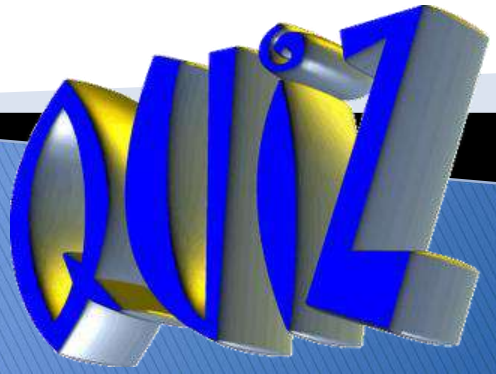
Cyberbullying: Awareness and Prevention for Educators

STOP cyberbullying

Question #1

T or F:
Youth who experienced traditional bullying or cyberbullying, as either an offender or a victim, had more suicidal thoughts and were more likely to attempt suicide than those who had not experienced such forms of peer aggression.



True.

19% reported attempting suicide. (Hinduja, 2010)

Question #2

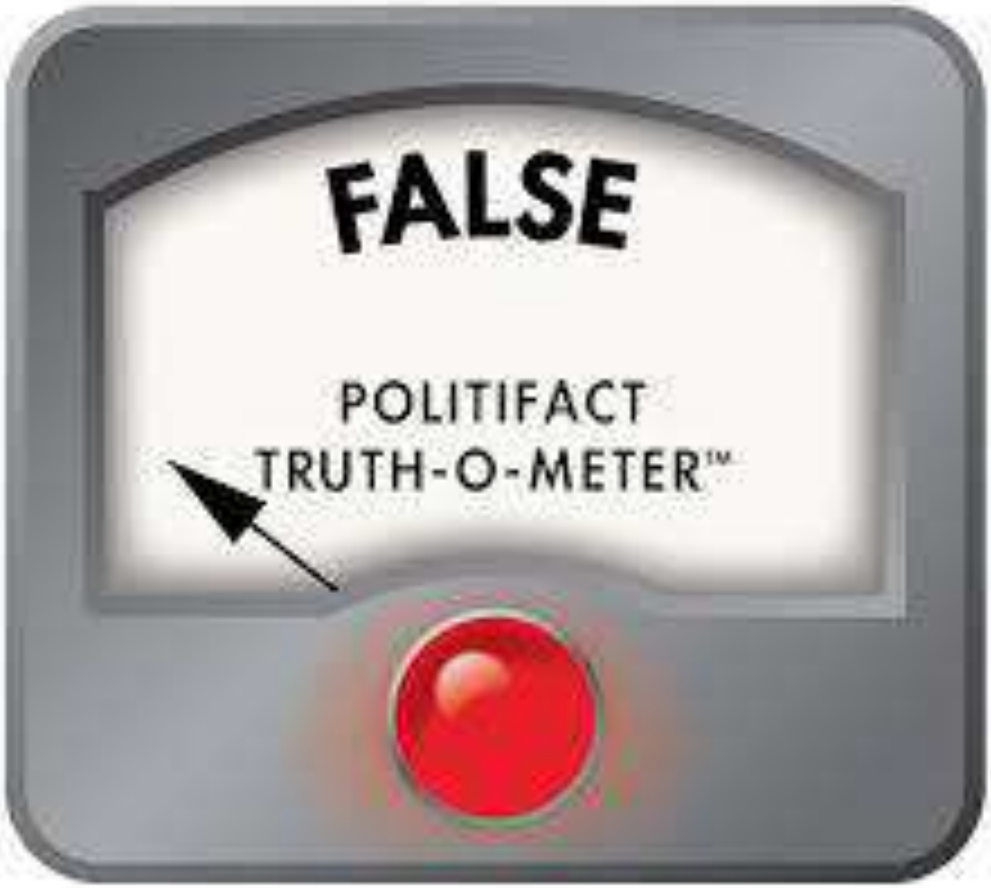
T or F:
Approx. 28% of students reported being cyberbullied in their lifetimes (ages 10 to 18)

(Hinduja and Patchin, 2018)

Actually…
Estimates vary widely…

Question #3

T or F:
April is National Bullying Prevention Month


FALSE
POLITIFACT
TRUTH-O-METER™

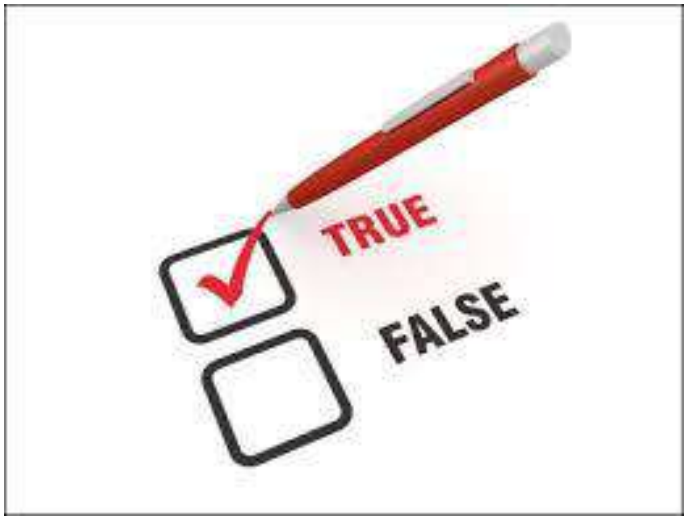
Question #4

T or F:
Traditional schoolyard bullies are more likely to become electronic bullies.

According to an article published in Deviant Behavior, traditional bullies are 2.5 times more likely to become electronic bullies.

Question #5

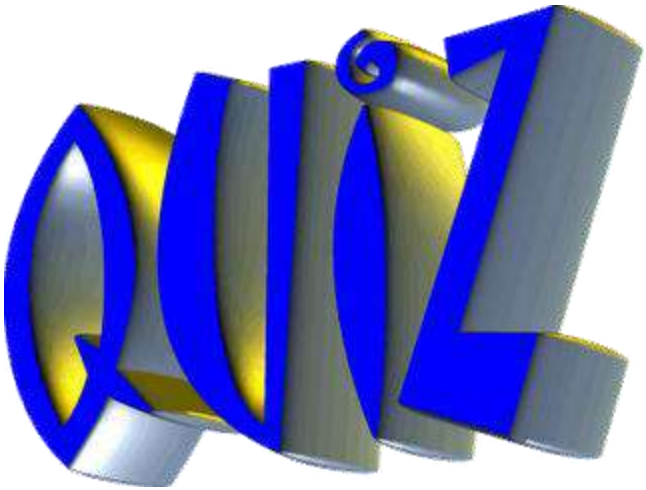
T or F: The motivation for students' engaging in cyberbullying is the same as that which motivates those who engage in offline bullying.



Bullying gives the student a sense of power over his/her victim.

Question #6

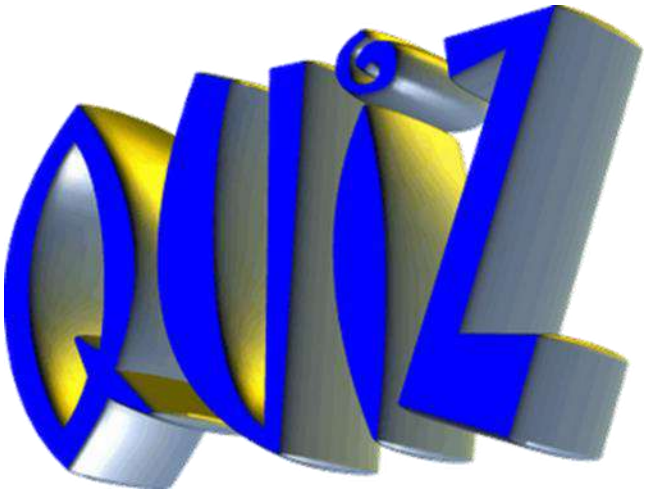
T or F:
Most bullies discontinue violent or aggressive behavior in adulthood.

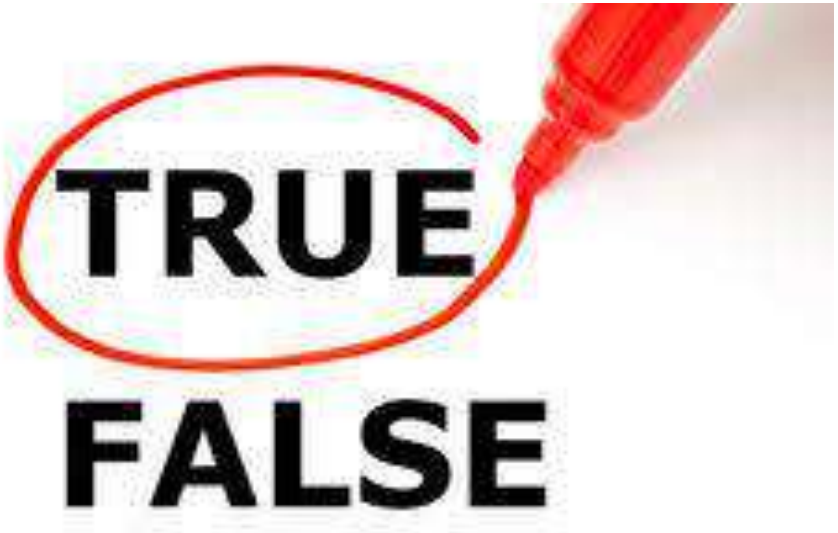


In fact…60% of bullies have at least one criminal conviction in adulthood.

Question #7

Girls are 41% more likely to experience cyberbullying at some point in their lives compared to boys





Girls (41 percent) are more likely to experience cyberbullying at some point in their life compared to boys (28 percent) (Source: teensafe.com

What is bullying?

Any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication WHETHER IT BE A SINGLE INCIDENT OR A SERIES OF INCIDENTS, that is motivated either by any ACTUAL or PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTIC, such as:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National origin
- Gender
- Age
- Gender identity and expression
- Sexual orientation
- Mental, physical, or sensory disability

HIB

“or any other distinguishing characteristic…”

- e.g. weight, socio-economic status, some physical characteristic that someone perceives as different,
an accent, etc.
- BOE’s must include “other distinguishing characteristic” in their HIB policies

That takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus OR OFF-SCHOOL GROUNDS that SUBSTANTIALLY DISRUPTS or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or rights of students

Includes electronic communications (social media, texting, etc.)

What is cyberbullying?

- Willful and repeated bullying behavior AND harm that takes place using digital communication tools.
- To threaten, humiliate, or harass peers

What is cyberbullying

- Willful: Deliberate, not accidental
- Repeated: A pattern of behavior
- Harm: Victim perceives that harm was inflicted
- Specific behaviors: Threats, rumors, hurtful comments, pictures, videos
- Usually an imbalance of power (proficiency with technology, access to pics, videos)

However…

Cross over into criminal activity/incidents of HIB

- Nude photo sharing
- Bullied for being economically challenged
- Bullied for being mentally/ physically disabled
- False identity profile
- Encouraging suicide
- Bullied for being gay or transgendered
- Any hate/racist messages
  - Motivated by any religion, ethnic, national origin characteristic

How prevalent is cyberbullying?

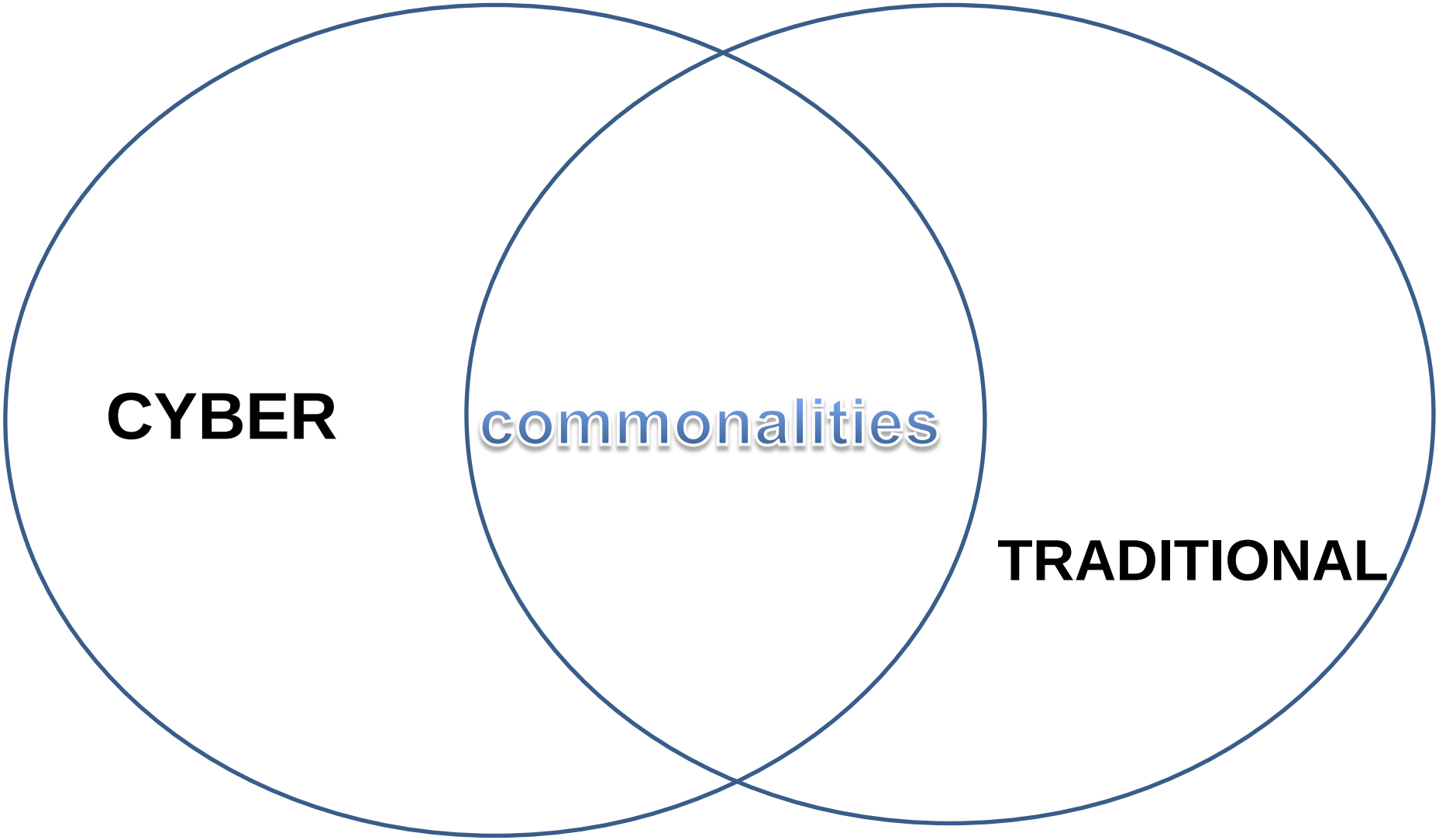
- Statistics very greatly (10 to 40%)…but…
- Approx. 28% seems to be the average (victims)
- 16% admit to being perpetrators

(Hinduja and Patchin, 2018)

Where/how does cyberbullying occur?

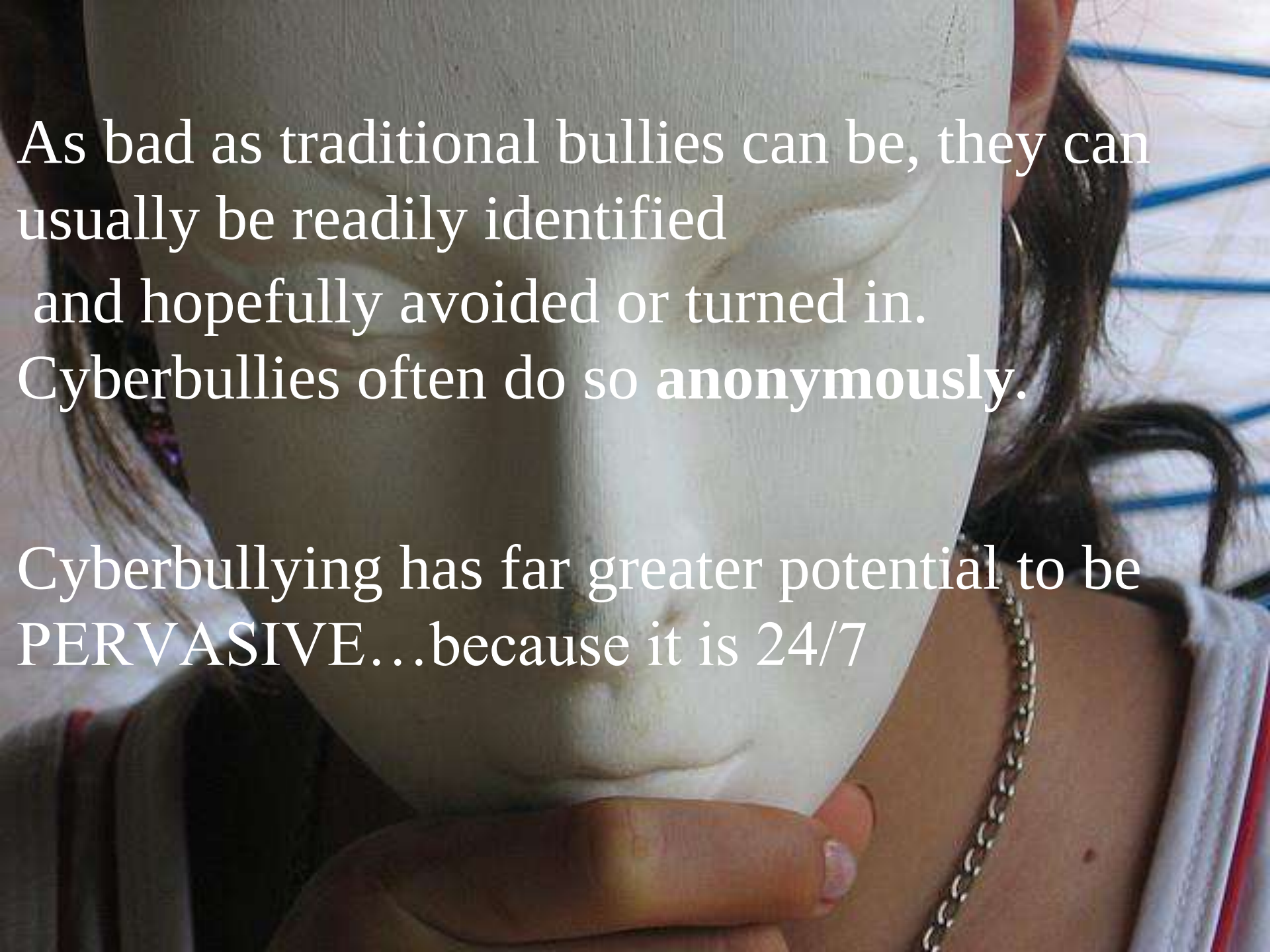
- Social Media:
  - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Yik Yak, wechat, Sarahah,

92%


CYBER
commonalities
TRADITIONAL

Cyber vs. Traditional

- COMMONALITIES
- Meant to intimidate, cause fear
- Meant to empower bully
- Highly destructive to bullied child – severe impact on health, school, quality of life
- DIFFERENCES:
- Anonymity of cyberbullying makes it easier for the perpetrator to hurt the victim
  - …say and do crueler things compared to traditional bullying
  - Kids get “cyber muscles”



As bad as traditional bullies can be, they can usually be readily identified
and hopefully avoided or turned in.
Cyberbullies often do so **anonymously.**

Cyberbullying has far greater potential to be PERVASIVE…because it is 24/7

Size of Audience

Most traditional bullying episodes occur in presence of other people (bystanders, witnesses). When bullying takes place online, potential exists for audience to be global.

Who cyberbullies?

Journal of Deviant Behavior reports that students identified as traditional bullies are 2.5x more likely to become cyberbullies than non-bullying students.

Adolescent girls are more likely than boys to partake in and experience cyber-bullying. Girls also are more likely than boys to report cyber-bullying to a parent or teacher. (Hinduja and Patchin)

Girls more likely to experience cyberbullying

Girls tend to favor social media outlets

Boys tend to post hurtful pictures, videos

A student may be cyberbullying if….

- He/she quickly switches screens or hides their device
- He/she uses their device(s) at all hours of the night
- He/she gets unusually upset if they can't use device(s)
- He/she avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- He/she seems to be using multiple online accounts, or an account not his/her own
- Avoids discussion about online activity

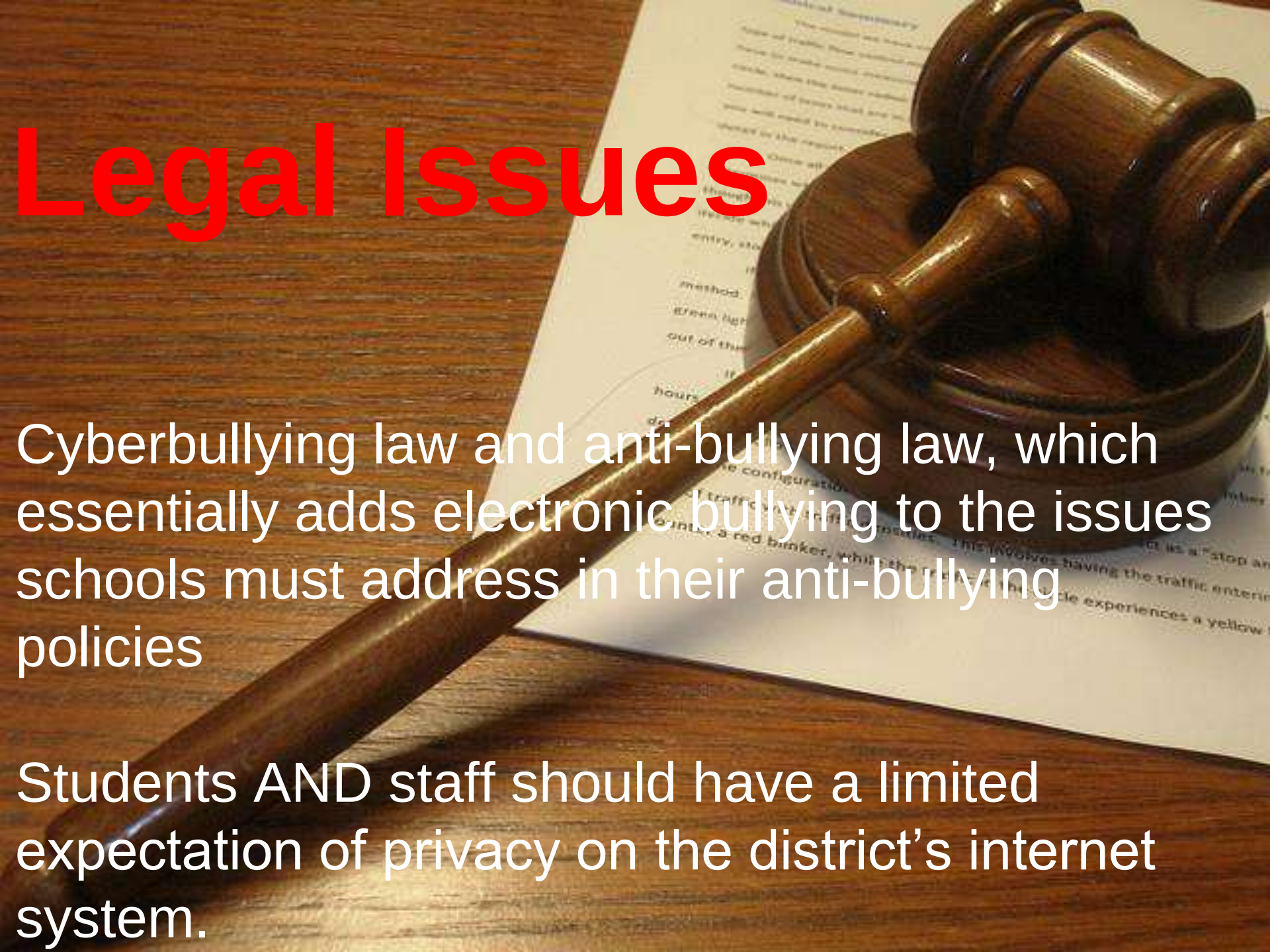
Sexting

- Statistics very widely…but sexting is a significant problem
- School districts should adopt a comprehensive anti-sexting policy
- Educate students AND staff regarding the dangers of sexting (and possible criminality)
- Sexting incidents should be reported to administration IMMEDIATELY VERBALLY…followed by an e-mail!
- Sexting incidents may also be criminal!!!!

Obstacles in the fight to stop cyberbullying

- Parents may not have the same level of technology
  - Some people still may not see the harm
- Educators are doing their part during the school day…but may not be aware of how to stop cyberbullying off school grounds
- Law enforcement may not be willing to get involved unless there is clear evidence of criminal activity

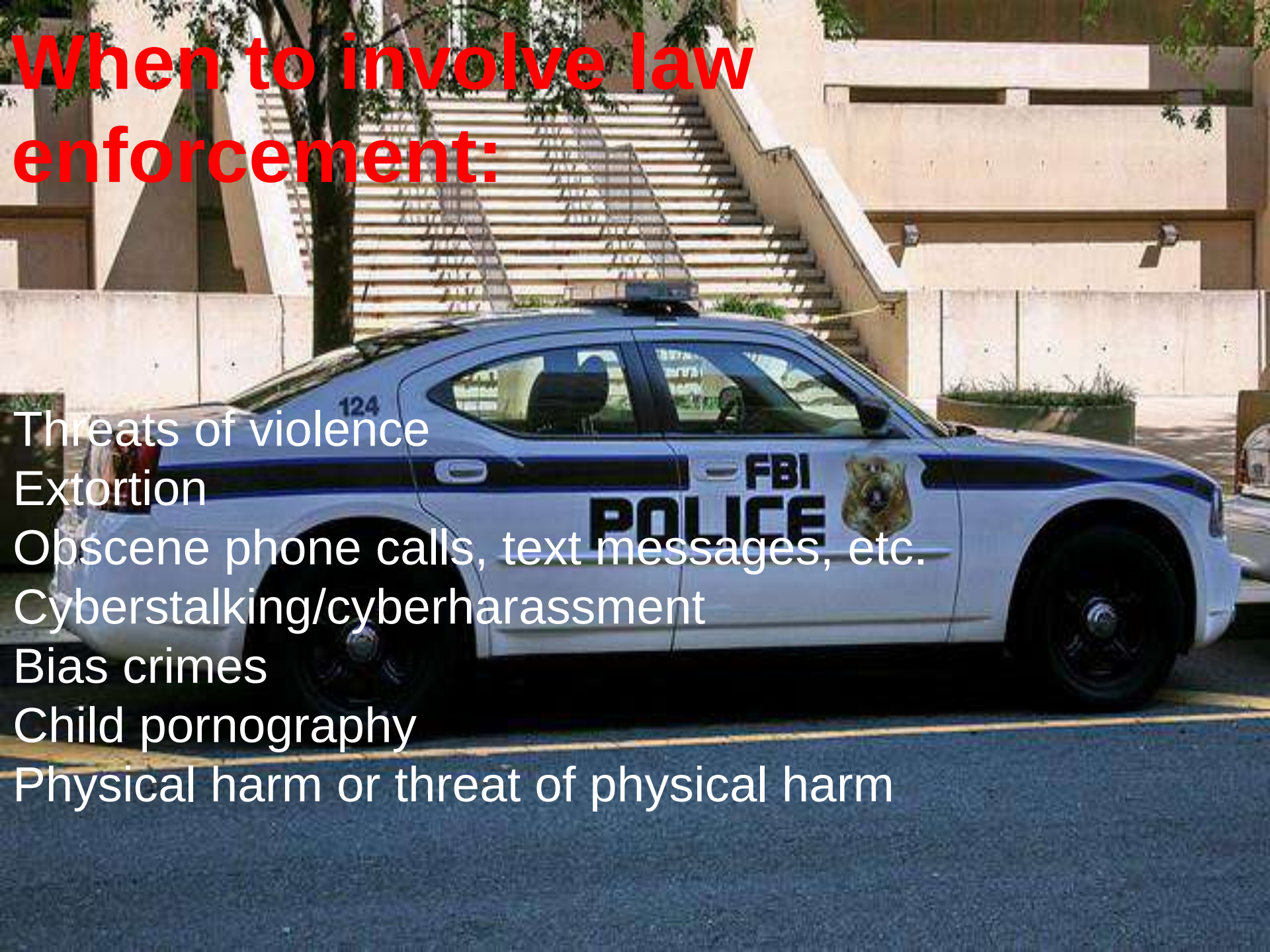
Legal Issues



Cyberbullying law and anti-bullying law, which essentially adds electronic bullying to the issues schools must address in their anti-bullying policies

Students AND staff should have a limited expectation of privacy on the district's internet system.

When to involve law enforcement:



Threats of violence
Extortion
Obscene phone calls, text messages, etc.
Cyberstalking/cyberharassment
Bias crimes
Child pornography
Physical harm or threat of physical harm

ABBR

- The law includes:
- **Electronic communications**
- Incidents off school grounds
- Reporting and procedural requirements
- Schools will be graded
- Professional development on harassment, intimidation, bullying
- An “anti-bullying” specialist in each building
- A school safety team in each building
- Week of respect established

The best policies/programs …

- Enlist help of parents – they are front line of defense
  Educate them on what cyberbullying looks like (not only victims, but perpetrators
- Educate students and staff about bullying/cyberbullying policies/consequences
- Make students understand that off campus activities may impact what happens at school, resulting in school disciplinary measures
- Teach students that no one is anonymous on the internet – each time they access the internet they generate an electronic finger print….
- Enlist the help of law enforcement

The best policies are proactive

- Educate bystanders about the importance of speaking out, providing assistance to victims, and reporting concerns and incidents
- Clear Acceptable Use Policies
  - Sent home to parents/guardians
  - Included in student handbooks
  - Included a list of commonly known and understood unacceptable communications

Electronic communication guidelines for staff

- DO Read/follow ALL district policies
- DO Copy/include administration on any communication with students/parents
- DO Use ONLY school e-mail systems to communicate with students/parents
- You can communicate with students/parents about grades/assignments VIA SCHOOL/DISTRICT PHONE OR E-MAIL…being sure to copy administrators on ANY/ALL electronic communications

Electronic communications guidelines for staff

- DO monitor posts on social media pages
- Remember that you are a representative of a government entity…so be careful that whatever you post does not reflect negatively upon the school district
  - Political views, partying pics, inappropriate attire, etc.

DON'TS

- DON'T text students/parents
- DON'T communicate with students/parents about personal matters
- DON'T communicate with students/parents via personal e-mail, personal cell phone, social media
- DON'T criticize the school/district or its policies
- DON'T accept friend requests from students/parents

REMEMBER:

All electronic communications are public AND permanent

Cyberbullying and school climate/culture

"One of our recent studies found that students who experienced cyberbullying (both those who were victims and those who admitted to cyberbullying others) perceived a poorer climate at their school …Youth were asked whether they "enjoy going to school," "feel safe at school…"

Hinduja and Patchin, 2014

PAIR AND SHARE

What is your school district's policy?

How do we change the culture of schools regarding cyberbullying and sexual orientation?

What can schools do?

?
Q
&
A