Ramstad Act or the Campus Sexual Assault Victims Bill of Rights**. In 1998 the law was amended again, expanding the reporting requirements and alerting colleges that infractions could result in fines of \$25,000 per violation. An additional amendment was passed in 2000, which provides guidance and details pertaining to the definitions and standards of the reporting requirements (Clery, H. 2001).

#### **The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act**

The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act required colleges to collect data on certain crimes; to advise students, faculty and staff in writing of such crimes; and to furnish information on police and other crime prevention services on an annual basis (Buchanan, 1993). These protective laws and legislation applied to every institution that received federal financial assistance or had students attending who received funds under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, federal work-study programs). Failing to comply with these laws and regulations can result in the termination or withholding of federal financial assistance (Gehring, D., 1994).

#### **Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights**

In 1992 the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights (Ramstad Act) amended the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act. The new regulations listed in the Campus Sexual Assault Victim's Bill addressed concerns which were cited in national research studies revealing that unwanted sexual experiences were quite prevalent on college campuses. This amendment required campuses to add information to the reports that they were required to include when submitting their annual reports to the Department of Education. Campuses had to report how their insti-

tutions were going to support sexual assault victims and what measures they were taking to reduce the incidence of sexual assaults from occurring. The report required information which included a description of:

1. Sexual assault and sexual offense awareness programs.
2. Possible sanctions for sexual offenses.
3. Procedures for students to follow once an offense has occurred.
4. Campus disciplinary procedures including the right in sexual assault cases to have others present during the proceedings and to be notified of the outcome.

Additionally, institutions must also notify students of:

1. Their option to report a sexual assault to external law enforcement units and to be assisted by campus administrators in doing so.
2. Counseling services both on and off campus.
3. Their option to change living and academic arrangements where reasonably available and to be assisted by administrators in doing so. The Department of Education has interpreted this requirement to include releasing a victim from an on-campus housing contract penalty and to assist the student to locate off campus housing if it is reasonably available. This option is to be offered after an alleged sexual offense (Summary of Proposed Changes, Student Assistance General Provisions, 58 Fed. Reg. 54904, 1993).

#### **The Campus Crime Report**

In 1999, the Department of Education released its first-ever, federally mandated, comprehensive report on college crime. Over 6,000 institutions submitted crime statistics from their campuses to the Department of Education, which served as a clearinghouse for the collection, analysis and dissemination of crimes occurring at college campuses throughout the United States. The amended federal law required colleges, starting in October 2000, to submit data on crimes that occurred on their campuses the previous year. The Education Department is responsible for preparing a report for Congress and making it available for public consumption. Prior to 2000, colleges were required only to release the information to their students and employees or anyone else who requested it (Nicklin, J., 2001).

According to the results published in the Department of Education's report for the year ending 1999, drug arrests at the 6,300 post-secondary institutions grew 6% from 1998-1999. The Department of Education report also found that the number of sex offenses rose nearly 6% from 1998 to 1999. The report also found that the number of burglaries, hate crimes, automobile thefts and robberies also grew from 1998 to 1999. A closer analysis of the crimes reported in the Department of Education's annual report demonstrated that college campuses were not immune to incidents of violence and crime. However, based on per capita data, one could conclude that, in general, our nation's college campuses are safe because they show a lower inci-

dence of crime compared to national data. The report itemized the total for each crime category on a per-student basis and compared it to the crime rate for the nation as a whole. In most cases, the incidence of crime on campus was significantly lower (Nicklin, J., 2001).

The law originally required that campus crimes only be reported because it would be difficult to include crimes outside the jurisdiction of campus law enforcement. In some cases, institutions, particularly ones in urban environments, where crime can be much more prevalent on streets bordering the campus than on the campus itself, appeared to be safe when they were not. Also, crime reporting may be more a function of how safe a victim feels about reporting a crime and/or how vigorously a Police Department enforced the laws (Coomes and Gehring, 1994).

Hartle (2001) offers four reasons why the Clery Act is such a troublesome task for college administrators:

- 1) the law is complicated and the accompanying regulations do not clarify these reporting requirements;
- 2) Congress has amended the law four times since it was enacted. Each time the regulations were expanded;
- 3) the law required colleges to report everything that anyone might know, from minor infractions such as underage drinking occurring off campus to a violent crime committed on the campus;
- 4) the requirements assumed that many people on every campus, from deans to residence hall and student staff or faculty, would collect and submit information for the report. Many of these individuals were not even aware that they have responsibilities to report criminal acts by others, and those who were aware of this duty do not see themselves as monitoring crime as a function of their duties. Residence hall staff and other staff who work closely with students often serve as advisors and mentors to students. If these staff members report such incidents, it may impact whether students feel comfortable approaching and confiding in these front-line personnel (Coomes and Gerhring, 1994).

### **Proposing Changes**

Colleges are currently called upon to disclose several controversial issues, such as graduate rates of athletes, salaries of presidents and college coaches as well as other campus matters that have the potential of creating an "image problem." Astin (1993) argued that the data presented by colleges and universities in the Student Right-To-Know section of the report and the information presented in the campus security section has the potential of being very misleading. On many campuses, crimes are never reported, particularly incidents of sexual assault (Palmer, 1993) and therefore they would never appear in the data required under the campus security section of the legislation. Also, improvements in the outreach efforts and educational interventions has been related to increases, in reports of sexual assault. Thus, caution must be exercised when attempting to measure program success and other efforts that are aimed at reducing the incidence of sexual assault on campus (Holcomb, D. Savela, P. Sondag, A. and Holcomb. L., 1993).

Hartle (2001) has called for Congress, the Department of Education, and campus security advocates and college leaders to reconsider the Clery law in ways to enhance public understanding and compliance by institutions. He suggested that the following topics be among those on the agenda:

- 1. Only specific and violent crimes should be reported.**

The Clery Act should be concerned with the most serious and violent crimes, particularly those that result in personal injury. Minor crimes occurring away from campus dilute the significance of the reported data.

- 2. Responsibility for reporting information should be limited to one or a few campus leaders.**

The number of people who can report and gather information should be limited. Campus security officials, college judicial boards and local police should collaborate and be held accountable for reporting information.

- 3. Matters related to privacy must be determined.**

Individuals who are sexually assaulted and tell someone they trust such as a Resident Assistant, advisor or a faculty member are not aware that the person with whom they confide is obligated to report the incident. College officials must either ignore the explicit wishes of the victim or knowingly fail to report the incident and run the risk of fines.

- 4. Provide adequate technical support for colleges.**

The Department of Education (DOE) should provide technical assistance and training to ensure that college administrators understand the law and reporting regulations. At present, such help is not available.

- 5. Federal monitoring after training.**

Monitoring by the DOE should be conducted routinely, but only after campus officials are adequately trained.

Congress intended college campuses to report accurate crime data to help students and families make more educated choices. The crime statute has become a prescription for non-compliance and confusion. As of result of reporting complexities, institutions follow significantly different reporting practices. Hartle (2001) reported that the only thing that is clear about the Clery Act is that no one can accurately determine the safety of a campus based solely on the data reported.

### **Conclusion**

The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act was intended to encourage colleges to place more emphasis on campus safety and on crime prevention services and programs. Much of the debate regarding the Clery Act revolved around categories of criminal activity, school prop-

erties and academic and co-curricular programs that should be covered by this federal statute. Recent research suggests that too much attention is being directed to the reporting requirements and not to the cultivation of initiatives that educate students and change their attitudes and behaviors. Greater attention needs to be directed towards the development of services and programs that work (Janosik and Gehring, 2001).

Bolman and Deal (1997) indicated that when managers and leaders are unable to get organizations on track, the government frequently intercedes with legislation and regulations. These rules and regulations most often inhibit freedom, flexibility and creative interventions by focusing resources on time-consuming reports and public information efforts. Many college campuses appear to perceive the regulations as defined in the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act and subsequent amendments as unreasonable and ineffective. They appear to make every attempt to manipulate crime data so that they can portray a positive image of their institution. Without federal intervention, could we trust that college campuses would confront and respond to violence on their campuses?

Colleges are competing to attract the best and brightest students to their campuses. Projecting an image that makes the campus appear unsafe, either through the crime data they report or the programs and/or services they offer could impact the number of students who decide to attend each year. State and/or Federal Legislation may be necessary, but reporting statutes must be clear and unambiguous. Reporting mechanisms must be streamlined and simplified. Additionally, auditors and advisors must be available to ensure accurate reporting and to provide guidance and support for those who complete reports. College officials should plan and design effective strategies, both educational interventions and policies, that make their campuses safer, protect students, and convey a clear message that acts of violence will not be tolerated.

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# High Stakes Testing for Students with Disabilities

- By Patrick G. Harrigan

## Introduction

Today's political climate as it relates to education is one of high expectations and scrutiny at every level. The number of parents home schooling their children is at an all time high and charter schools and vouchers continue to gain momentum in political and community circles. Efforts to improve our nation's public school system are being quantified by scores on standardized tests. It is debatable at many levels if standardized tests are true indicators of performance and quality or simply snapshots of a student on a given day. What is clear is that, at the present time, high stakes testing is a reality in America's public schools and must be addressed. Accountability for all teachers and students has led to a proliferation of high stakes testing throughout the country. School quality, teacher competence, and student capabilities are all judged by the results of standardized tests (Frase-Blunt 2000). This trend coupled with the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has brought high stakes testing to students with disabilities. The present study examines the research related to standardized testing for students with disabilities. Issues addressed include accountability, the legal basis for testing, accommodations, alternative assessments for students with severe disabilities, teacher attitudes toward alternative assessments, and the New York State alternative assessment policies and procedures.

## Legal basis

As with many educational reforms related to students with disabilities, the question of access to statewide assessments was not the result of a shift in educational ideology; rather it developed in response to recent legislation. The IDEA requires that children with disabilities be included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations where necessary (Kleinert 1999). In addition, as appropriate, the state or local education agency was required to develop guidelines for the

testing of children with disabilities, utilizing alternate assessments for those who cannot participate in the regular state and district-wide assessment programs. This was to begin no later than July 1, 2001 (Kleinert 1999).

In 1986 "A Nation at Risk" presented the notion that our schools were failing our children and that accountability for all those involved was required. Accountability for student performance is a key aspect of educational reform at the local school, district, state, and national levels (Elliot 2000). The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) works with state and federal agencies to assess the results of education for students with disabilities. The NCEO has found that historically students with disabilities have been excluded from state and local testing, or their results



have not been reported (Elliot 2000). It is generally held that students whose progress is measured in educational accountability systems are those who benefit from the educational reform the system produces. Including students with disabilities in standardized assessments is critical to improving educational opportunities for these students as well as to providing meaningful and useful information about their performance (Elliot 2001). Because students with disabilities are often excluded from state and local measures of educational accountability, they are not held to the same high standards as other students; students with more severe disabilities are nearly universally excluded from assessments (Kleinert 1999). There is considerable anecdotal evidence that exclusion from the assessment system results in students being excluded from the curriculum or from reform initiatives designed to improve student perfor-

mance. Exclusion from system-level high stakes assessment results in higher percentages of grade level retention for the excluded children when they are compared to the tested population (Thurlow 2000). The current trend of accountability can only be effective and meaningful if we account for all learners regardless of disabilities. Four general recommendations can be made based on the NCEO's experience in pursuing accurate participation data from statewide assessment programs: 1) States need to identify students with disabilities in statewide assessment programs. 2) State education agencies and local education agencies need to identify students for whom accommodations are provided. 3) Standardized reporting procedures need to be developed. 4) Lines of communication between state special education and assessment offices need to be improved (Elliot 2000). These changes lay a framework for what should be done. State and local officials should determine when students should be tested, how their tests should be scored, and how their scores should be reported. For those students who need accommodations, guidelines need to be developed so that testing accommodations have minimum impact on the validity of the testing instrument.

### **Testing accommodations**

Typically, high stakes testing has been aimed at evaluating students, schools, districts, and states as to the quality of the education being delivered. Special education has always been aimed at the individual needs of children. The legal background of special education law in America supported this notion. The intent of the original IDEA (1990) was that the student's IEP would be a tool for the implementation of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and serve as a process for ensuring that students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Shriner 2000). Accommodations for students with disabilities are required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), (Shriner 2000). Current education law requires that all decisions be made on an individual basis as to the participation of students in statewide, district-wide, or alternative assessments, and what accommodations if any need to be made. In addition, parental involvement in these and other decisions made by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) is required.

In order to fairly and accurately test individual students, testing accommodations are necessary and helpful devices. Accommodations are changes in the way a test is administered or in the way a student responds on the test (Elliot 2001). The accommodations are intended to allow students with disabilities to show what they have learned about the content of the exam without being constrained by their disability. Accommodated assessments are intended to level the playing field so that a student with a disability may demonstrate performance on an assessment relative to the same goals and standards established for the general population (Shriner 2000). Testing accommodations allow students with disabilities to access a test and demonstrate their ability in relation to the targeted skills or content of the exam. The IDEA requires that appropriate accommodations be made for a student with disabilities but does not specify

what an appropriate accommodation is (Frase-blunt 2000). A study of accommodations commonly available revealed that the accommodations most frequently allowed by states were those dealing with the presentation of the material (Thurlow 2000). These accommodations included the use of large print, Braille, sign language, and reading the test aloud. The next most common accommodations involved the examination setting: testing in small groups and individual testing. Other commonly accepted accommodations were extended time for the completion of the exam, a scheduling accommodation, and the use of a scribe, which is a response mode accommodation. Since accommodations must be determined on a case-by-case basis in order to be effective, the question of the reliability and validity of the testing instrument also arises. Validity involves an overall evaluative judgment; it requires evaluation of the degree to which interpretations and uses of assessment results are justified by supporting evidence and the consequences of those interpretations and issues (Elliot 2001). Reliability refers to the stability or consistency of a test. Does the instrument yield the same results each time it is used with an individual or a group?

### **Alternative assessments**

For a very small percentage of students with severe disabilities the best way for the district or state to gauge students' progress in their unique curricula may be through participation in an alternative assessment system (Shriner 2000). IDEA says that students with disabilities have the option of alternative assessments, but it is expected that only between one and five percent of students will require an alternative assessment (Frase-Blunt 2000). An alternative assessment has been described as a substitute for the standardized or criterion-based statewide test that produces appropriate information on the performance and progress of students (Thurlow 2000). The purpose of alternative assessment is the same as that of the general state assessment - to measure progress toward high expectations that are established ahead of time. Alternative tests should be consistent with other goals and standards for children established by the state (Shriner 2000). A study of alternative assessment practices in various states explains why alternative assessment systems are important; they enable the educational outcomes of students with the most significant disabilities to be included in school and district accountability measures (Kleinert 2000). It is important to remember that assessment is a matter of school accountability more than it is about student accountability; because of this it is crucial that all students be included.

### **Teacher attitudes**

A survey of teachers involved in the nation's first alternative assessment and accountability system for students with moderate and severe disabilities was conducted to determine the extent to which these teachers perceived benefits of including their students in large scale assessments (Kleinert 1999). Of the teachers surveyed, 55% believe in the idea that assessments should be for all students including those with severe disabilities. The statewide survey of teachers who participated in the alternative assess-

ments in Kentucky reported that 53% of teachers saw benefits from their student's participation in the assessments (Kleinert 1999). The day-to-day change in educational programming for students with severe disabilities revealed that 62% of the teachers surveyed incorporated portfolio assessment into their daily routine. In addition, 65% of the teachers reported that the inclusion of their special education students in portfolio assessments did not make it any easier to have their students participate with general education students more frequently even though the portfolio assessment required such activities (Kleinert 1999).

### **New York State alternative assessments**

The IDEA reauthorization of 1997 required that each state develop a plan for alternative assessments for those students who cannot participate in regular assessments by July 2000. The New York State Education department estimates that 3% of students with disabilities qualify for alternative assessments (NYSED 2001). A plan has been developed that addresses the key questions related to alternative assessments: why students who had previously been exempt are now being assessed, who should participate in alternative assessments, what should be assessed, when to assess, how students should be assessed, how to score the assessments, and how to report the scores.

Why students who were previously exempt from New York State assessments are now being assessed is due to three federal requirements: the 1997 reauthorization of the IDEA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I, and the Office of Civil Rights (NYSED 2001). The IDEA requires states to develop alternative assessments. The ESEA Title I requires that each state must establish standards, must assess in math and language arts, and will be held accountable for student performance. The Office of Civil Rights requires states to not discriminate, and to ensure participation in assessments by all students. The New York State Education Department has accepted these guidelines and has developed a firm stance to assess even the most severely disabled students through alternative assessments.

To determine who would be assessed using the alternative assessments, New York State established three criteria that must be met for students to qualify for the alternative assessments:

- 1) The student has a severe cognitive disability and significant deficits in communication/language and adaptive behavior.
- 2) The student requires a highly specialized education program.
- 3) The student requires educational support systems (NYSED 2001).

Using these criteria, the local Committee on Special Education (CSE) decides if the individual student will participate in the alternative assessment. There is no category of disability that will automatically qualify a student to participate; for example, all students with autism, or all students working toward an IEP diploma. Decisions may not

be based on such things as excessive absence, or language differences.

To address the question of what should be assessed, the New York State Education Department came up with alternative performance indicators that are tied directly to the general academic standards designed for all students. The standards assessed are Math – Science & Technology (MST), English-Language Arts (ELA), Social Studies (SS), and Health, Physical Education and Family & Consumer Sciences (HPEFCS), with the final area of Career Development & Occupational Studies (CDOS) being optional for the 2002 school year.

The students taking part in the alternative assessments will do so at the same chronological age as those students taking the general assessments. Presently New York assesses general education students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. To account for the many students who participate in un-graded special education classes who will participate in the alternative assessments, ages were given for when to assess. Students must be assessed one time for each age level, 9-10, 13-14, and 16-17 (NYSED 2001).

Student progress will be measured through portfolio assessment. Each student must compile a data-folio with three to five pieces of evidence for each required standard. In addition a parent survey, an introductory page, and a table of contents should be included. No information may be provided about the student's functioning level including disability, IQ scores, or scores on other standardized tests. The assessment is designed to capture the student's performance at the time of the assessment and progress toward the NYS learning standards (NYSED 2001).

The student data-folio will be scored using a rubric. The rubric rates the level of student progress, the relationship of that progress to the state learning standards, and the opportunities provided to the student that allow him or her to demonstrate progress (NYSED 2001). The rubric addresses five dimensions - performance, connection to the standards, self-advocacy, settings, and social interactions - using a four point scoring system similar to that used by the general assessments. Data-folios will be scored in the spring at regional scoring sites where teachers will be trained in proper scoring methodology. The scoring system will allow students with severe disabilities who take part in the alternative assessments to receive a score that can be reported along side the scores of students taking the general assessments. The time frame laid out by the NYSED allows for teacher training via statewide teleconferences in September and October, completion and submission of the student data-folios by February, and scoring in March 2003.

### **Summary**

If it is true that assessment drives instruction, and that educational reforms and resources are geared towards those assessments, then increased participation should benefit students with disabilities. In particular, New York State has made significant progress in creating assess-

ments for students with the most severe disabilities; a population often ignored in the frameworks of state education policy in the past. The New York State plan includes alternative performance indicators that have been developed to relate the general education standards to the needs of students with severe disabilities.

The groundwork has been developed for future students with severe disabilities, their schools, and teachers to have better access to information about their progress and academic needs.

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## *Who's Who In The School Districts?*

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# Is Classroom Instructional Technology Beyond Professional Development Support? *Long Island Teachers Respond*

- By Stephen J. Farenga, Ed.D.  
Beverly A. Joyce, Ph.D.  
Daniel Ness, Ph.D.

Recent educational and technological developments are challenging educators to redefine traditional approaches to teaching and learning. In response, virtually all American public schools (97%) have computers in their classrooms, libraries, labs, or media centers. From 1994 to 1998, the Internet access in public schools nearly tripled from 35% to 89% (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1999). Although success of technological classrooms is determined by the computer skills of the teachers (Gallo & Horton, 1994), the majority of preservice and inservice teachers feel unprepared to teach their students using computers (Simonson & Thompson, 1990).



The literature is replete with studies suggesting that computer-related technology is the solution to transform teaching and learning (Means, 1994; Office of Technology and Assessment, 1995). Most of the research on the impact of computer training has focused on the effects of computer access and usage, and teachers and students' attitudes (Delcourt & Kinzie, 1993; Farenga & Joyce, 1996; Hunt & Bohlin, 1993; Knapp & Glenn, 1996; Morison, Lowther & Demeulle, 1999; Siegel, 1995).

The purpose of this study was to identify how school teachers viewed the funding patterns for technology in their classrooms and their usage levels regarding computer hardware, software, and telecommunications.

## **Method**

Surveys were sent to 4,500 educators throughout Long Island in New York. Of the 1,114 individuals who responded, a sample of 702 classroom teachers was drawn. The Global Assessment of Technology in Education (GATE) was designed to evaluate (a) hardware/software availability, (b) skills/confidence levels, (c) home/school computer capability, (d) professional development interests, and (e) demographics and funding profiles (Joyce & Farenga, 1997). Using a mailing list of school personnel from The New York State Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the GATE was sent, along with a cover letter, to educators throughout Long Island.

## **Results**

When asked to estimate the amount of money spent on hardware, software, and professional development, teachers reported that the majority of technology funding was invested in hardware (68%) and software (19%). The fewest dollars were spent on professional development programs (13%) to train teachers to use the hardware and software.

Most teachers had access to basic technology, such as computers (98%), CD-ROM (87%), Internet/WWW connection (72%), and graphics software (69%). Despite its availability, teachers generally felt ill-equipped in using hardware and software resources. Most, however, were more interested in using the computer for the purpose of logging on to the Internet (84%), CD-ROM (77%), digital or video cameras (67%), downloading images (67%), and multimedia presentations (65%).

When asked to identify specific activities, teachers placed great importance on those that focused on professional level training, such as “offering a college-level course or workshop in technology” (79%), and “attending a professional conference on technology” (67%). They also wanted assistance in “forming teams to develop comprehensive plans to integrate technology into the curriculum” (73%) and “preparing multimedia presentations for instruction” (62%). Reflecting national concerns regarding students’ access to online sites, teachers also saw a need for guidance in “developing an access policy for Internet use” (76%). Perhaps in response to the limited dollars budgeted for staff training, “developing grant-writing skills to apply for funding” was considered an important professional development activity (67%).

## Discussion

While most school districts spend less than one-quarter of their computer budgets on training, educational experts generally advise that well-trained teachers make the difference between the success or failure of meaningful integration of technology and curricular practices (Bruder, 1993; Roblyer, Edwards & Havriluk, 1997; Siegel, 1995). By rejecting this advice, school districts have chosen to ignore the essential human elements in the process of effectively integrating technology into the curriculum.

A cursory view of classrooms within the last five years may conjure the perception that technologies involving computers have transformed the learning environment. This illusory image of the 21st-century classroom seems to be the norm and not the exception. The technological advances made in professional fields—such as medicine, science, and business—are not paralleled in present-day classrooms. To be sure, the computer-related technology has not transformed educational practice (Becker, 1993; Peck & Dorricot, 1994).

The higher education community should improve the training of preservice teachers by requiring technological literacy of their graduates. The next wave of the technology revolution in education may soon occur, and it requires a paradigm shift in investment for continuous staff development if the technological resources are to be effectively incorporated into teachers’ efforts to improve learning in their classrooms.

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# Perceptions of Secondary Principals on the Use of Computers as an Information Tool

- By Gail Borruso, Ed.D.

In 1999 a survey was distributed to 128 Long Island secondary principals to ascertain their perceptions about the use of computers as an information tool. A total of 72 principals responded to this survey. These principals responded to thirteen questions designed to ascertain their perceptions of computers as administrative tools to increase productivity. In addition, demographic information was collected about the responding principals.

According to Mitra (1998), people with a more positive attitude towards computers report more frequent use of computers. Therefore, the relationship between principal's attitudes towards computers and their degree of computer usage could be important for greater effectiveness in our secondary schools.

## **Demographics:**

Of the responding secondary principals on Long Island, NY, 15% were female and 65% were between 50-59 years of age. More than 93% of the secondary principals reported having access to a computer either at home or in the office.

## **Findings:**

Of the respondents, 78% agreed computer phobia is a problem for secondary principals and their use of computers for their job related tasks. Over 90% of principals agree that an effective administrator uses the computer for administrative functions. Over 93% of the principals felt an effective administrator would explore new uses for computers. Only 37% of secondary principals were satisfied with their present computer competency. Only 44% of principals agreed that



information was more reliable when stored in a computer. Secondary principals seem to doubt the reliability of data stored in a computer even though 85% of the principals agreed that information was easier to retrieve when stored in a computer. In addition, 86% of the principals agreed computers would improve the level of service provided by the schools. The secondary principals reported two issues that warrant immediate attention: 87% of the principals agreed greater emphasis should be placed on computer usage in administrative programs, and 41% of the principals reported that they couldn't find the time for additional computer training. Table 1 outlines the findings of the survey.

There seems to be an overwhelming support for computer use in administration even though principals claimed there was not enough time to receive computer training. They reported that computer phobia hinders them from seeking the necessary computer training to complete their job related tasks. Fear of failure may be a more drastic impediment to learning new computer skills than the lack of time. It is important to consider principals' perceptions about the use of computers as an information tool when trying to assist them to manage the complexity of their job. Sergiovanni, (1991, p.15) stated "principals must master the art of complexity in order to succeed." Principals may need one on one training sessions in specific software before they are willing to use these tools.

"Leadership preparation programs are being re-examined throughout New York State. According to all indications New York State is facing an administrative shortage" (Elmore, (2000, p.2-40).

**Table 1 - Perceptions about Computers as an Information Tool** N=72

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain/ Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Computer phobia is a problem in implementing computer use	1.4%	12.5%	8.3%	25%	52.8%
Effective administrator uses computer for administrative functions	1.4%	2.8%	4.2%	27.8%	63.9%
Effective administrator should encourage other school personnel to use the computer	1.4%	2.8%	2.8%	25%	68.1%
Effective administrator should explore new uses for computers	1.4%	4.2%	1.4%	30.6%	62.5%
Effective administrator perceived more favorable toward computers	1.4%	8.3%	16.7%	25%	48.6%
Secondary principals satisfied with their present level of computer competency	1.4%	50%	11.1%	30.6%	6.9%
The computer is an important tool in educational administration	0%	2.8%	1.4%	43.1%	52.8%
Information is more reliable when stored in a computer	2.8%	22.2%	30.6%	29.2%	15.3%
Information is easier to retrieve when stored in a computer	0%	6.9%	6.9%	34.7%	51.4%
Computers will improve the quality of information provided by the schools	1.4%	4.2%	11.1%	41.7%	41.7%
Computers will improve the level of service provided by the schools	1.4%	4.2%	8.3%	44.4%	41.7%
Administrative training programs should place greater emphasis on computer usage in administration	0%	5.6%	6.9%	51.4%	36.1%
I can find time to obtain additional computer training	6.9%	34.7%	16.7%	37.5%	4.2%

References:

Leadership training programs may benefit from the use of case study approaches that use real data from schools to help administrators gain first hand experiences with software for decision-making and forecasting. Computers and software programs can be utilized by principals to analyze data on a variety of levels. According to Manley and Hughes (2000), "educational leaders need to improve the process of information management and expand information analysis techniques" (p.27). A case study approach would assist current administrators to learn computer skills and software at their own pace while completing meaningful analysis tasks. According to Education Week (2002), for the first time ESEA Federal Funds will include professional development monies for principals. When districts utilize these funds for professional training, knowledge of the principals' perceptions about computers can contribute to an effective professional development program.

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## Advice for Seeking School Administrative Positions

### *The Interview Process*

- By Leonard Adler, Ed.D.

In our last issue of The Long Island Education Review Journal, I presented the Do's and Don'ts of putting together a resume. This article will offer an opinion on the interview process. The focus of an interview will center around seeking an administrative position in education.

As an illustration, we will show one example of a process and hopefully the basic strategies will have a common thread regardless of the position sought.

#### **Position: High School Principal, housing grades 9-12.**

You have been "screened in" and selected to be interviewed by a committee made up of teacher representatives, administrators, a parent, a student leader and a support staff (secretary) member.

Prepare for the interview by finding out as much as you can about the school. Know the basic elements – student population, size of faculty, support staff, and administrative structure of the building. Is there an assistant principal who is a candidate for the position? What is the experience level of the staff? Why is the incumbent principal leaving? How long has the principal served? Secure information on the performance of the students by checking the State scores. Obtain a student handbook and a curriculum guide. Don't hesitate to obtain information directly from the district. Contact the person who informed you of the scheduled interview. You may call an assistant Superintendent or the Human Resource person to request the information. Perhaps a recent issue of the high school newspaper and the district's newsletter will be helpful. You may not have sufficient time to prepare so do the best that you can under limited circumstances.

In analyzing the high school instructional program, identify what advanced courses they offer, what remedial and special education programs exist, and most importantly, what does the high school offer for

the majority of their students – the solid middle level "average" students. What percentage of the students participate in the extra curricula and co-curricula programs?

An understanding of the district is very important. Is there community support for the school? Have school budgets been supported? Are there construction projects that could impact the high school?

Find out as much as you can about the day-to-day operation of the high school. What kind of schedule do students follow? Is there an "open" or "closed" campus in existence?

Now that you have some knowledge of the high school, let us think about you, the candidate. Keep in mind that you have gotten to this point mainly on your excellent resume, and perhaps an initial screening interview by the Personnel Administrator.

#### **Further preparation:**

- 1) Generate a series of questions and have a friend or spouse or someone practice with you in the interview. It is also okay to stand or sit facing a mirror and interview yourself. Use this session to see how you respond. We usually are our own worst critics, so do not be discouraged.
- 2) In answering your own questions, you should be able to improve your responses and be clear and concise.
- 3) Take advice from one other source on your responses.

#### **The Interview:**

- 1) Dress well and be well groomed. A good sign of leadership is an attractive presentation.
- 2) Be comfortable with yourself – Don't try to be

## CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

someone else. Usually the opening question is meant by the committee to help you relax – thus the first question might be: Tell us about yourself.

- 3) In your responses to any question, try not to ramble or over-answer a question.
- 4) Be honest. Should you be uncertain about a question, don't pretend to be an expert. For example, if someone were to ask you about Special Ed and Inclusion, an area that is not your expertise, you may wish to give a general response and add, "I would need to learn more about Inclusion and how the program works here." "My intention would be to meet with the staff – get their input, observe the classes and help develop a program in the best interests of students."
- 5) Do not answer questions by stating, "What we do in Oshkosh High School..." While the committee interviewing you may have many concerns about their high school, they will tend to maintain a deep supportive feeling about their school. The best way to discuss your ideas is to say: "This is a program I have experienced... or, I believe that in supporting school dress codes or discipline regulations, ..." Make your responses about you and your interest in their high school.
- 6) Your style of being there for staff and students (parents too) should be reflected in what you say. That is, the interviewer should sense an open door policy without having to say it. Example: "During the day, I am in and around the building, talking to staff and getting to know students."
- 7) Another commonly used phrase is: "...having a vision." I have never been certain how to answer this question. It is a tough question because I believe that vision is what you possess as an educator; perhaps it is what you see "down the road" in the education of young people; in this case, a vision for a high school that results in a sense of pride and accomplishment for every student. In order to bring about a higher level of performance and accomplishment, a leader with a vision must be able to bring people aboard in a team effort where all involved can take ownership. That can mean

tweaking, adjusting and enriching this vision with the participants and stakeholders.

- 8) Sense of Humor – Don't lose it. If you don't have one, secure one. If you can't laugh, even at yourself, you are missing something in your position as an administrator. If an opportunity presents itself in your interview, inject humor into the conversation.
- 9) If you miss a point that you wanted to make and it resulted in an incomplete answer, do not be afraid to clarify, particularly at the end of the interview, where you may be able to offer a closing statement.
- 10) In answering questions, make good eye contact with the person that asked the question but also keep the others attentive by making eye contact and using gestures to include all the members of the interview team. Avoid responding only to the top official in the room.
- 11) Should you want to bring to this interview a few worthwhile materials that reflect some things you have accomplished previously, be cautious and restrained about distribution. The best idea is to leave it with the leader of the group at the completion of the interview.

On a final note, when you are in your car leaving the interview, you will try to evaluate yourself. There will be some items that you forgot to mention or questions that you could have stated better than you did. But, let the "chips fall where they may." Do not be too critical of yourself. Sometimes people are not listening to what you say, but rather, how you say it. If it is your first interview for a Principalship and it was 'flat,' perhaps it was not all your fault. It is not uncommon for people on screening committees to be somewhat unprepared.

If you are an effective administrator or show a strong potential to become a successful administrator, you are going to reach that goal. Continue to strengthen your skills and knowledge. Most importantly, enjoy the success that you have in your current position and the future will take of itself.

Dr. Leonard Adler is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Dowling College and Deputy Director for Management Services at SCOPE.

# BOOK REVIEW

## Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds (2001)

- A book by Richard J. Light

- Reviewed by Jerrold L. Stein

Most texts written on the topic of student success often offer useful strategies and sage advice for the student. In his most recent book, *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds*, Dr. Richard Light offers practical advice to campus administrators, faculty, and parents, as well as prospective and current college students. Commissioned by former Harvard President, Derek Bok, Light was asked to study students attending Harvard. This research project spanned 10 years and included interviews with 1600 students and visits to nearly 100 other institutions. The decade long research project examined factors contributing to the success of college students. More specifically, Light and his associates addressed two major areas: the choices students make to get the most out of the college experience and effective ways for faculty and administrators to help students maximize their potential while attending college.

Light identified several key sources of academic distress. Some of the more significant findings of this research study included: (1) general lack of advising and mentoring; (2) poor time management skills; (3) failure to transition from high school to college; (4) inadequate selection of courses (5) limited amount of faculty-student interaction; and (6) poor or inefficient study habits. Light noted that college students in academic distress typically exhibit symptoms of emotional distress, including feelings of isolation as well as an unwillingness to ask for and seek assistance. Also highlighted is how students best make the connection between what they are learning in the classroom and outside of it, and how they are connecting their overall collegiate experience to a greater understanding and development of their own personal knowledge and values. Light poignantly reports that students do not often know how to make these connections on their own. Faculty and staff must play a central role helping students make these connections.

Light revealed that good advising is the single most important attribute of a successful college experience. Discussing the selection of courses, academic and career goals, and short and long term aspirations with a faculty member and/or a knowledgeable professional advisor is essential. In fact, Light tells his own advises that he expects them to get to know at least one faculty member each semester. He noted that not only will this result in a student being able to acquire a recommendation when she/her prepares to graduate, it also, and more impor-

tantly, offers the potential for a mentoring relationship with a faculty member. The adult advisor serves as role model and exposes students to career and life experiences, connections and networks they never considered and/or realized. Light reported that parents, despite good intentions, often encourage their children to take required courses first before taking elective courses. Required courses are often the most popular and the largest classes, but because of their size students are inhibited from interacting with faculty. Freshmen often express feelings that the faculty is distant because these students do not have an opportunity to interact with their professors. Institutions should offer and new students should consider taking small, seminar courses from the start of their collegiate experience.

Another finding reported in the study is that the ability to manage time was the most concrete difference between those students who succeeded and those who struggled. College students are expected to act independently and are responsible for their own schedule and work. They no longer have parents and teachers monitoring their work as they did in high school. Students must be taught how to make the best use of time. Light reported that it is not how much students study, but when, how, and where they study. Studying in long, uninterrupted periods of time is much more effective than studying in short intervals with many disruptions. College students should be encouraged to maintain time logs that they can present to advisors so that they can mutually develop study plans to make the best use of time.

Another attribute linked to success is working collaboratively and studying with other students. Throughout most of our educational experiences, we have been taught and rewarded for work done alone. Group work fosters understanding and makes learning more purposeful as well as enjoyable. Faculty can also invite students to be actively involved in their own learning. Light spoke about his own educational experience at Harvard when he was asked by a faculty member to critique an article prepared by the professor. Besides having no choice but to accept the challenge, Light talked about how the exercise required him to think more critically. The subsequent discussions with this faculty member about the article helped Light view himself as a member of the academy.

Of all the factors linked to a successful collegiate experience, getting involved in campus activities, for many

# BOOK REVIEW

students, was determined to be the single most significant contributor to student success and satisfaction. It was found that belonging to a group or organization provides students with the social and personal support systems they require. Parents often dissuade their children from joining clubs and organizations until they have shown mastery of course content and subject matter. Light's study suggests that although group membership and activity must be done in moderation, a sense of belonging to any community is fundamentally important to people, particularly new students in transition. According to findings that Light reports, students from minority groups, first generation college students, and students leaving behind strong support networks were more apt to report that group membership was essential. Upon entry to the campus, advisors and faculty should encourage student participation and leadership in the campus community.

Despite the admirable suggestions offered by Light and his co-researchers, some readers question whether these findings apply to students who do not have the same aptitude and interests as the respondents studied for this research project. The subject pool included predominately Harvard undergraduates, obviously, a group that includes some of the best and brightest students in the country. Are these findings relevant to students attending other research universities? Do they apply to students enrolled at community colleges? Do they apply to students who commute to campus? And, do they apply to students who do not have the means to study full-time? While ability, interest and eco-

nomics may differ, Light does offer a template from which we can create organizational structures and activities that advance learning, enhance satisfaction and promote personal growth for students attending private or public, big or small, rural or urban, residential or commuter as well as research universities.

If our desire as educators is to create learning communities that optimize conditions for the advancement of knowledge and its application, we must fully engage students in their learning experiences and we must create supportive, nurturing environments that young scholars require. One significant finding from Light's book is that most faculty and administrators often underestimated the impact they have or can have on students. Many even reported that they "get out of the way of students." We know from our own experiences that when asked which people influenced us most when we attended college, we would undoubtedly refer to the faculty member or an administrator that took the time to listen, guide and direct us. The professor or dean who provided the support to reach an academic challenge is the one we remember. Light reminds us that early mentoring relationships with faculty and administrators, and positive interactions with peers provide a satisfying, meaningful and robust learning experience for first year college students.

Dr. Richard Light is a Professor in the Graduate School of Education and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Jerrold L. Stein prepared this book review. Jerry is currently the Dean and Director of Residential Education and Programs at Stony Brook University where he also serves as the Director of SAFE (Sexual Assault Facts and Education Peer Education Program) and as a Clinical Lecturer in the School of School of Social Welfare. Jerry is currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and Technology at Dowling College.



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# BOOK REVIEW

## Zero Tolerance: Resisting The Drive For Punishment In Our Schools

by William Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn, and Rick Ayers  
-Reviewed by Myrka A. Gonzalez J.D., Ed.D.

Zero Tolerance is comprised of a group of essays assembled by William Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn and Rick Ayers. The book is published as a handbook for parents, students, educators and citizens. The editors divided the book into three sections. The personal and poignant narratives are moving and vivid. The reader cannot help but be transported to his or her own secondary school days and their indiscretions, childish pranks and immature behavior. Such behaviors would be dealt with very severely under zero tolerance disciplinary school policies today. The narratives are written by teachers, students and child advocates. They have titles as *Two Punches*, *Expelled for Life*, *Ground Zero*, *Arturo's Case*, *America Still Eats Her Young*, and *From the Jail to the School Yard*. *From the Jail to the School Yard* was written by a child advocate who reveals:

We had about one thousand intakes a year. Of those one thousand intakes, most are categorized as custody, special education, some delinquency and a lot of child welfare. Three to four intakes were suspension/expulsion issues prior to 1993. In 1994, that number went to ninety intakes. In Massachusetts during the 1992-93 school year, ninety students were expelled statewide according to the Massachusetts Department of Education statistics. In 1993-94, that number went to nine hundred. (p.43)

The essay continues with additional statistics on the increase of suspensions throughout the country. The author then begins to relate the facts of actual cases:

I represented a student who used to carry a knife to school. He was afraid of walking home. He carried it for three years. Then he became afraid of what would happen should he have to use the knife, so he started to bring a crutch to school. He used the crutch at school for six weeks before he finally swung it at someone. At that point, he was taken into the principal's office where they emptied his pockets. They found the knife and he was expelled. (p.45)

In the second section, essays examine the social influences on zero tolerance and how those influences have caused an escalation of zero tolerance disciplinary rules and the expansion of categories for which students are expelled. There are essays on the disproportionate and distorted coverage of youth crime by the media and the jailing of mentally ill children. This section loses some of the previous objectivity. The essays could benefit from the credentials of the authors being included. No book or study on discipline in

schools would be complete without the work of Dr. Russell Skiba, Director of the Institute for Child Study. He studied discipline in many schools and from different perspectives for many years. His name, however is not easily recognized by persons who are not in the field of child behavior. Although an essay by Russell Skiba is included in the book, his credentials are not identified. To give serious credence to the issues raised, the credentials of each author would have benefited readers.

The final essays detail the racial disparity in the use of zero tolerance disciplinary policies and suggest various alternative policies to maintain discipline while improving the learning environment and recognizing the racial biases inherent in most schools. It is here that the authors give the reader solutions and alternatives to zero tolerance policies.

The book presents a passionate argument against the use of zero tolerance disciplinary policies and the militarization of schools. What it lacks is a national perspective. Although there exist ample national data and studies, they are not included.

The final conclusions presented by this book cannot be ignored:

1. There are more disciplinary problems in schools where zero tolerance is applied then in schools where other approaches are used.
2. Any time there are suspensions and expulsions, Black and Hispanic students are far more likely to be suspended and expelled than their Caucasian counterparts.
3. The nation has progressively increased the number of students suspended and expelled to where there are over one million students suspended every year in the United States, most for non-violent behavior.
4. School districts cannot afford to give alternative education to many expelled youths.

The book gives a clear view of how a policy designed to benefit students can have a reverse effect. For those interested in improving education, racial tensions and school environments, this publication is a good beginning to become better informed about the problem and its potential solutions.

Myrka Gonzalez is an attorney in private practice in Suffolk County, New York.

# BOOK REVIEW

## The Truth About Testing: An Educator's Call to Action

By W. James Popham

Reviewed by James I. Brucia, Ed.D.

There is a sage piece of advice that every speaker or writer attempts to follow as the time for communication draws near: Tell them what you are going to say, say it, and then tell them what you said. In his very informative book, *The Truth About Testing: An Educator's Call to Action*, W. James Popham unabashedly follows that advice. The result is a readable and informative book that demystifies the confusion that many educators hold about standardized testing and classroom assessment of students.

With all the attention sometimes bordering on near hysteria in today's educational environment concerning "high stakes" testing, this book could not have come at a more opportune time. Today's teachers and administrators are increasingly being victimized by education departments that seek to mandate statewide testing referenced back to sets of "standards," approved through consensus (at best) or imposition (at worst). To heighten everyone's feelings of insecurity, the results are routinely published in area newspapers under the guise of promoting "discussion." As the predictable comparison of one district to another occurs, pressure is brought to bear on "under-performing" districts to teach to the test and drill students in test taking skills.

Popham straightforwardly states he is not opposed to standardized tests, even high stakes tests – just *unsuitable* ones. After a brief, historical introduction on how education arrived at "this unhappy place," as he calls it, Popham proceeds to identify the five most widely used standardized tests: California Achievement Tests (CAT), Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS), Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT), and the Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT). He cautions readers that the very same companies that construct and market the five national tests build many of the state standardized achievement tests (often called

criterion-referenced tests). Thus, the so-called "customized" state standards-based exams may be just a set of reworked national exam items and may not provide an accurate evaluation of educational quality.

Popham breaks with the tradition that all good things come in threes. He sets out four rules to create an "instructionally illuminating" large-scale assessment and another four rules for classroom assessment. It is here where this book's major value lies. Not only does it provide a clear understanding of standardized testing and some ammunition for educators to employ against the onslaught of high stakes testing proponents, but it also shows teachers convincingly that they are capable of creating quality classroom assessments to evaluate their students.

Popham knows the territory well, having enjoyed a thirty-year career at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. He has written 20 books, published 180 journal articles, authored 50 research reports, and presented 150 papers before research societies. Best of all, though, he writes in a clear, direct style, and his succinct prose will engage the reader quickly. His personal opinions (which he always identifies) enhance the total story he is telling. Educators who read *The Truth About Testing* will come away with a new respect for the power of a well-constructed test and realize that this knowledge is an important, but often neglected, aspect of their overall professional responsibility. When W. James Popham authored this book, he performed a valuable service for educators at a time when that service was greatly needed.

James I. Brucia, Ed.D. is an Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration, Leadership, and Technology at Dowling College

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Sincerely,

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