Preventing School Violence: From the Inside Out

Youth Summit
April 1, 2013

Prepared by
The Center for Community Engagement
Arkansas State University
Who is Here?

- Who we are
- Who are you?
Overview of Session

- Introductions
- Take a modified CDC approach:
  - Defining the problem
  - Identify risk and protective factors
  - Develop and test prevention strategies
- Differences among schools
- What do research and experts say?
- What can be done about it?
- What can you do?
Myths vs. Facts

Which are true?

- You can usually tell which students will conduct school violence.
- Students who attack other students often feel bullied themselves.
- Most students who are a part of school violence have mental disorders.
- Many students involved in school violence have suicidal thoughts.
- Students involved in school violence usually have an interest in violent movies, video games, or books.
Myths vs. Facts Continued

• Which are true?
  ▫ Most students who attack other students have a history of violent behavior
  ▫ Students who attack other students usually have problems coping with significant losses or personal failures
  ▫ Most acts of school violence are sudden, without long-term planning
  ▫ Usually no one else knows about a student’s plan to attack
  ▫ Students usually threaten others before actually attacking another student
School Violence in the Headlines

What do you see in the news?
What are the students in your school saying?
What are they worried about?
What is your school administration saying?
What are your teachers saying about violence?
What are your parents saying?
The Catalyst for the Summit

From the Washington Post

Sandy Hook Elementary shooting leaves 28 dead, law enforcement sources say

By Steve Vogel, Sari Horwitz and David A. Fahrenthold, December 14, 2012

NEWTOWN, Conn.--A shooting rampage in this small Connecticut town on Friday morning left 28 people dead, including 20 children killed inside their elementary school, authorities said.
School Violence

Preventing School Violence
January 30, 2013
By JANET GROOME, The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

In the wake of the tragic school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, there has been a tremendous amount of discussion about making schools safer and the enhancement of crisis plans if an incident would occur.

The questions facing us when discussing school safety are not just of gun-control or stronger security - but are schools providing services for the mental health and emotional safety of their students.

Fundamentally, do school districts have prevention and intervention services in place that promote student mental health and assist students with their mental and emotional needs? One of the programs meeting these needs for the past 32 years is Belmont County Student Services. Student Services’ mission is to assist area students and their families through life’s difficult problems, so they succeed in school and in life. Their Student Assistance Program is designed to support and enhance the climate of safety that promotes a positive school experience. Addressing students’ behavioral, emotional and mental health issues reduces the barriers to learning, making students more successful and receptive to learning. The more support services, intervention, and mental health treatment our students receive, the healthier they will be in all areas of their lives. ...
Is the Problem Isolated?

Nettleton Jr. High

Boy threatens to bring gun, shoot up school

BY DUSTIN AZLIN
Sun Staff Writer
dazlin@jonesborsun.com

JONESBORO — A boy told fellow students Tuesday afternoon he was going to bring a gun to school and start shooting.

The 14-year-old boy told four students at Nettleton Junior High School that he was going to “shoot up the school,” according to a police report.

Assistant Principal Donnie Tennison told officer Russ Manning the teen was mad because teachers were telling him to keep his pants pulled up to his waist while he was on school property, Manning reported.

The students reported the threats to Tennison on Tuesday, and he called the Jonesboro Police Department to report the incident, the report stated.

The suspect did not attend school Friday. Tennison told police that the teen was going to Florida with his family, Manning reported.

Manning went to the suspect’s house and spoke with the teen’s sister. She said the suspect was with his aunt, and she did not know when he would return, Manning reported.

The suspect’s mother contacted Manning and said she would turn him into juvenile authorities once they return from their trip to Florida, according to the report.
How Common Is It?

Student’s trial set for summer
Police say teen detailed how he’d kill at school

BY MICHAEL WILKEY
Sun Staff Writer

HARRISBURG — A teenager accused of threatening to “shoot up” an area high school will go on trial this summer.

Circuit Judge David Laser set a June 3 trial date for Preston Downs, 18, of Harrisburg, on Monday during a brief hearing with attorneys at the Poinsett County Jail.

Downs was arrested Feb. 22 on suspicion of first-degree terrorist threatening.

Poinsett County Sheriff’s Department Detective Ron Martin said school officials were told about the threat Feb. 22.

Martin interviewed school officials, who in turn, interviewed a student who had heard some of the threats made, police said.

“The student stated last summer, Downs begin using drugs and talking about taking a gun to school and killing people,” Martin said in a probable cause affidavit. “At first it appeared to be just a joke, but as time went on, everyone stopped laughing, and Preston got more serious about it. Preston said he supported the boys that killed the students at Columbine. ... Preston drew out a diagram of the school and showed it ...

Please see TRIAL | A2

“Preston drew out a diagram of the school and showed it ... stating he could come in ... and go directly to the office and kill people, then go out into the hall and kill everyone that he could ...”

Ron Martin
Poinsett County Sheriff’s Department detective
What do you know about school violence?

School Violence Quiz
Statistics on School Violence

Prepared by The Center for Community Engagement
Arkansas State University
‘12% of 9th – 12th graders reported being in a physical fight on school property in the past 12 months’*

*Based on a 2011 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12 (CDC).
'5.9% of students reported that they did not go to school on one or more days in the 30 days before the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school'*

*Based on a 2011 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12 (CDC).
‘7.4% of students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times in the 12 months before the survey’*

*Based on a 2011 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12 (CDC).
In the 2009-2010 school year, there were 17 homicides at school of youth aged 5 to 18
‘In 2010, there were about 828,000 nonfatal victimizations at school among students 12 to 18 years of age’
What is School Violence?

- School shootings?
- Assault?
- What else?
Are these examples of violence?

- You are walking down the hall and a group of students laugh and point at what you are wearing.
- A student writes something inappropriate about you on the bathroom wall.
- A student walks by you and slaps you on the back of the head.
- A student writes something insulting on your Facebook page.
- You are walking down the hallway and another student trips you.
- A student vandalizes your locker.
- A student yells obscenities at you.
- A student pushes you against a wall and hits you in the stomach.
- A student throws something at you.

How would you respond to those?
Where Does Bullying Fall?

- CDC data: 20% report being bullied on school property and 16% report being bullied electronically (over 1 year period)

- Pew Research Center
Bullying Can Take Toll Beyond Childhood

VICTIMS, BULLIES BOTH FACE HIGHER RISK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES: STUDY

By Matt Cantor, Newser Staff
Posted Feb 21, 2013 1:57 AM CST

(NEWSER) – Bullied kids are at greater risk of a range of psychological problems years later, a study suggests. "Psychological damage doesn’t just go away because a person grew up and is no longer bullied," says a researcher. And that applies to both sexes, the study finds, challenging earlier research that suggested the long-term toll was more pronounced among girls. This study referred to "a much richer data set," researchers say. "We were actually able to say being a victim of bullying is having an effect a decade later."

Children in North Carolina joined the study at age nine, 11, or 13. Researchers collected data by interviewing the kids and their parents, following 1,270 of them into adulthood, the Globe and Mail reports. Victims had "higher levels of depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, generalized anxiety, panic disorder, and agoraphobia," the study says. They suffered 4.3 times the anxiety disorder risk of children with no bullying in their pasts, the New York Times reports. Bullies themselves faced a higher risk of antisocial personality disorders, while male victims and bullies faced 18.5 times the risk of suicidal thoughts.

Finding
- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted or injured by others prior to the attack.

Explanation
- Almost three-quarters of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured by others prior to the incident (71%, n=29)
Secret Service Example

“In one case, most of the attacker’s schoolmates described the attacker as "the kid everyone teased." In witness statements from that incident, schoolmates alleged that nearly every child in the school had at some point thrown the attacker against a locker, tripped him in the hall, held his head under water in the pool or thrown things at him.”

(emphasis added)
### Type & Frequency of Violent Incidents

(National Institute of Justice Research in Brief, Schools with high levels of violence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>Frequency Incident Occurred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used Knife</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Gun</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with Knife</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with Gun</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threw Something</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat Up</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed, grabbed, shoved</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicked/bit/hit with fist</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School District Responses

### School District Responses to Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percent Using Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locker Searches</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Code</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Groups</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Personnel in Schools</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug-detecting Dogs</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephones in Classrooms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Detectors</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Violence Questionnaire
Break Into Groups
Assignment 1
What are the 3 types of violence that happen most at your school?

• How prevalent are those?
• What don’t the teachers see or know?
• Where does the violence happen?
• What gender differences emerge?
  ▫ What do males do?
  ▫ What do females do?
Assignment 2
What Causes the Violence

• What causes the violence?
  ▫ acceptance of violence?
  ▫ not backing down?
  ▫ saving face?
  ▫ retribution?
  ▫ What else?

• Why doesn’t it stop?
  • 10 minutes
Assignment 3
Risk and Protective Factors

• What **risk factors** do you have in your school?
  ▫ Poverty
  ▫ Gangs
  ▫ Low commitment to school
  ▫ Drug use
  ▫ Dominant negative peer group
  ▫ Others? What makes a school less safe?

• What **protective factors** do you have in your school?
  ▫ Values that promote respect
  ▫ Connectedness or bond to school
  ▫ Positive relations between school staff and students
  ▫ Emphasis on achievement and learning
  ▫ Involvement in social activities
  ▫ Others? What makes a school more safe?
    • 10 minutes
Assignment 4
What is Done by the Schools

• How does the school administration respond?

• How SHOULD the school administration respond?
  ▫ What shouldn’t the school do?

  ▫ 10 minutes
Assignment 5
What can you do about it?

• How do other students react?
  ▫ Do they get involved?
  ▫ Is there an unwritten no-snitching policy at your school? A code of silence at your school?

• How SHOULD YOU respond?
• What else can YOU do?
• How do YOU make the school climate better?

• 10 minutes
How Can You Find Out More? Do More?

• Do research
  Follow the CDC plan
    • Define the problem at your school
    • Identify risk and protective factors
    • Develop prevention strategies

• Get involved
  Develop a culture of safety
    • Work with clubs
    • Work with teachers, staff, and administration
BE CREATIVE!!
Some Ideas...

• Awareness
  ▫ Skits
  ▫ Videos
  ▫ Websites
  ▫ Brochure
  ▫ Posters
• Advocacy
• Developing Assets
Watson Chapel EAST Combats Bullying

11/9/2010 9:03:37 AM

Students create anti-bullying videos for elementary school assemblies.

Watson Chapel High School EAST student Jeffrey Neal organized an Anti-Bullying Assembly for the younger schools of the community of Watson Chapel School District — Coleman Elementary and L.L. Owen.

For the assemblies, several Watson Chapel High School EAST students went to Coleman Elementary and made anti-bullying videos with the students of the G/T classes. We used the videos as demonstrations to show how bullying affects the mental and physical body.

The assemblies have received favorable reviews from the local police department and community leaders. School administrators, teachers and students also found the assembly very helpful.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Jeffrey Neal at jneal.east@gmail.com

Videos, Assemblies, & Banners
Prairie Grove Middle School is Stopping Crime One EAST Project at a Time

8/28/2011 3:02:51 PM
Teen takes bullying and school crime serious- works with community business and local police department to create anonymous hotline and email address for student use.

The first week of school for 8th grade EAST II student, Cole W. was “just another day at the office” as he picked up right where he left, project wise, from his summer vacation. Cole partnered with our S.R.O. (School Resource Officer) Cpl. Jeff O’Brien and our local telephone company to create an anonymous hotline phone number that students could call, while at school and at home, if they saw or heard of any bullying, vandalism, theft, drug usage or sales, weapons violations, or other criminal misbehaviors that could impact student wellbeing and learning while on campus.

After selecting and securing an anonymous hotline number from our local telephone company, Cole used Adobe Photoshop CS4 to design a poster that would inform the PGMS staff and student body about the anti-violence stand that he and others are taking on our school campus. His poster includes the new hotline number along with our newly acquired crime stoppers email address so students can anonymously report crime tips whenever they happen; tips go directly to our S.R.O.’s phone and email account so he will know immediately when a situation on campus needs his attention. “Sometimes, kids are afraid to tell what they know, what they hear about in the halls, or what they see at school for fear of retribution by their peers….” said Officer O’Brien, S.R.O. for the school district. “This is a way for kids to send me tips anonymously so I can respond swiftly and accordingly, and hopefully prevent a serious situation before it starts.”

Information concerning the new hotline number and crime stoppers email address will soon be placed on individual teacher web pages district wide; on posters in the halls and in every classroom, on the district homepage, on flyers that will go home with the student body, and in the local newspaper to inform the entire community.
Pulaski Heights M.S. EAST: “BOB” Being Our Best Goes to the Capitol

4/15/2011 9:33:59 AM

Student program to promote positive social interaction and eliminate bullying behaviors results in invitation to bill signing.

“BOB” Being Our Best is a campaign designed to promote positive social interaction and eliminate bullying behaviors. The program provides support for students at school, along with resources such as a Facebook community page and a wiki website. These resources also serve as an avenue for students to network in a positive social environment and share with one another.

At the 2011 EAST Conference in March, we had the opportunity to share our “BOB” Being Our Best Program with Arkansas’ Lieutenant Governor Mark Darr and Senator Missy Irvin. Both Lieutenant Governor Darr and Senator Irvin were impressed with our project and invited us to come to the Legislature. We looked forward to maybe being able to take them up on their invitation.

At the 2011 Legislative Session a bill was passed dealing with bullying issues. Through collaboration with the bill’s sponsor, Senator Chesterfield, and the Governor’s Office arrangements were made for us to attend the signing of this very important bill into law.

Senator Chesterfield, the supporter of bill SB 214, now Act 905 “To Establish the Crime of Cyber-bullying”, invited us to the Senate Chamber to see the Senators in action. We were able to observe them from the “Senators’ Only” VIP room. Senator Chesterfield formally introduced “BOB” Being Our Best and Pulaski Heights Middle School EAST students on the Senate Floor. She read the “BOB” Pledge and the Laws of “BOB”, then, encouraged the other Senators to become supporters of “BOB”.

Our “BOB” Being Our Best Program has a tremendous affect on our school community and has the potential to become an affective resource for other schools.

The “BOB” Being Our Best Program gives the students of our EAST program a voice to actively contribute to our community and eliminate bullying.

Social Networking
Video from Canada
“The principle objective of school violence-reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within educational institutions.”

Voice Time: Creativity Contest
Email: cce@astate.edu
Website: cce.astate.edu