

## *Heath School*



*Boston University School of Education*

## *Survey of Bullying Brookline Public Schools, Brookline, MA*

Survey Completed: May, 2011  
Report Completed: September, 2011  
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## Introduction

The California Bully Victimization Survey (CBVS) was completed by students in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades from May 2 to May 15, 2011. The majority of students completed the survey using a web-based survey software program. Students were brought as a class to the computer lab in their school where they were asked to log-in to a website housing the survey. All surveys were completed anonymously and students were told that they could skip or leave blank any questions that they would prefer not to answer.

Third graders completed a brief survey that assessed only their experiences with bullying (excluding the question about sexual victimization). Teachers read the survey aloud and were given a script that prompted them to explain response options to students as they progressed through the questions.

Fifth, seventh, and ninth graders independently completed a lengthier survey, which used branching to skip-out students from sets of questions, based on their responses. Students who indicated that they had experienced any victimization at school were administered a series of follow-up questions about bullying. All students were directed to respond to a series of questions about bullying others, teacher responses to bullying, and their emotional functioning.

The survey was translated into seven languages: Korean, Hebrew, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese. A small number of students in the district (35) completed paper-and-pencil versions of a translated survey. An additional two students completed paper-and-pencil versions of the survey in English.

The CBVS is a reliable and valid measure of bullying (Felix et al., in press; Furlong et al., 2010). Unlike other measures of bullying, the CBVS does not use the word “bullying” or provide a lengthy definition of bullying (Greif & Furlong, 2006). Rather, it asks about the three core definitional features of bullying: (a) repetitious aggression, (b) intentionality, (c) power differential between the person being bullied and the person doing the bullying. The CBVS uses these three components of the definition to identify students who have been involved in bullying. This method was designed to reduce the effect of prior conceptualizations of the definition of “bullying” that may or may not be similar to the definition presented above, to limit the psychological impact of labeling oneself as being a “victim of bullying,” and to eliminate inaccuracies that can arise from a lack of clarity about long and complex definitions of bullying. The current report will present data on rates of bullying (victimization repeated at least 2-3 times in the past month that is done on purpose and in a mean way by someone who is described as more popular, smarter, or physically stronger than the person being bullied).

## Executive Summary

### Rates of Bullying:

- **20.2%** of Heath Students reported being involved in bullying in the past month.
- **17.1%** reported being a **victim-only** of bullying (victimization at least 2-3 times a month by someone who they perceived to be more popular, stronger, or smarter)
- **0.8%** reported being a **bully-only** of other students
- **2.3%** reported that they were both bullied by others and also a bully (we call this group **bully/victims**)

### Forms of Bully Victimization:

Students who were victims of bullying (**19.4%** of all students) reported:

- Being teased or called names (**11.3%**)
- Being left out of a group or ignored on purpose (**15.7%**)
- Having rumors or gossip spread about them (**4.2%**)
- Being hit, pushed, or physically hurt (**5.3%**)
- Being threatened (**2.7%**)
- Having sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to them (**5.0%**)
- Having their things stolen or damaged (**1.8%**)
- Being teased, having rumors spread, or threatened through the internet or text messaging (**0.0%**)

### Group Differences in Bully Victimization:

Bullying is reported most frequently by:

- 7<sup>th</sup> graders (**26.7%**)
- Followed by 5<sup>th</sup> graders (**20.0%**) and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders (**13.6%**)
- **18.6%** of males reported being bullied
- **20.3%** of females reported being bullied

Bullying was reported most frequently by students who identified as Asian/Asian American.

- Asian/Asian-American (**31.8%**)
- White/Caucasian (**19.0%**)
- Other (**18.2%**)
- Multi-Ethnic (**11.1%**)
- Black/African American (**0.0%**)

Bullying was reported more frequently by students who identified as Non-Hispanic.

- Hispanic/Latino (**10.0%**)
- Non-Hispanic/Latino (**21.2%**)

### **Reasons that Students Believe Bullying Occurs:**

Students reported that they are bullied because others think...

- My friends are weird (**38.9%**)
- Other reason (**33.3%**)
- I cry a lot (**27.8%**)
- I'm fat (**22.2%**)
- I am a wimp (**22.2%**)
- I get good grades (**22.2%**)
- I am too short (**22.2%**)

### **Where Bullying Occurs:**

Students who are bullied report it occurs:

- The playground or sports field (**87.5%**)
- Lunch or eating areas including cafeteria (**41.7%**)
- Classrooms (**37.5%**)
- Hallways (**20.8**)

### **Responses to Bullying:**

When provided with the statement "I try to help other students who are picked on or bullied", almost all students respond that it is "certainly true" for them (**52.8%**) or "somewhat true" for them (**41.3%**). A smaller percentage (**4.2%**) reported that they do not try to help others who are picked on or bullied.

Students reported that when students are doing mean and hurtful things to one another, teachers and school staff "sometimes" or "often":

- Notice that it is happening (**85.7%**)
- Try to stop it (**88.5%**)
- Ignore it (**50.4%**)
- Talk about it with students who are involved (**90.5%**)
- Listen to both sides of the story (**87.8%**)
- Make fair decisions (**91.2%**)
- Have consequences for the person who is being mean (**85.1%**)
- Support the person who has been hurt (**94.7%**)
- Understand the situation (**88.7%**)

### **Effects of Bullying on Students:**

Students completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a brief measure of emotional/behavioral problems. Scores above a cut-point indicate the likely presence of an emotional/behavioral problem.

Students involved in bullying were more often above the cut-point.

- **5.6%** of bullied students were above the cut-point
- **3.6%** of non-bullied students were above the cut-point

## Results

### Description of Student Participants

This survey was completed by 129 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Figure 1.1 Participants by School

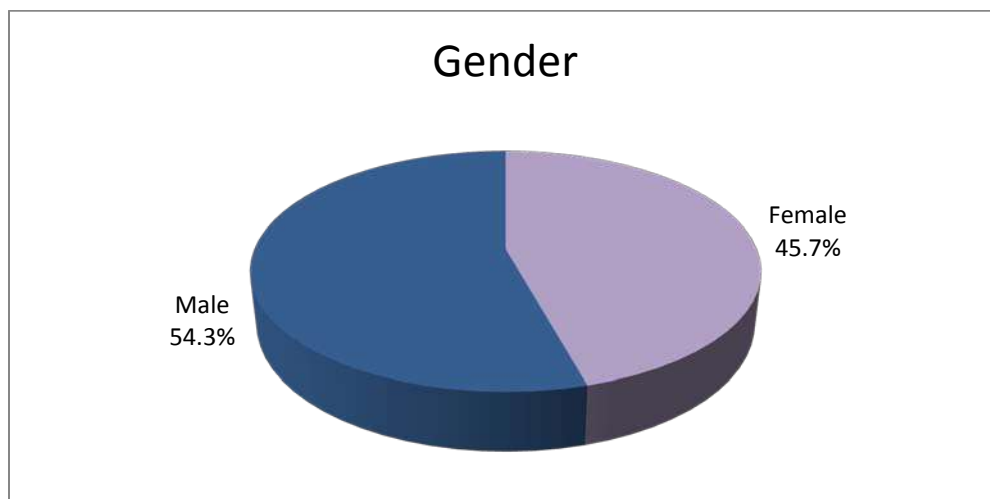
School	Number
Runkle	160
Baker	211
Driscoll	156
Heath	129
Lawrence*	60
Lincoln	152
Pierce	180
Devotion	208
Brookline High	331
Total	1,587

\* Only 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Lawrence School students completed the survey

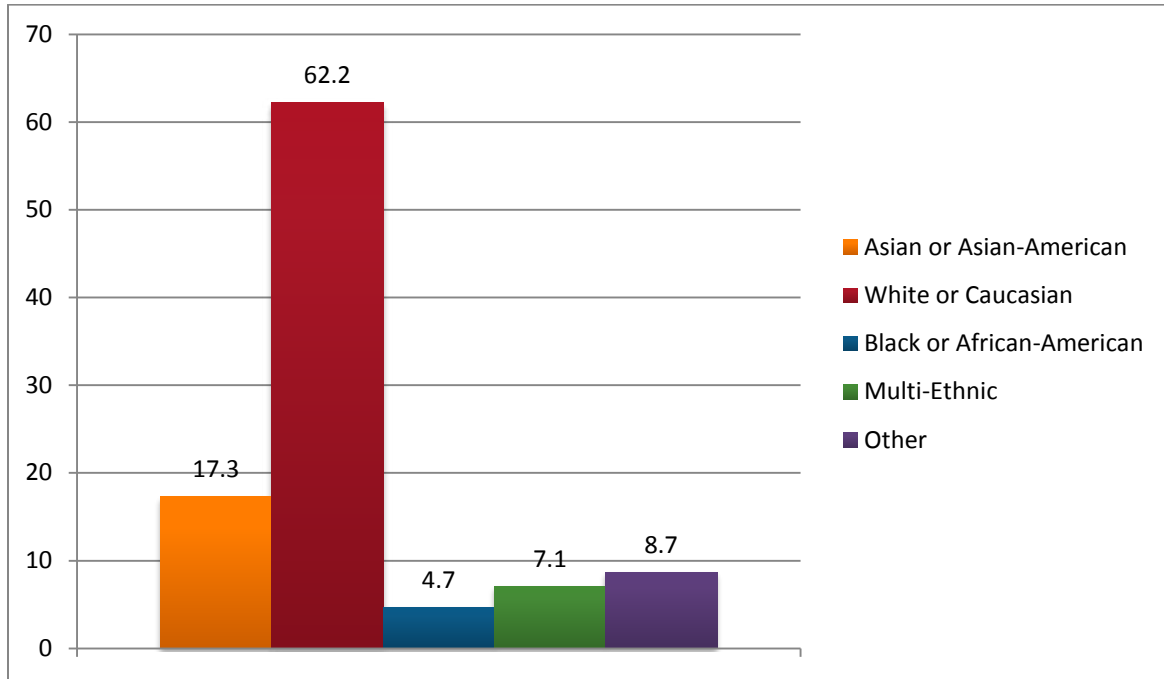
Figure 1.2 Participants by Grade

Grade	Number
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	44
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	55
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	30

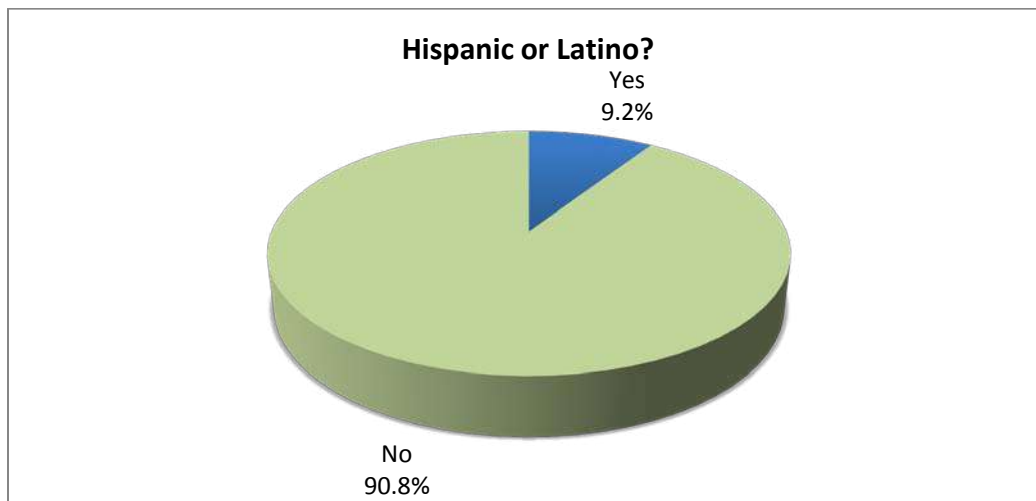
Figure 1.3 Participants by Gender (%)



**Figure 1.4 Participants by Race (%)**



**Figure 1.5 Participants by Ethnicity (%)**

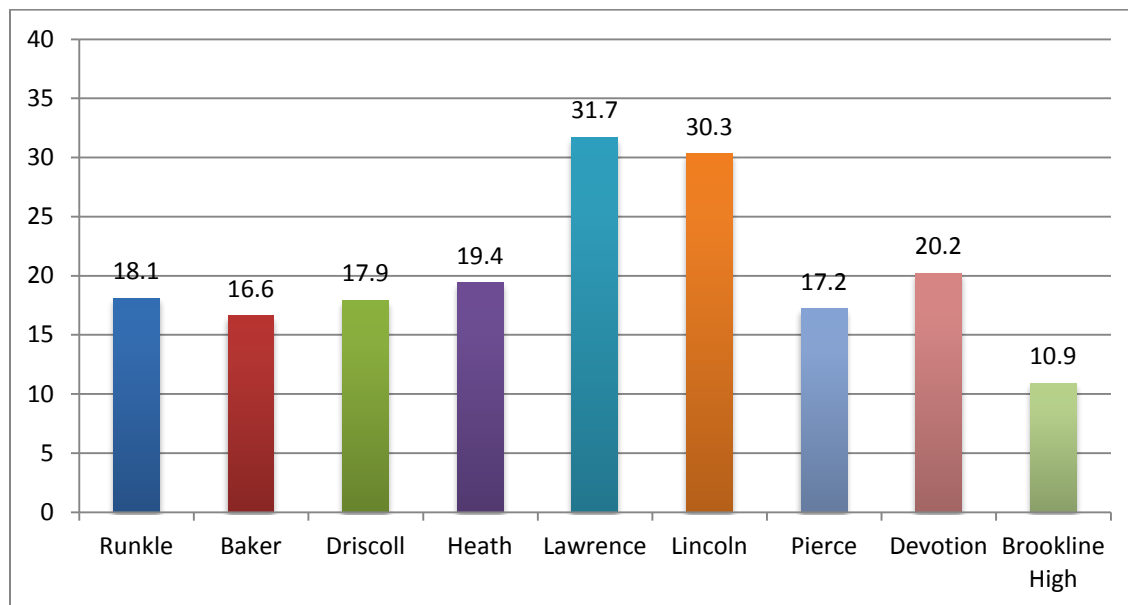


## Students Reporting Bullying (25 Students)

The California Bully Victimization Scale defines bullying as repeated victimization (at least 2 to 3 times a month) and an imbalance of power (the person doing the bullying is perceived to be stronger, more popular, or smarter). Students are asked about eight different forms of bullying:

- Being teased or called names (Teasing)
- Being left out of a group or ignored on purpose (Ignored)
- Having rumors or gossip spread about them (Rumors)
- Being hit, pushed, or physically hurt (Hit)
- Being threatened (Threatened)
- Having sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to them (Sexual)
- Having their things stolen or damaged (Stealing)
- Being teased, having rumors spread, or threatened through the internet or text messaging (Internet)

**Figure 2.1 Rates of Bullying by School (%)\***



\* Note: Only 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Lawrence completed this survey.



**Figure 2.2 Rates of Forms of Bullying by School (%)**

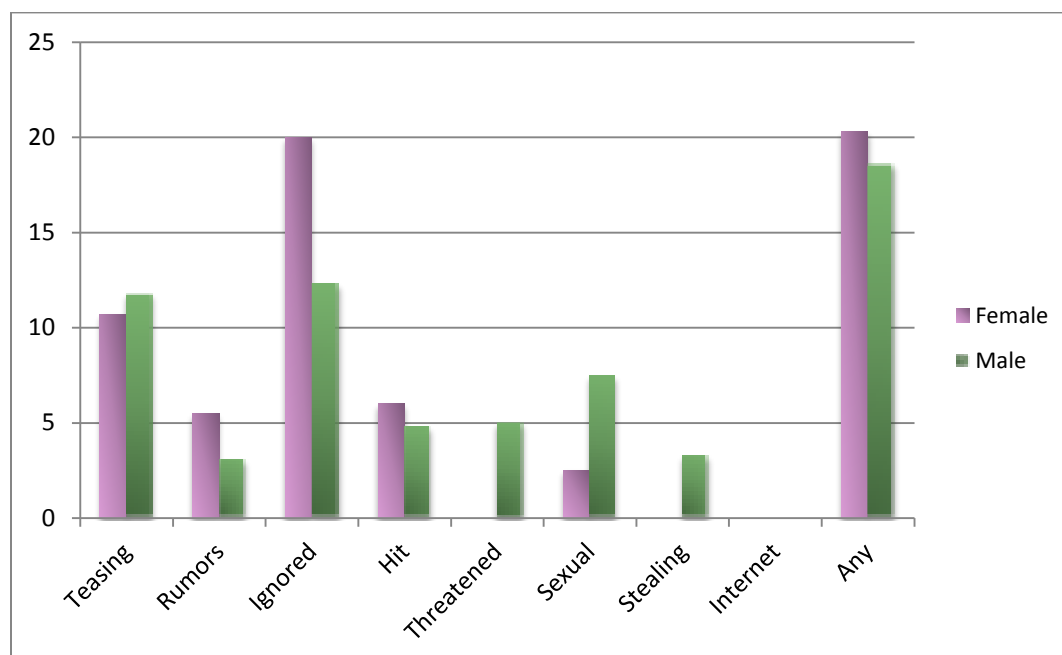
Form	Runkle	Baker	Driscoll	Heath	Lawrence	Lincoln	Pierce	Devotion	BHS	Lawrence 3rd Grade*
Teasing	10.1	8.5	9.1	11.3	26.7	20.5	9.6	13.6	6.0	26.7
Rumors	6.4	5.7	3.9	4.2	10.0	9.3	6.7	8.5	5.5	10.0
Ignored	9.2	5.7	5.2	15.7	15.0	11.4	8.4	8.4	4.3	15.0
Hit	5.8	3.8	6.7	5.3	10.0	10.1	3.9	5.4	1.5	10.0
Threatened	5.7	3.3	2.6	2.7	13.3	4.8	5.1	5.1	1.8	13.3
Sexual	1.9	3.3	1.0	5.0	N/A	4.3	4.8	3.9	3.3	N/A
Stealing	3.8	1.4	3.3	1.8	10.0	6.0	1.1	2.5	0.6	10.0
Internet	2.6	1.0	2.6	0.0	3.6	4.8	1.8	3.5	2.7	3.6
Any Form	18.1	16.6	17.9	19.4	31.7	30.3	17.2	20.2	10.9	31.7

Note: Only 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Lawrence completed this survey. Comparison to other schools should be interpreted with caution, as results from other K-8 schools reflect data from students in three grades.

**Figure 2.3 Rates of Forms of Bullying by Grade (%)**

Form	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Teasing	9.8	13.0	10.3
Rumors	5.1	1.9	6.9
Ignored	14.7	17.6	13.3
Hit	6.1	7.8	0.0
Threatened	6.9	2.0	0.0
Sexual	N/A	3.9	6.9
Stealing	6.9	0.0	0.0
Internet	0.0	0.0	0.0
Any Form	13.6	20.0	26.7

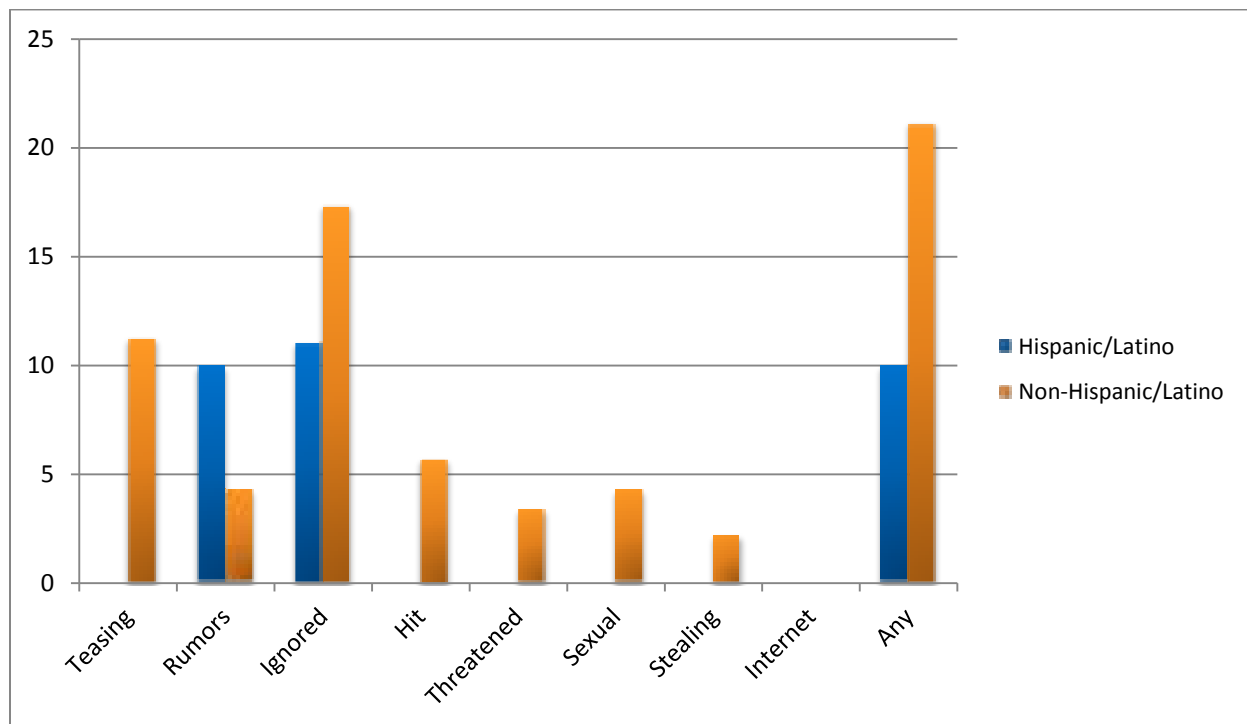
**Figure 2.4 Rates of Forms of Bullying by Gender (%)**



**Figure 2.5 Rates of Forms of Bullying by Race (%)**

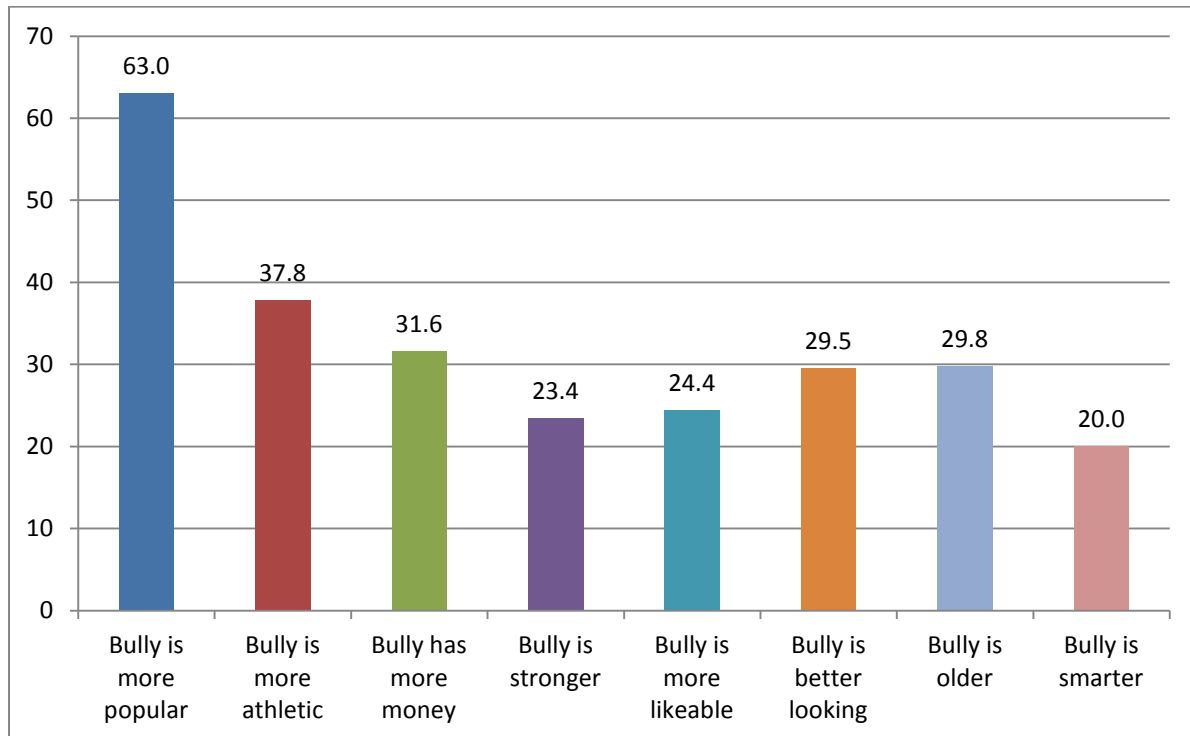
Form	Asian/ Asian-American	White/ Caucasian	Black/African-American	Multi-Ethnic	Other
Teasing	23.8	9.1	0.0	12.5	9.1
Rumors	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	10.0
Ignored	21.1	16.7	0.0	12.5	10.0
Hit	15.8	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Threatened	5.3	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sexual	12.5	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stealing	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Internet	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Any Form	31.8	19.0	0.0	11.1	18.2

**Figure 2.6 Rates of Forms of Bullying by Ethnicity (%)**



The following types of power imbalance were reported by students experiencing repeated victimization:

Figure 2.7 Power Imbalances (%)



**Figure 2.8 Reasons for Bullying (%)**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Students who checked “yes”</b>
They think my friends are weird	38.9
Other	33.3
They think I cry a lot	27.8
They think I'm fat	22.2
They think I am a wimp	22.2
They think I get good grades	22.2
They think I am too short	22.2
They think I am different	16.7
They don't like what I wear	16.7
They think my face looks funny	11.1
They think I'm too skinny	11.1
They think I look too young	11.1
They don't like the clothes I wear	11.1
They think my family has a lot of money	11.1
They think I get angry a lot	11.1
They think I can't get along with other people	11.1
They think I look too old	5.6
They think my family is poor	5.6
They say someone in my family has a disability	5.6
They think I am too tall	5.6
They don't like that I am in special education	5.6
They say I'm gay	5.6
They don't like the way I talk	5.6
They don't like the language I speak	5.6
They don't like my race or ethnic group	0.0
They don't like that I'm sick a lot	0.0
They say I have a disability	0.0
They think I get bad grades	0.0
They don't like where I live	0.0
They don't like the color of my skin	0.0
They don't like the country I'm from	0.0
They don't like my parents	0.0
They don't like my brother	0.0

**Students who responded “Other” listed reasons including:** “Been taking my friends apart”, “Called my best friend adopted”, “so that I feel worse about myself”, “they think I’m annoying” and “too silly”.

**Figure 2.9 Where Students are Bullied (%)**

Location	Students who checked “yes”
The playground or sports field	87.5
Lunch or eating areas including cafeteria	41.7
Classrooms	37.5
Hallways	20.8
Somewhere else	16.7
Extended day	16.7
Bathrooms or locker rooms	8.3
The way to or from school	8.3
The school bus	4.2
The public bus or T	0.0

\*Note: Only a subset of students attend extended day, take the school bus, and take the public bus or T to school.

**Students who responded “Somewhere else” listed places including:** “RAFT dances,” “not in school campuses,” “field trip,” “gym.”

**Figure 2.10 Who Students Speak to about Bullying (%)**

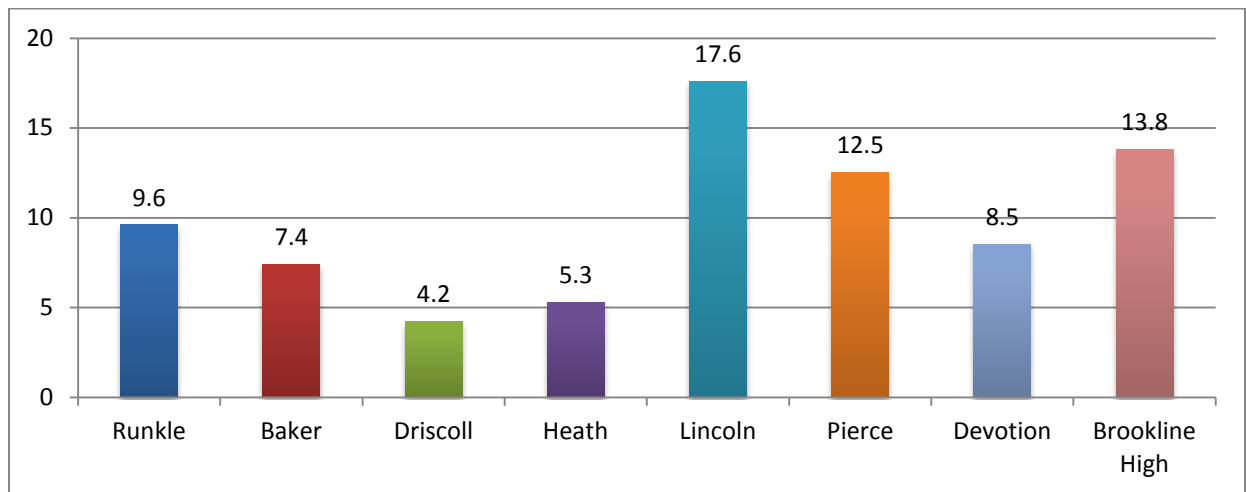
Person/People	Students who checked “yes”
Friends	61.1
Adult at home	55.6
Another family member like a brother, sister, cousin, etc.	27.8
Keep it to themselves and don’t talk to anyone	22.2
Teacher at school	22.2
Someone else	11.1
Counselor at school	5.6
Principal or Vice Principal	5.6
Another adult at school	0.0

**Students who responded “Someone else” listed people including:** “I keep some things to myself.”

## Students Who Bully Others (4 Students)

We present rates of students who report bullying others. (Note: 3<sup>rd</sup> graders did not receive this section of the survey.)

**Figure 3.1 Rates of Bullying Others by School (%)**



## Status of Involvement in Bullying

Students were classified into four groups based on their responses to questions about involvement in bullying. Students were in the following categories:

- Uninvolved in bullying (79.8%)
- Involved as a victim-only (17.1%)
- Involved as a bully-only (0.8%)
- Involved as a victim and a bully (we call this group “bully/victims” (2.3%))

## Responses to Bullying

**Student Responses to Bullying** (Note: 3<sup>rd</sup> graders did not receive this section of the survey.)

Students were asked to indicate whether the following statement “I try to help other students who are being picked on or bullied” is true for them.

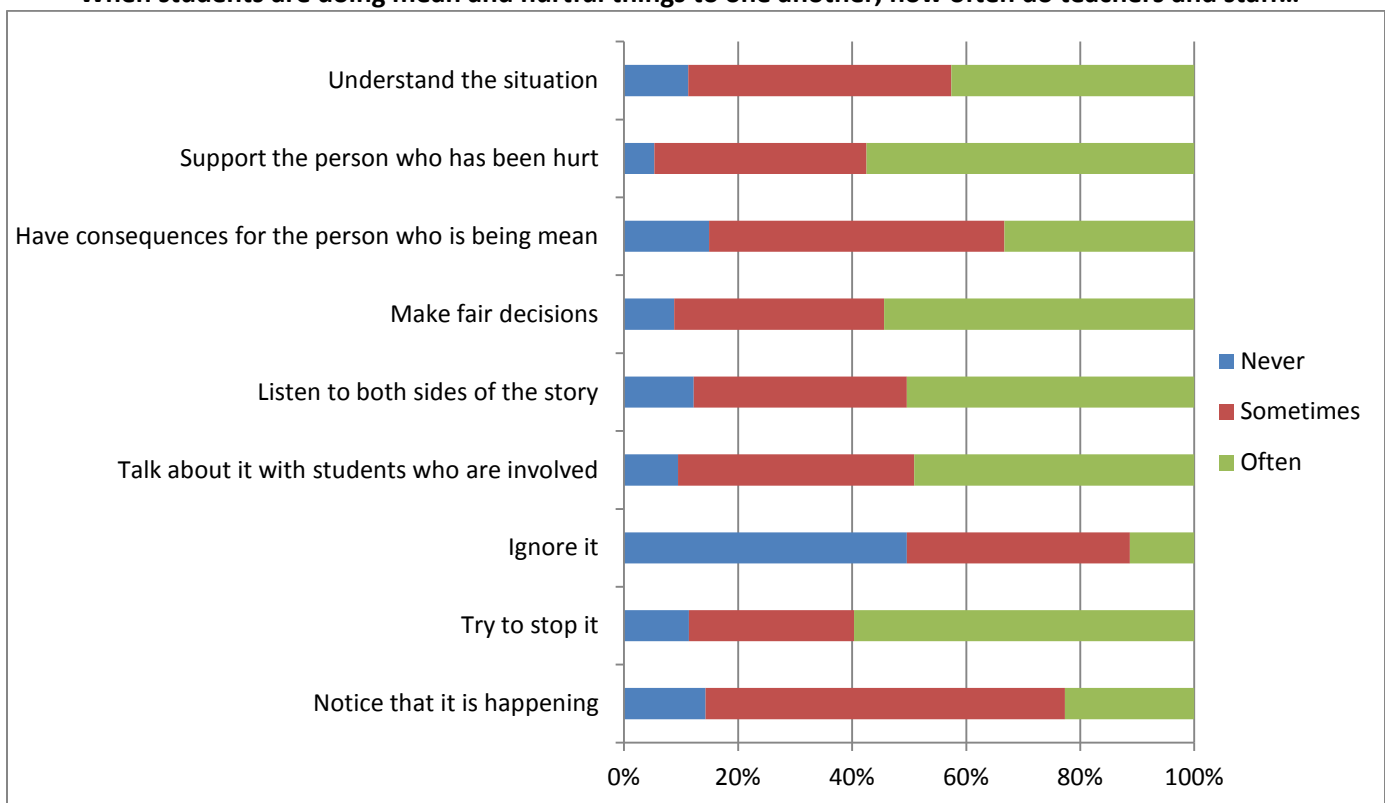
**Figure 4.1 Student Responses to Witnessing Bullying (%)**

I try to help other students who are being picked on or bullied	Student Responses
Not True	4.2
Somewhat True	41.3
Certainly True	52.8

## **Teacher Responses to Bullying**

**Figure 4.2 Teacher Responses to Bullying (%)**

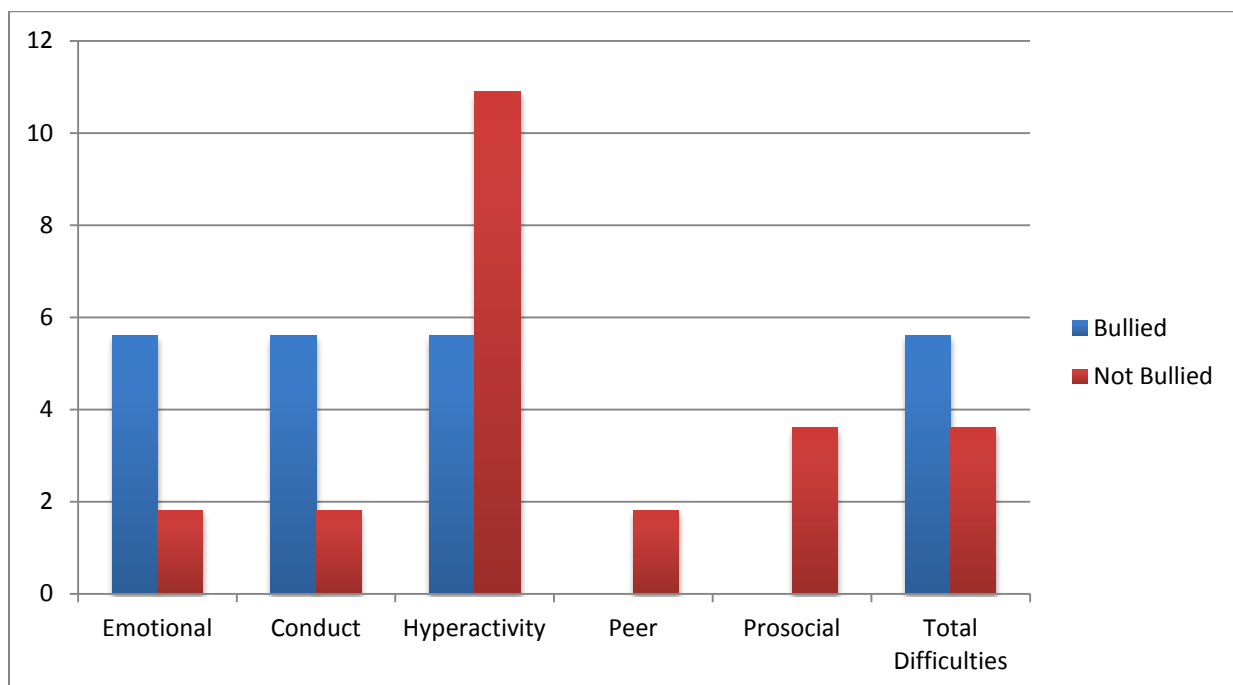
**When students are doing mean and hurtful things to one another, how often do teachers and staff...**



## Bullying and Emotional Wellbeing

Students completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a brief measure of emotional/behavioral problems. The SDQ questions assess problems in 5 areas: Emotional Problems, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity Problems, Peer Problems, and Prosocial Behavior. A sum of these 5 categories is calculated to derive a Total Difficulties score. Scores on each of these scales above a cut-point are likely to indicate the presence of an emotional/behavioral problem.

**Figure 5.1 Rates of students above the cut-point by involvement with bullying (%)**



Bullied students were at much greater risk for emotional/behavioral problems than students who were not bullied.

Students were asked if they miss school to avoid being picked on or bullied. Among all students responding to the survey, **1.4%** reported this was “somewhat true” or “certainly true” for them.

- **0.0%** of bullied students reported missing school to avoid bullying
- **1.8%** of non-bullied students reported missing school to avoid bullying



**Figure 5.2 Who Students Speak to When they are Upset or Having a Hard Time**

<b>Person</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Friends</b>	59.2
<b>Adult at home</b>	41.7
<b>Another family member like a brother, sister, cousin, etc.</b>	26.7
<b>Keep it to themselves and don't talk to anyone</b>	16.7
<b>Teacher at school</b>	15.8
<b>Someone else</b>	7.5
<b>Counselor at school</b>	2.5
<b>Another adult at school</b>	2.5
<b>Principal or Vice Principal</b>	1.7