

I have been an educator for 35 years and have been Principal at Montgomery Elementary in the Sycamore School District (in Ohio) for the past 17 years.

I would like to share steps of a successful **integrated** anti-social cruelty prevention endeavor we have taken to tackle the bullying issue in our K-4 building. We had tried many things with good intentions, but none of them made a lasting impact until we incorporated a **school wide, comprehensive approach**.

Our methods are based on the research of Dr. Dan Olweus. Our entire district staff was trained by Stan Davis (stopbullyingnow.com). The first important component is to **build a safe and affirming school climate**. Teachers begin the day with community-building meetings based on the Responsive Classroom model (www.responsiveclassroom.org). The meetings build positive feeling; students learn to respect each other. Social-emotional curriculum is taught, (i.e. empathy, problem solving in friendships, anger management/impulse control, etc). Second Step kits have been helpful (www.cfchildren.org), as have the 40 Developmental Assets (www.search-institute.org). Teachers are busy; we don't "tack on" another program. Instead, they utilize read alouds to model character traits and launch character-building discussions. We work hard at being positive role models and recognizing and rewarding positive student behavior.

We surveyed students and parents to learn where and when bullying was likely to occur and increased supervision during those peak times. We defined exactly what bullying meant and developed a **rubric of inevitable, predictable and escalating consequences for peer-to-peer aggression**. We have assemblies to familiarize our students with this rubric. Rubrics are posted in our halls to maintain student awareness. Our students are trained to be empowered bystanders and to report any incidents of bullying in order to help another student "out" of trouble.

Our approach helps bullies change by working with parents and counseling the bully. We raise the cost of bullying by removing the bully's power. We support targets by stopping the bullying the minute it is brought to our attention and offer counseling if needed. We empower our bystanders by offering them an environment where it is safe to speak up and they do not fear repercussions from reporting.

Are we perfect? Not by any means, but we are encouraged by the at least 60 % drop in bullying that we have experienced. We are making a positive difference. I'm very proud of my staff and students for taking care of themselves, each other and our school environment...very proud.

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For more information:

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