

Runkle School



Boston University School of Education

Survey of Bullying Brookline Public Schools, Brookline, MA

Survey Completed: May, 2011
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Introduction

The California Bully Victimization Survey (CBVS) was completed by students in the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th 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:

- **21.2%** of Runkle Students reported being involved in bullying in the past month.
- **15.0%** 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)
- **3.1%** reported being a **bully-only** of other students
- **3.1%** 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 (**18.1%** of all students) reported:

- Being teased or called names (**10.1%**)
- Being left out of a group or ignored on purpose (**9.2%**)
- Having rumors or gossip spread about them (**6.4%**)
- Being hit, pushed, or physically hurt (**5.8%**)
- Being threatened (**5.7%**)
- Having sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to them (**1.9%**)
- Having their things stolen or damaged (**3.8%**)
- Being teased, having rumors spread, or threatened through the internet or text messaging (**2.6%**)

Group Differences in Bully Victimization:

Bullying is reported most frequently by:

- 7th graders (**28.3%**)
- Followed by 3rd graders (**15.5%**) and 5th graders (**12.5%**)
- **19.8%** of males reported being bullied
- **16.2%** of females reported being bullied

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

- Black/African American (**41.7%**)
- White/Caucasian (**18.1%**)
- Asian/Asian-American (**17.1%**)
- Other (**11.1%**)
- Multi-Ethnic (**0.0%**)

Bullying was reported more frequently by students who identified as Hispanic/Latino.

- Hispanic/Latino (**23.5%**)
- Non-Hispanic/Latino (**16.8%**)

Reasons that Students Believe Bullying Occurs:

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

- I'm fat (**23.8%**)
- I am a wimp (**23.8%**)
- I am different (**23.8%**)

Where Bullying Occurs:

Students who are bullied report it occurs:

- Hallways (**55.2%**)
- Lunch or eating areas including cafeteria (**51.7%**)
- The playground or sports field(**51.7%**)

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 (**54.5%**) or “somewhat true” for them (**42.6%**). A smaller percentage (**3.0%**) 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 (**81.8%**)
- Try to stop it (**90.1%**)
- Ignore it (**53.7%**)
- Talk about it with students who are involved (**90.0%**)
- Listen to both sides of the story (**85.6%**)
- Make fair decisions (**87.7%**)
- Have consequences for the person who is being mean (**82.0%**)
- Support the person who has been hurt (**88.2%**)
- Understand the situation (**84.9%**)

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.

- **4.8%** of bullied students were above the cut-point
- **0%** of non-bullied students were above the cut-point

Students were asked if they miss school to avoid being picked on or bullied. Among all students responding to the survey, **2.9%** reported this was “somewhat true” or “certainly true” for them.

- **14.3%** of bullied students reported missing school to avoid bullying
- **0.0%** of non-bullied students reported missing school to avoid bullying

Results

Description of Student Participants

This survey was completed by 160 students in the 3rd, 5th, and 7th 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 3rd grade Lawrence School students completed the survey

Figure 1.2 Participants by Grade

Grade	Number
3 rd Grade	58
5 th Grade	56
7 th Grade	46

Figure 1.3 Participants by Gender (%)

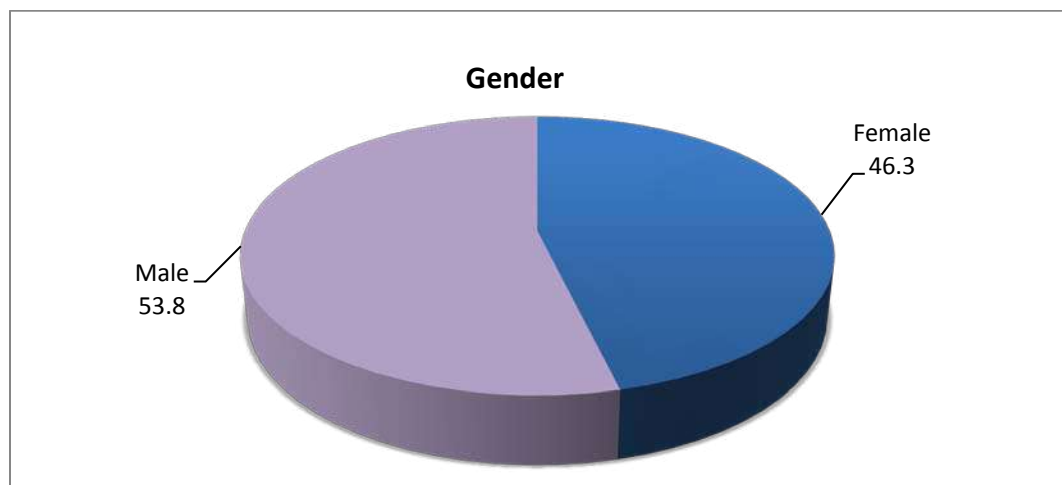


Figure 1.4 Participants by Race (%)

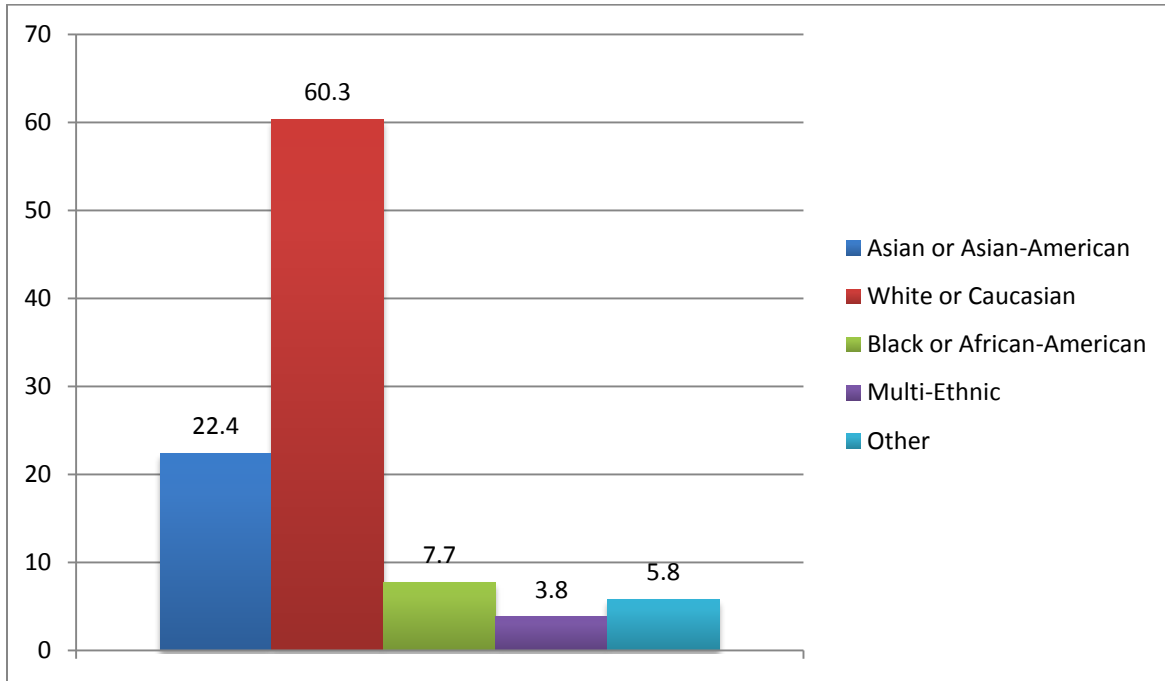
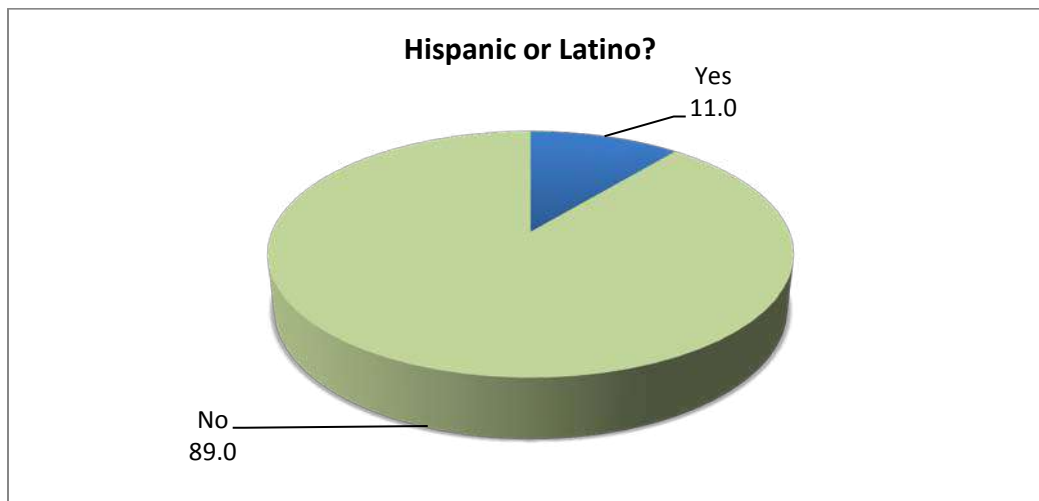


Figure 1.5 Participants by Ethnicity (%)

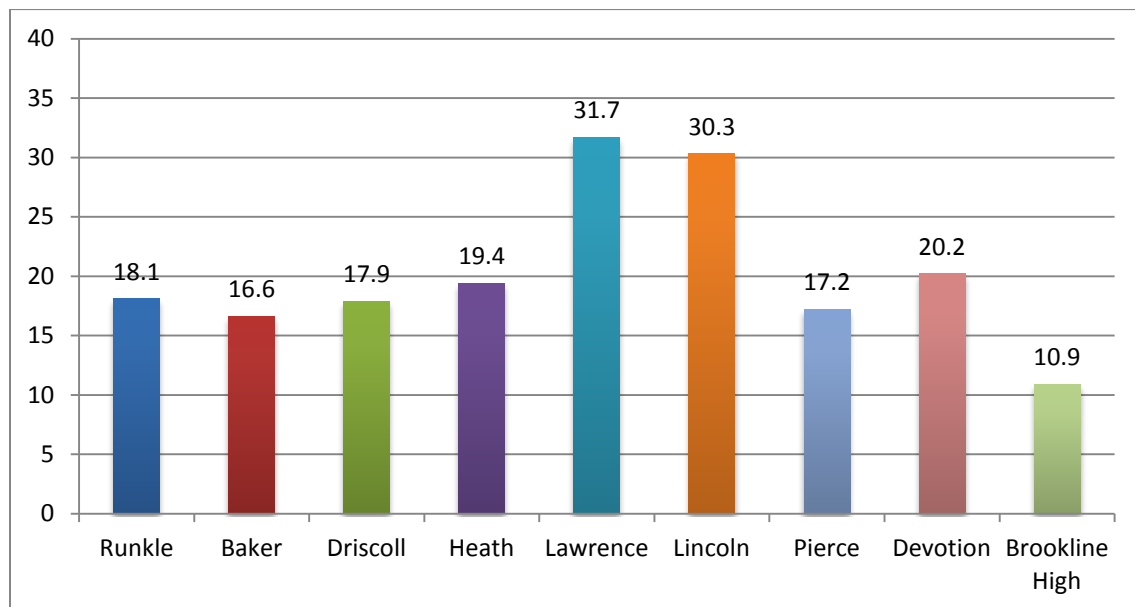


Students Reporting Bullying (29 Students)

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 3rd 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 3rd graders at Lawrence completed this survey.

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

Form	3 rd Grade	5 th Grade	7 th Grade
Teasing	12.3	5.4	13.0
Rumors	1.8	5.6	13.0
Ignored	11.1	5.7	10.9
Hit	8.9	0.0	8.7
Threatened	8.6	3.7	4.3
Sexual	N/A	0.0	2.2
Stealing	5.5	3.6	2.2
Internet	3.7	1.8	2.2
Any Form	15.5	12.5	28.3

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

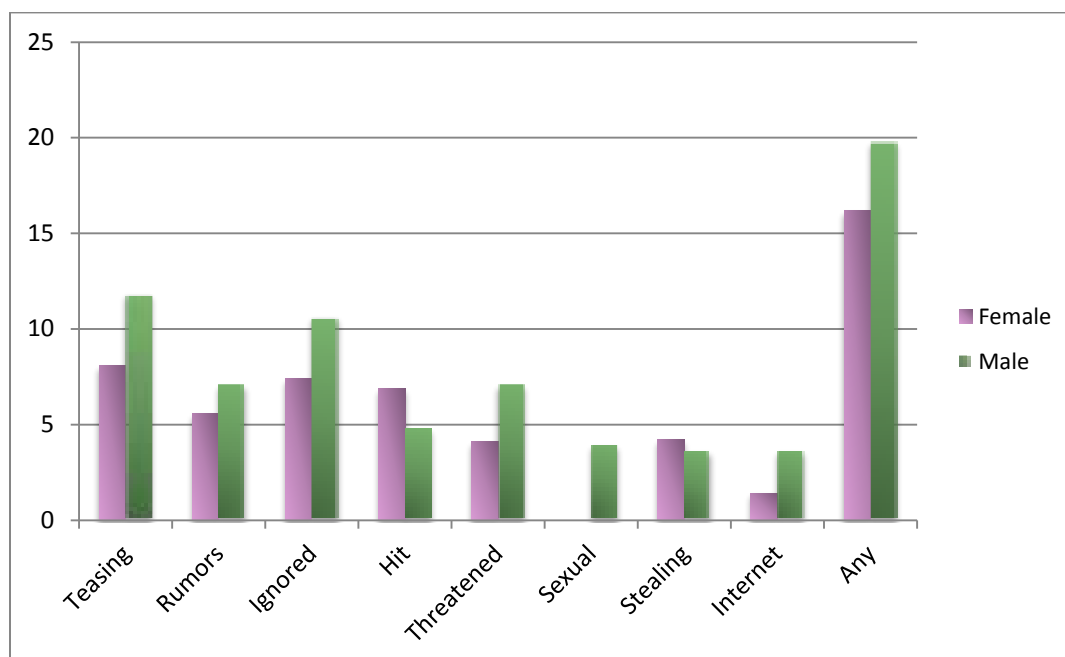
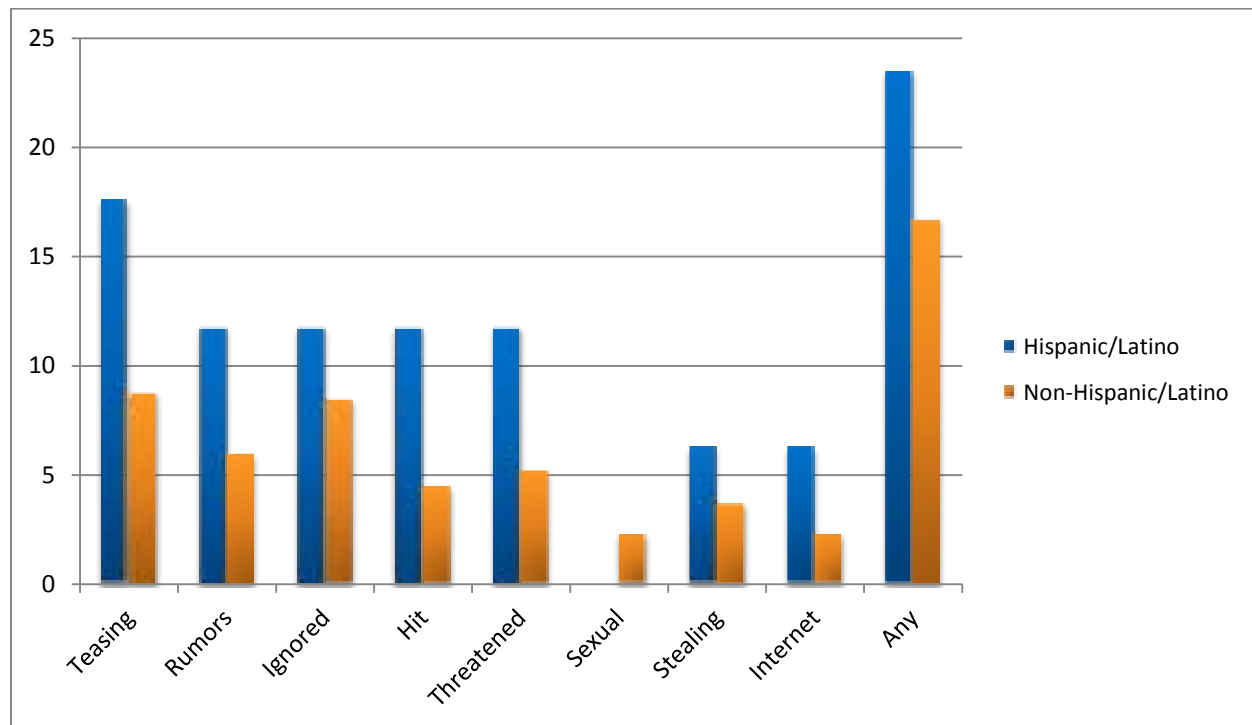


Figure 2.5 Rates of Forms of Bullying by Race (%)

Form	Asian/ Asian-American	White/ Caucasian	Black/African-American	Multi-Ethnic	Other
Teasing	8.8	9.6	25.0	0.0	11.1
Rumors	3.0	6.5	16.7	0.0	11.1
Ignored	8.8	9.0	27.3	0.0	0.0
Hit	9.1	4.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
Threatened	5.7	5.4	16.7	0.0	0.0
Sexual	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stealing	5.7	3.3	10.0	0.0	0.0
Internet	2.9	2.2	10.0	0.0	0.0
Any Form	17.1	18.1	41.7	0.0	11.1

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 (%)

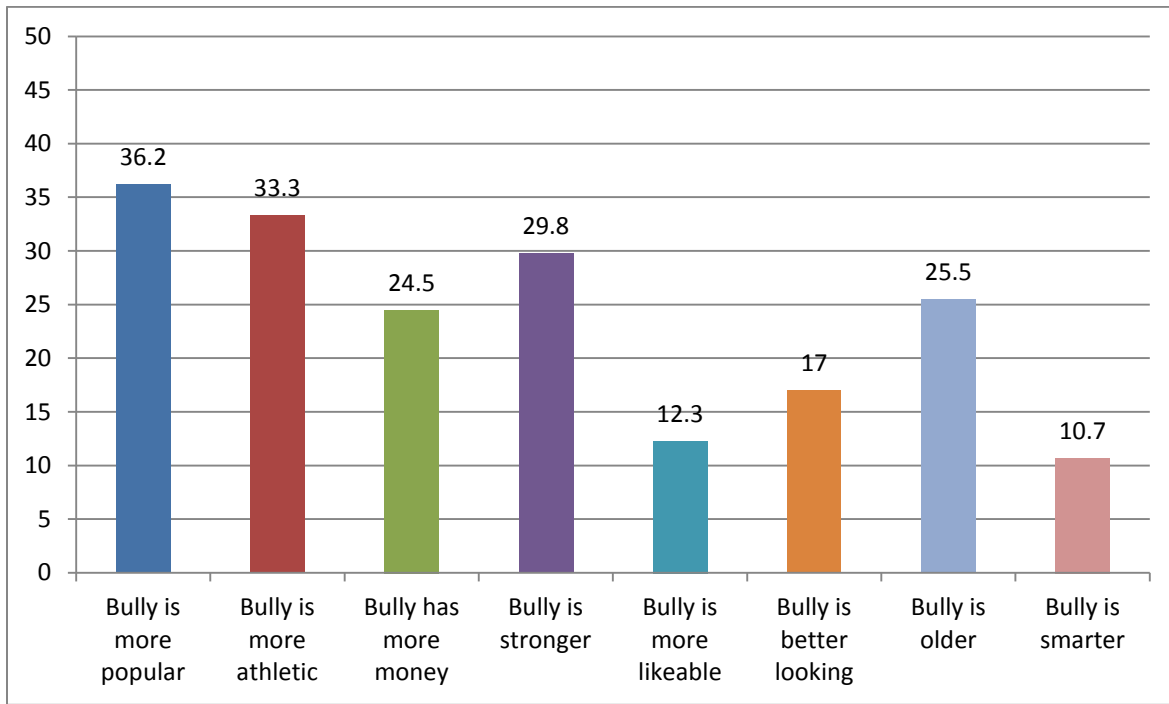


Figure 2.8 Reasons for Bullying (%)

Reason	Students who checked “yes”
They think I'm fat	23.8
They think I am a wimp	23.8
They think I am different	23.8
Other	20.0
They think my face looks funny	19.0
They think my friends are weird	19.0
They think I get angry a lot	19.0
They think I look too young	14.3
They think I get bad grades	14.3
They don't like the clothes I wear	14.3
They don't like what I wear	14.3
They think I am too short	14.3
They think I cry a lot	14.3
They say I'm gay	14.3
They don't like the language I speak	14.3
They say I have a disability	9.5
They don't like the color of my skin	9.5
They don't like my brother	9.5
They think my family has a lot of money	9.5
They think I am too tall	9.5
They don't like my race or ethnic group	4.8
They think I get good grades	4.8
They don't like where I live	4.8
They don't like the country I'm from	4.8
They think my family is poor	4.8
They don't like the way I talk	4.8
They think I'm too skinny	0.0
They think I look too old	0.0
They don't like that I'm sick a lot	0.0
They don't like my parents	0.0
They don't like my sister	0.0
They say someone in my family has a disability	0.0
They don't like that I am in special education	0.0
They think I can't get along with other people	0.0

Students who responded “Other” listed reasons including: “Hate my personality”, “the person I like”, “they hate me”, and “they think I’m annoying”.

Figure 2.9 Where Students are Bullied (%)

Location	Students who checked “yes”
Hallways	55.2
Lunch or eating areas including cafeteria	51.7
Classrooms	51.7
The playground or sports field	48.3
The way to or from school	31.0
The school bus	31.0
Somewhere else	24.1
Bathrooms or locker rooms	17.2
Extended day	10.3
The public bus or T	0.0

*Not all students attend extended-day, and caution must be used when comparing extended day to other locations.

Students who responded “Somewhere else” listed places including: “after school,” “gym,” “Internet,” “my home.”

Figure 2.10 Who Students Speak to about Bullying (%)

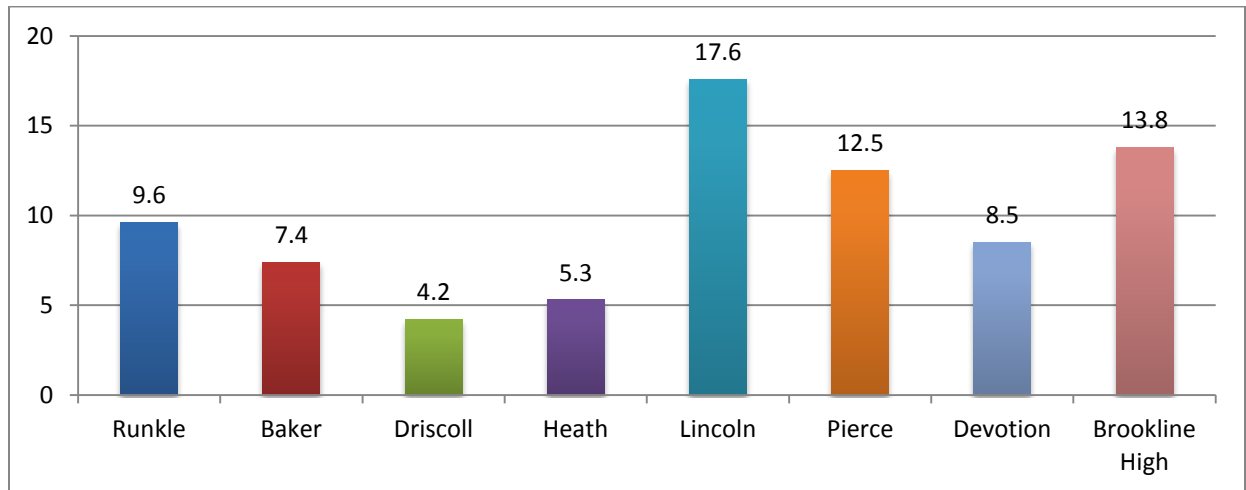
Person/People	Students who checked “yes”
Adult at home	45
Friends	35
Keep it to themselves and don’t talk to anyone	30
Teacher at school	25
Counselor at school	20
Principal or Vice Principal	20
Another family member like a brother, sister, cousin, etc.	15
Someone else	15
Another adult at school	5

Students who responded “Someone else” listed people including: “my dog,” “psychologist.”

Students Who Bully Others (10 Students)

We present rates of students who report bullying others. (Note: 3rd 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 (**78.8%**)
- Involved as a victim-only (**15.0%**)
- Involved as a bully-only (**3.1%**)
- Involved as a victim and a bully (we call this group “bully/victims” (**3.1%**))

Responses to Bullying

Student Responses to Bullying

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.

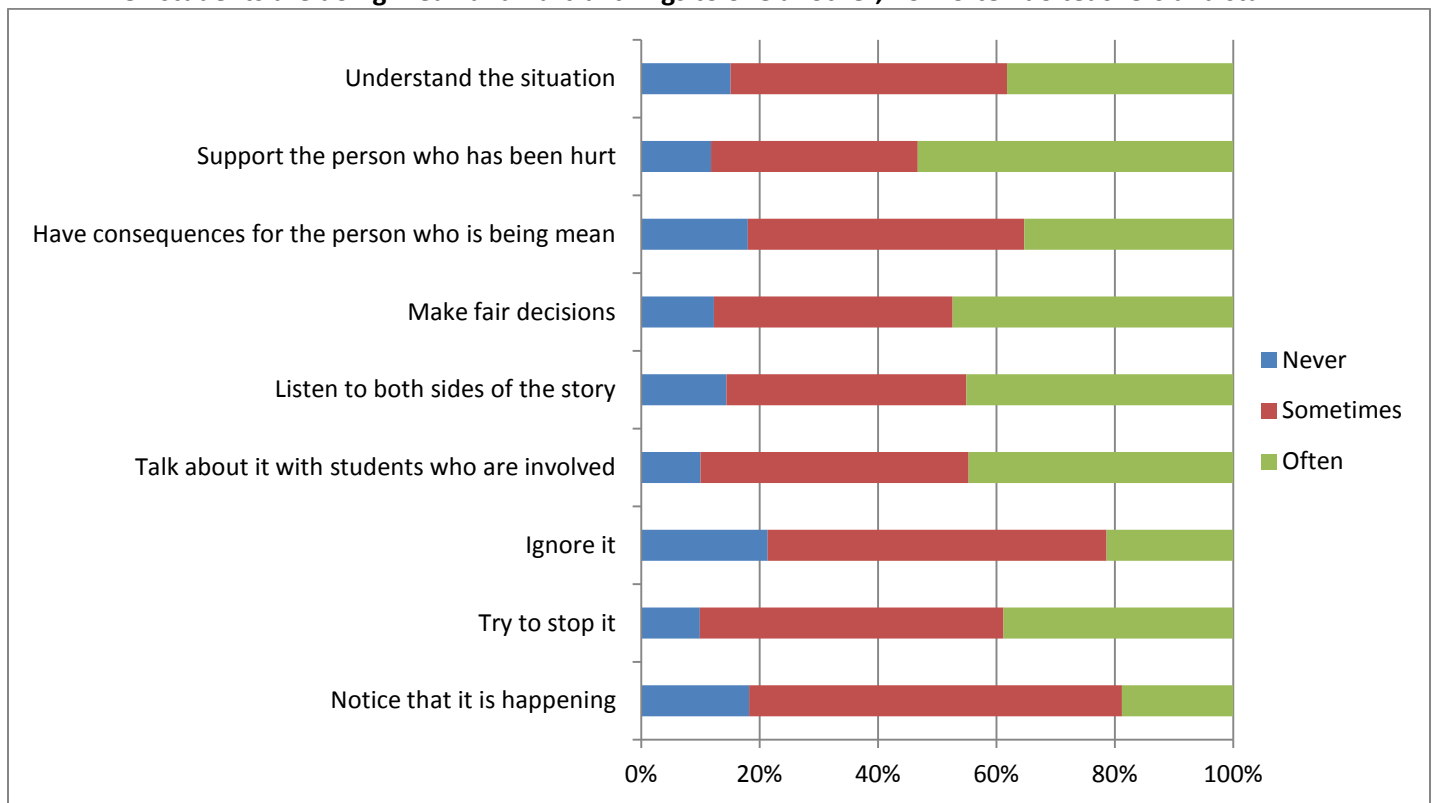
Figure 4.1 Student Responses to Witnessing Bullying (%)

I try to help other students who are being picked on or bullied	Student Responses
Not True	3.0
Somewhat True	42.6
Certainly True	54.5

Teacher Responses to Bullying

Figure 4.2 Teacher Responses to Bullying (%)

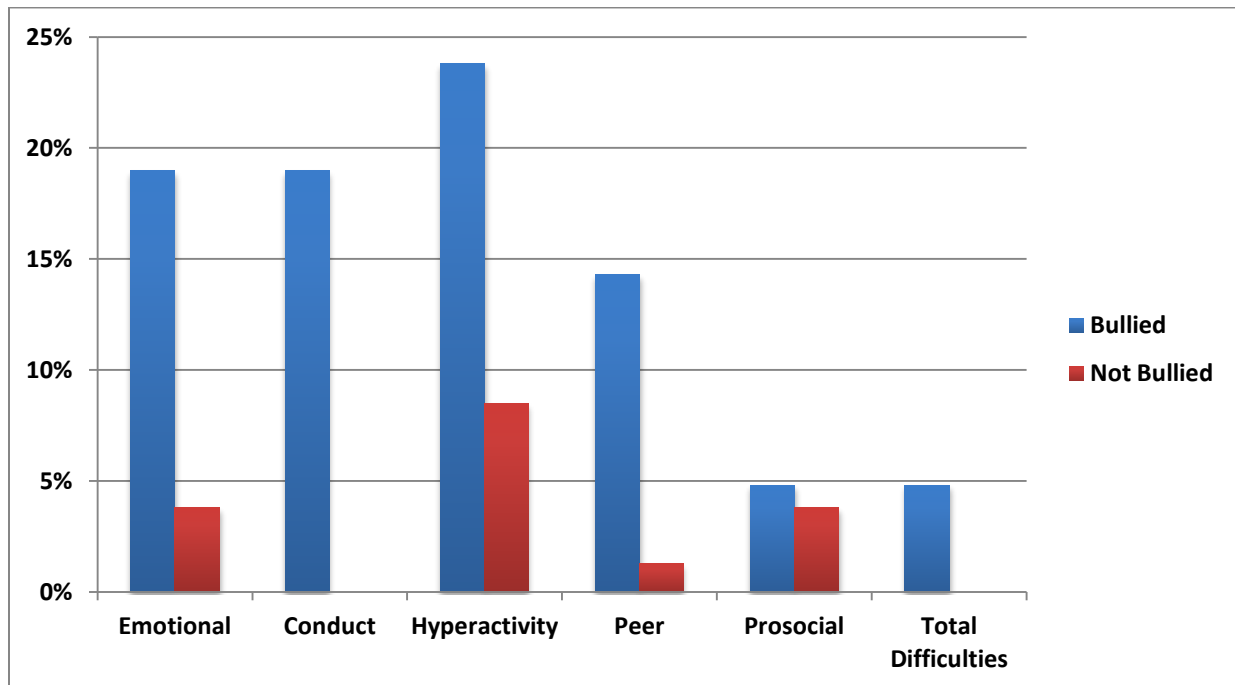
When students are doing mean and hurtful things to one another, how often do teachers and staff...



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, **2.9%** reported this was “somewhat true” or “certainly true” for them.

- **0.0%** of uninvolved students reported missing school to avoid bullying
- **14.3%** of bullied students reported missing school to avoid bullying

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

Person	Percent
Friends	59.5
Adult at home	55.7
Teacher at school	36.7
Another family member like a brother, sister, cousin, etc.	23.4
Keep it to themselves and don't talk to anyone	12.7
Counselor at school	10.8
Someone else	7.0
Another adult at school	7.0
Principal or Vice Principal	7.0