

WHEREAS, nearly one in six (more than 3.2 million) sixth through tenth grade students are victims of bullying each year;¹

WHEREAS, 3.7 million students bully other students;¹

WHEREAS, 160,000 students miss school every day (28 million missed days per year) due to fear of attack or intimidation by a bully;²

WHEREAS, bullied students suffer physical and emotional pain such as shame, humiliation, loss of self-esteem, anxiety, insecurity, injury, headaches, stomach pain, and other physical complaints;³

WHEREAS, bullied students are more prone to depression and suicide ideation;³

WHEREAS, bullies' antisocial and delinquent behaviors are linked to higher crime rates;³

WHEREAS, involvement in bullying, both for bullies and their targets, is associated with greater odds of weapon carrying, fighting, and injury from fighting;⁴

WHEREAS, 60% of boys categorized as bullies in grades six through nine were convicted of at least one crime by the age of 24 and 40% of boys who were bullies had three or more convictions by the age of 24;¹

WHEREAS, girls are more likely than boys to exhibit indirect aggressive behaviors, such as gossiping and giving "dirty looks," which makes the bullying more difficult to observe;⁵

WHEREAS, research has shown that as much as half of all bullying can be prevented;⁶ and

WHEREAS, young people with the most severe aggressive behaviors can benefit the most from efforts to reduce bullying and aggression.⁷

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the American School Health Association recommends implementation of school-wide bullying prevention initiatives as part of coordinated school health programs that involve all members of the school community. These initiatives should be a part of school improvement plans and should include:

- 1) A code of conduct, effectively communicated to all students, families, and staff, that includes clear anti-bullying rules and consequences;
- 2) A team of students, administrators, teachers, and support staff that is actively involved in anti-bullying efforts;
- 3) Instruction in social and emotional learning skills;
- 4) Adequate supervision of young people, especially on playgrounds, in hallways, and in bathrooms where most bullying takes place;
- 5) Establishment of a caring school climate that does not tolerate bullying and encourages reporting of bullying activities (either experienced or witnessed) to designated school personnel; and
- 6) Commitment to program maintenance over time. Anti-bullying efforts should be on-going and constant, not simple a one-time program implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: the American School Health Association urges federal, state, and local governments, and state and local school boards to adopt legislation and policies that provide school districts with the tools and resources they need to ensure that all students feel safe within their schools.

References

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