

Representative Renee Erickson
Hope Scholarship Act Oral Testimony
February 14, 2019

Jason Long, is working on an amendment that only the victim who reports bullying is an eligible student, not any reporting student.

How does bullying affect health and well-being?

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/bullying/conditioninfo/health>

Bullying can affect physical and emotional health, both in the short term and later in life. It can lead to physical injury, social problems, emotional problems, and even death.¹ Those who are bullied are at increased risk for mental health problems, headaches, and problems adjusting to school.² Bullying also can cause long-term damage to self-esteem.³

Children and adolescents who are bullies are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and violence to others later in life.²

Those who are both bullies and victims of bullying suffer the most serious effects of bullying and are at greater risk for mental and behavioral problems than those who are only bullied or who are only bullies.²

NICHD research studies show that anyone involved with bullying—those who bully others, those who are bullied, and those who bully and are bullied—are at increased risk for depression.⁴

NICHD-funded research studies also found that unlike traditional forms of bullying, youth who are bullied electronically—such as by computer or cell phone—are at higher risk for depression than the youth who bully them.⁵ Even more surprising, the same studies found that cyber victims were at higher risk for depression than were cyberbullies or bully-victims (i.e., those who both bully others and are bullied themselves), which was not found in any other form of bullying. Read more about these findings in the NICHD news release: *[Depression High Among Youth Victims of School Cyberbullying, NIH Researchers Report](#)*.

Citations

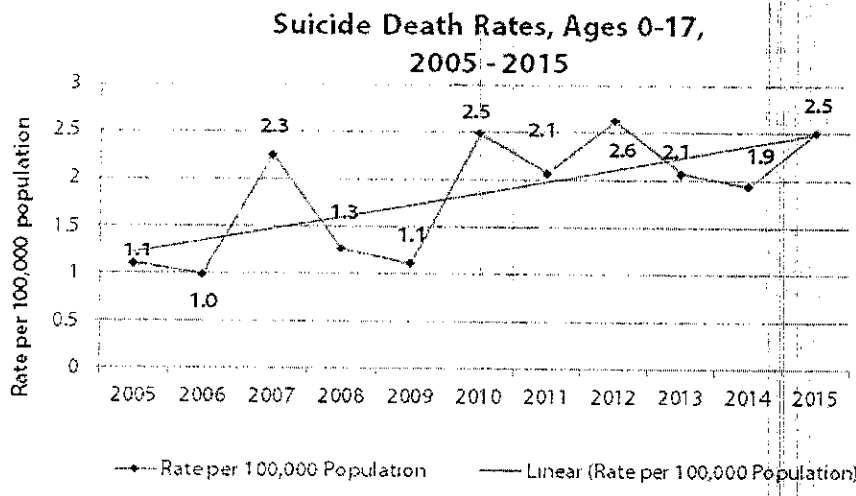
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3. *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2010). Taking a stand against bullying. Retrieved June 17, 2016, from <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/resources/spotlight/092110-taking-stand-against-bullying>
4. *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2012). *Focus on children's mental health research at the NICHD*. Retrieved June 17, 2016, from <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/resources/spotlight/060112-childrens-mental-health>

In Spring 2018, the Tower Mental Health Foundation and Attorney General Derek Schmidt created the Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force (YSPTF) in response to rising numbers of Kansas youth attempting and dying by suicide. The number of suicides by Kansans 18 years of age and younger more than doubled in the decade between 2005 and 2015.¹ This increase coincides with an alarming increase of death by suicide across all age groups. Kansas is fifth in the nation in the rise of its per capita rate of death by suicide over the last 17 years.² Death by suicide increased 45 percent in Kansas over that time period, compared with the national average increase of 25.4 percent. The rate of suicide deaths among Kansas youth continues to climb despite a decline in the overall rate of child deaths in this state. In 2016, the Kansas Death Review Board reported that 20 Kansas youth died by suicide, seven of who were age 14 or younger.³ Their Board report went on to recommend that Kansans would be better equipped to understand and prevent youth suicides if we better understand the precipitating events leading to them.



According to a study by the National Education Association more than 160,000 children miss school every day out of fear of being bullied. And statistics compiled by The National Association of Secondary School Principals in 2011 show the average public school can lose \$2.3 million in funding and expenses as a result of lower attendance and disciplinary needs. <https://www.kshb.com>

Parents, on behalf of their children, sued school districts across the US and were awarded between \$300,000 and \$4.2 million dollars in damages and/or reimbursement of medical bills, because school officials neglected their duties as surrogate parents, or “in loco parentis”, to make sure their children were safe. (Tomazin, 2010; Cline-Thomas, 2011) To that end, all monies that are either expended or lost as a consequence of bullying, result in decreased amounts of fiscal capital available for staff and instructional resources to support student learning. **Journal of Bullying and Social Aggression, Volume 1, Number 1, 2015**, The Socio-Emotional and Financial Costs of Bullying In the United States, **Kriss Y. Kemp-Graham, PhD**, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education and Human Service, Texas A&M University-Commerce, **LaVelle Hendricks, EdD**, Associate Professor of Counseling, Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education, College of Education and Human Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce

I’m not aware of anyone who would argue the long-term, harmful effects bullying can have on victims. As a former teacher, principal, and parent of school-aged children, I have seen many well-intentioned programs, policies and attempts to address the bullying crisis in our schools. Sadly, they have fallen short. We can no longer fail these victimized children and must take definitive action.

This bill is designed to provide an avenue of hope for the victims of bullying. The Statement from the Kansas State Board of Education says, “The Kansas State Board of Education believes in providing physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all Kansas students and staff.” What does that mean in practical terms for a victim of bullying? What are parents to do if the bullying persists? See page 5 of the KSDE Bullying Prevention document. Is that enough?

What this bill does:

1. Gives victims of bullying and their parents an option.
2. Allows parents of a bullying victim the option of keeping their child in the current school.
3. Allows parents to transfer their child to another public school.
4. Allows parents to transfer their child to a qualified private school.

The BASE aid would follow the student as outlined in Sec. 6 (c) (1).

What this bill does not:

1. Force a student to leave a school or go to any other school.
2. Violate student privacy laws in the reporting of bullying.

With everything we know about the harmful effects of bullying, we need every tool available to ensure our students have a “physically safe and emotionally secure” environment (State BOE statement).

KSDE Bullying Prevention

Statement from the Kansas State Board of Education

Serious nature of bullying

The Kansas State Board of Education believes in providing physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all Kansas students and school staff. The State Board recognizes that bullying is a serious issue affecting Kansas schools by creating a negative effect on the social environment of schools and a climate of fear among students, as well as inhibiting students' ability to learn and leading to other anti-social behavior. For this reason, the State Board supports current state legislation requiring each local board of education to adopt and implement a plan to address bullying on or while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle and at school-sponsored activities and events, including a provision for the training and education of school staff members and students. The State Board encourages Kansas schools to adopt policies to assist school personnel in identifying bullying, intimidation and harassment and in providing a framework for an appropriate response to such activities that reinforces and encourages positive conduct and ensures the safety of all students.

State Board Resolution

WHEREAS, The State of Kansas recognizes its responsibility to safeguard schools to ensure physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all Kansas students and school staff; and

WHEREAS, Each day an estimated 160,000 children nationwide refuse to go to school for fear of being bullied; and

WHEREAS, It is important that we acknowledge and heighten awareness about the serious issues and the negative effects of bullying, including creating a climate of fear among students, inhibiting the ability to learn and contributing to other anti-social behavior; and

WHEREAS, Bullying is a communitywide issue and students, parents, and educators all have a role in addressing bullying situations and changing school culture; and

WHEREAS, the Kansas Legislature has required local boards of education to adopt and implement plans to address bullying on and while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle or at school-sponsored activities or events, to include a provision for the training and education of staff members and students; and

WHEREAS, October has been designated National Anti-Bullying Awareness Month; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the first full week of October of each year beginning with October 2011 be designated **Anti-Bullying Awareness Week** in Kansas as a symbol of our commitment to ensuring safe and nurturing school environments.

KSA 72-8256

Kansas Anti-Bullying, Cyberbullying & Character Development Legislation (HB 2758)

The 2008 Legislature amended the anti-bullying statute and effective July 1, 2008, requires school districts to:

- 1) adopt and implement a plan to address cyberbullying, and
- 2) adopt policies prohibiting bullying on school property, in school vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities, and
- 3) adopt and implement a plan to address bullying, which must include provisions for training and education of staff and students.
- 4) upon request of a school district, the state board shall assist in the development of a grade appropriate curriculum for character development programs.

Shown below are the provisions of the anti-bullying legislation:

Section 1. K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 72-8256 is hereby amended to read as follows: 72-8256. (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Bullying" means: (A) Any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, **electronic** or physical act or threat that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student or staff member that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, knows or should know will have the effect of:

- i. Harming a student or staff member, whether physically or mentally;
- ii. Damaging a student's or staff member's property;
- iii. Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to the student or staff member; or
- iv. Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the student's or staff member's property; or

(B) **cyberbullying**, or

(C) any form of intimidation or harassment prohibited by the board of education of the school district in policies concerning bullying adopted pursuant to this section or subsection (e) of K.S.A. 72-8205, and amendments thereto.

(2) **"Cyberbullying" means bullying by use of any electronic communication device through means including, but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers, online games and websites.**

(3) "School vehicle" means any school bus, school van, other school vehicle and private vehicle used to transport students or staff members to and from school or any school-sponsored activity or event.

(b) The board of education of each school district shall adopt a policy to prohibit bullying on school property, in a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored activity or event.

(c) The board of education of each school district shall adopt and implement a plan to address bullying or **while utilizing** on school property, in a school vehicle or at a school sponsored activity or event. Such a plan shall include provisions for the training and education for staff members and students.

(d) The board of education of each school district may adopt additional policies relating to bullying pursuant to subsection (e) of K.S.A. 72-8205, and amendments thereto.

Stop Bullying Now¹

Recognizing the Warning Signs

There are many warning signs that could indicate that someone is involved in bullying, either by bullying others or by being bullied. However, these warning signs may indicate other issues or problems, as well. If you are a parent or educator, learn more about talking to someone about bullying.²

Being Bullied

- Comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Has unexplained injuries
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Has changes in eating habits
- Hurts themselves
- Are very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Runs away from home
- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless
- Often feels like they are not good enough
- Blames themselves for their problems
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Avoids certain places
- Acts differently than usual

Bullying Others

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Has friends who bully others
- Needs to win or be best at everything

Know the Risk Factors Before Bullying Begins

¹ <http://stopbullying.gov/index.html>

² http://stopbullying.gov/topics/warning_signs/index.html

There is no one single cause of bullying. Rather, individual, family, peer, school, and community factors can place someone at risk for being bullied or for bullying others. Even if a child has one or more of the risk factors, it does not mean that they will bully or will become bullied.

Who is At Risk for Being Bullied?

Generally, children, teens and young adults who are bullied:

- Do not get along well with others
- Are less popular than others
- Have few to no friends
- Do not conform to gender norms
- Have low self esteem
- Are depressed or anxious

Who is At Risk for Bullying Others?

Some people who at risk for bullying others are well-connected to their peers, have social power, and at least one of the following:

- Are overly concerned about their popularity
- Like to dominate or be in charge of others

Others at risk for bullying others are more isolated from their peers and may have any of the following:

- Are depressed or anxious
- Have low self esteem
- Are less involved in school
- Are easily pressured by peers
- Do not identify with the emotions or feelings of others

Other risk factors for bullying others include the following:

- Being aggressive
- Have less parent involvement
- Think badly of others
- Are impulsive
- Are hot-headed and easily frustrated
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way

What Does Not Increase Risk:

- **Location.** There are no differences in rates of bullying for urban, suburban, or rural communities. Bullying happens everywhere.
- **School Size.** The overall percentage of students being bullied does not vary based on school size, although bullying does happen more often in larger schools.

- **Gender.** Boys and girls are just as likely to be involved in bullying. Forms of bullying may vary by gender; for instance, some research has found that girls are more likely to bully others socially.

How Do I Get Help?

There are things you can do to stop the bullying. Visit pages that apply directly to you:

- [Kids](#)
- [Teens](#)
- [Young Adults](#)

If you are a parent or guardian, talk to the school administration or the adult that supervises your child's community activities.

What to Do When Bullying Continues or Gets Worse

If the bullying gets worse and you need additional help, consider the following if:

Someone is at immediate risk of harm because of bullying	Call the police 911
Your child is feeling suicidal because of bullying	Contact the <u>suicide prevention hotline</u> ☎ at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Your child's teacher is not keeping your child safe from being bullied	Contact local school administrator (principal or superintendent) and document the attempt
Your school is not keeping your child safe from being bullied	Call the School Violence Hotline 1-877-626-8203
Your child is sick, stressed, not sleeping, or is having other problems because of bullying	Contact your counselor or area mental health provider
Your child is bullied because of their race, ethnicity, or disability and local help is not working to solve the problem	Contact the <u>U.S. Department of Education's Office on Civil Rights</u>

Please note that though the Federal Departments of Health and Human Services and Education and KSDE care deeply about bullying, they are limited in their ability to intervene in specific cases; bullying and other discipline policies and laws are set at the state and local levels.

Effects of Bullying

Bullying has serious and lasting effects. While these effects may also be caused by other factors, research has found bullying has significant effects for those who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who witness bullying.

People Who are Bullied:

- Have higher risk of depression and anxiety, including the following symptoms, that may persist into adulthood:
 - Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness
 - Changes in sleep and eating patterns
 - Loss of interest in activities
- Have increased thoughts about suicide that may persist into adulthood. In one study, adults who recalled being bullied in youth were 3 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts or inclinations.
- Are more likely to have health complaints. In one study, being bullied was associated with physical health status 3 years later.
- Have decreased academic achievement (GPA and standardized test scores) and school participation.
- Are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.
- Are more likely to retaliate through extremely violent measures. In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied.

People Who Bully Others:

- Have a higher risk of abusing alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults.
- Are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school.
- Are more likely to engage in early sexual activity.
- Are more likely to have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults. In one study, 60% of boys who bullied others in middle school had a criminal conviction by age 24.
- Are more likely to be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses or children as adults.

People Who Witness Bullying:

- Have increased use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.
- Have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety.
- Are more likely to miss or skip school.

Responding to Bullying






How you and your entire school community respond to bullying makes a huge difference in both the moment the bullying occurs and preventing bullying in the future.

How Bullying Affects a School

Bullying negatively affects the atmosphere of the school and disrupts the learning environment:

- **Student achievement suffers** among both the students who are bullied and those who engage in bullying. Students who bully and students who are bullied by others are more likely to skip and/or drop out of school.
- **Teacher morale declines** amid harmful social dynamics in the classroom that interfere with discipline and learning.
- **Adult-student relationships suffer.** Students who witness bullying can become fearful and develop the belief that the adults are not in control or are uncaring.
- **Parent confidence and trust in the school erodes** when students experience bullying or are accused of bullying others.

Additional Resources

- [What We Know About Bullying \[PDF 397 KB\]](#)
- [Myths About Bullying \[PDF 210 KB\]](#)
- [Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention \[PDF 525 KB\]](#)
- [A Guide to Developing, Maintaining and Succeeding With Your School Resource Officer Program](#) 
- [Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs \[PDF 681 KB\]](#)
- [Bullying in Out-of-School Time Programs: Tips for Youth-Serving Professionals and Volunteers \[PDF 566 KB\]](#)
- [Youth Violence Prevention](#)  (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Electronic Aggression](#)  (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [The ABCs of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression](#)  (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
- [Sample Newsletter Article: Bullying Among Children and Youth \[PDF 436 KB\]](#)
- [Bullying and Victimization: What Adults Can Do](#)  (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
- [Bullying Among Children and Youth on Perceptions and Differences in Sexual Orientation \[PDF 681 KB\]](#)

Immediate Intervention

You may feel uncertain about how to handle bullying. Here are some tips to help you respond more effectively on the spot and make the best use of the teachable moments.

Can You Spot Bullying?

Adult intervention is one of the best defenses against bullying. Yet research shows that educators might not recognize students identified by their peers as students who bully. They also often miss different types of bullying, especially social bullying. Parents struggle with recognizing and acknowledging bullying as well.

Despite the difficulty, both parents and educators need to recognize the warning signs (see section above), intervene when bullying happens and send the message that bullying is not okay.

How to Step In

There is no set formula for the best way to intervene when you suspect or observe a bullying incident. You must consider a variety of issues, including the safety of all children, the age and gender of the children involved, the circumstances surrounding the bullying, the form and type of bullying, and the role of bystanders.

Here are some actions you may want to consider:

- **Intervene immediately.** Separate the students involved. Do not immediately ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts.
- **Request more information.** Get the facts. Speak to students involved (participants and observers) in the incident separately and ask what happened.
- **Tell the students you are aware of their behavior.** Talk to the students involved separately.
- **Make it a teachable experience.** Helping bystanders understand what has happened and why may be important for preventing future incidents.

Remember to:

- Report the incident to the right person (the school might consider identifying an official contact, who may be the school administrator, or a member of the school safety committee).
- Consider an appropriate intervention based on the severity and history of the incident and the students involved.
- Follow up with the students involved to ensure the bullying does not continue.

When You Suspect Bullying

If you are not sure what you witness or hear about is bullying, or if bullying is reported to you, here are some actions you may want to consider:

- **Intervene immediately.** Separate the students involved. Do not immediately ask about or discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts.
- **Request more information.** Get the facts. Speak to students involved (participants and observers) in the incident separately and ask what happened.
- **Tell the students you are aware of their behavior.** Talk to the students involved separately.
- **Make it a teachable experience.** Helping bystanders understand what has happened and why may be important for preventing future incidents.

Refrain from Labeling

When trying to understand the situation, refrain from labeling the incident bullying, or the individuals involved as bullies or victims. This helps encourages everyone to share information openly.

When You Confirm that Bullying has Happened

Once an incident of bullying has occurred, communication with the following individuals or groups should be part of your intervention or follow-up strategy:

For the Student Who Was Bullied

- Check in regularly with the student who was bullied
- Determine whether the bullying still continues
- Provide a supportive environment
- Review the school rules and policies with the student to ensure they are aware of their rights and protection
- Consider referring them for professional or other services as appropriate

For the Student Who Bullied Others

- Identify the behavior
- Review the school rules and policies with the student
- Ask for positive change in future behavior
- Consider referring them for professional or other services as appropriate
- Consider appropriate graduated consequences
- Encourage the student to channel their influence and behavior into positive leadership roles
- Monitor and check in frequently

For Bystanders

- Encourage them to talk with you
- Review the school rules and policies with the students
- Discuss with bystanders how they might intervene and/ or get help next time
- Acknowledge students who took action to stop the bullying

For the Parents of the Students Involved

- Describe the incident
- Review the school rules and policies with the parents
- Describe the intervention measures taken as appropriate
- Develop a plan to follow up

Remember...

The law limits your ability as an educator to discuss disciplinary actions taken against other students. Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Monitor & Report

Bullying in schools is a frequent and serious problem. It is important to monitor and report student behavior consistently. Progress monitoring is a key concept of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and needs to be a continuing practice relative to all behavioral issues.

Monitoring

Administrators, teachers, and staff should be on the lookout for bullying not only in the classroom, but also in the hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms, gymnasium, on sports fields, other areas of the school, and on the school bus. To do so, you need to know the warning signs of bullying.

If you see bullying, you can stop it.


Reporting

After each intervention, report the incident, so the school can track its responses to bullying incidents. You may want to consider implementing a reporting system to help further track bullying. Student information systems (i.e. SWIS) should include behavioral data options that include bullying data.

Developing a logical and timely reporting system that informs school personnel and parents of suspected and confirmed bullying incidents may help the school progress in bullying prevention.

Some schools have developed incident reporting forms for bullying and other problem behaviors. You may consider keeping one copy for the student's teacher, a second to be filed in the office, and a third to go to the student's parents. Other schools keep a log of bullying incidents in the main office.

Teachers and all school staff (e.g., bus drivers, school nurses, cafeteria workers, and custodial staff) should know the school's reporting procedures and understand their possible obligation to report suspected or confirmed bullying.

Treat reports of bullying as you would any part of a student's record. Maintain confidentiality and privacy of such reports as required in policy and law .

Assessment Tools

The ability to measure bullying experiences broadly and completely is crucial to the success of addressing and preventing bullying. This compendium provides researchers, prevention specialists, and health educators with tools for assessing [PDF 6.41 MB] self-reported incidence and prevalence of a variety of bullying experiences.

Kansas schools are at an advantage because of the state wide availability of the Communities That Care (CTC) survey. This tool measures perceptions of school climate and culture, including bullying. KSDE urges schools to use data driven decision making as a means of creating a school climate and culture that ensures that all students will succeed.

Follow-up Intervention

Intervening in bullying does not necessarily mean immediately turning to traditional forms of discipline. Discipline should be considered as one part of a holistic approach to addressing bullying. It should be used in conjunction with other educational and restorative strategies.

Each intervention should clearly label bullying as unacceptable, build awareness, and help students develop the skills, empathy, and insights they need to find alternatives to bullying. Interventions should also assist to restore positive relationships between the students involved in bullying and improve the school climate.

When choosing an intervention, you may want to consider the following questions:

- Did the bullying incident occur within the school's jurisdiction?
- What is the history of the students involved?
- What is the nature of the bullying behavior?
- How frequent and severe is the bullying?
- What intervention will promote a positive outcome for the students?
- Does the intervention fit within the school district's guidelines?

Avoid What Does Not Work

In recent years, increasing numbers of educators, health professionals, parents, and other adults who interact with students have come to understand the seriousness of bullying. Many proven and promising prevention and intervention strategies have been developed. Unfortunately, some misdirected intervention and prevention strategies also have emerged.

Research has shown that the following are **strategies that do not work or have unexpected negative consequences**.

- **Zero tolerance or “three strikes and you’re out” policies:** These policies have the potential to exclude large numbers of students from school, discourage reporting of bullying, and deprive students who bully from the good role models they so need.
- **Conflict resolution and peer mediation:** Bullying is not a conflict between two people of equal power with equal blame for the situation. Also, facing those who have bullied them may further upset students who have been bullied.
- **Group treatment for students who bully:** Group members tend to reinforce bullying behavior in each other.
- **Simple, short-term solutions:** Focusing on bullying in a piecemeal way (e.g., in-service training, school assembly, lessons taught by individual teachers) will do much less to prevent bullying than a school-wide initiative.

Is Police Involvement Necessary?

If a student in your school has committed a serious disciplinary infraction or an illegal act, police involvement may be necessary. If the answer to **any** of the questions below is “Yes,” you may need to contact the police:

- Was a weapon involved?
- Were there threats of serious physical injury or hate-motivated violence?
- Was there sexual assault?
- Was there physical bullying that caused serious bodily harm?
- Is there robbery, extortion, or vandalism causing extensive damage to property, or other illegal act?

Guidelines on involving police in disciplinary matters vary between school districts. You should always consult the rules that apply to your particular school when dealing with serious disciplinary matters.

Preventing Bullying

There are a number of things educators can do to make their school safer and prevent bullying. The following are suggestions for how to approach bullying in schools:

- **Assess bullying in your school.** Determine where and when bullying occurs.
- **Increase adult supervision in bullying "hot spots."** Work with support staff, such as cafeteria staff, bus stop and playground monitors and bus drivers, who may observe bullying incidents that unfold outside the classroom.
- **Involve students, parents, teachers, and staff in bullying prevention.** Establish a school safety committee and task force with a coordinator whose job it is to plan, implement and evaluate your school's bullying prevention program.
- **Encourage teachers and staff to file incident reports of bullying.** Keep track of critical incidents, and assess and evaluate your bullying prevention program.
- **Create policies and rules.** Create a mission statement, code of conduct, and school-wide rules that establishes a climate in which bullying is not acceptable. Disseminate and communicate widely.
- **Integrate bullying prevention material into curriculum and school activities.** Implement curriculum-based, class-level discussions and activities about bullying (e.g., role-playing activities) at each grade level.
- **Promote extracurricular activities.** Reinforce positive social interactions in an inclusive environment.
- **Raise awareness about your bullying prevention initiative.** Launch an awareness campaign to make the objectives known to the school, parents, and community members.
- **Establish a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect.** Take advantage of staff meetings, assemblies, class and parent meetings, newsletters to families, the school website, and the student handbook.

What Schools Can Do

Schools play an important role in ensuring that activities of kids, teens and young adults are in a safe environment, in school or in cyberspace.

Preventing Cyberbullying

Educate students, teachers, and other staff members about cyberbullying, its dangers, and what to do if someone is cyberbullied.

Discuss cyberbullying with students. They may be knowledgeable about cyberbullying and they may have good ideas about how to prevent and address it.

Be sure that your school's rules and policies address cyberbullying.

Closely monitor students' use of computers at school. Use filtering and tracking software on all computers, but don't rely solely on this software to screen out cyberbullying and other problematic online behavior.

What To Do When it Starts

Investigate reports of cyberbullying immediately. If cyberbullying occurs on-campus or through the school district's internet system, you are obligated to take action. If the cyberbullying

occurs off-campus, you can still help. Remember even cyberbullying that occurs off-campus can affect how students behave and relate to each other at school.

- Closely monitor the behavior of the students involved at school for all forms of bullying.
- Investigate to see if those who are cyberbullied need support from a school counselor or school-based health professional.
- Notify parents of students involved in cyberbullying.
- Talk with all students about the negative effects of cyberbullying.

Contact law enforcement. Notify the police if the aggressive behavior is criminal. The following may constitute a crime:

- Threats of violence
- Child pornography and sexting
- Taking a photo image of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy
- Harassment, stalking, or hate crimes
- Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages
- Sexual exploitation
- Extortion

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the Committee:

I'm not going to read my testimony to you. I will, however, highlight a few items:

- The revisors office is working on an amendment that only the victim who reports bullying is an eligible student, not any reporting student.
- The definition of bullying for this bill is the same as in current statute and can be found on page 2 of the KSDE Bullying Prevention document.

Bullying is not a new problem and I'm sure has touched everyone in this room to some extent; either as a victim, a parent or sibling of a victim, a bystander, or perhaps the bully. For decades, well-intentioned efforts and dozens of programs and initiatives to curb bullying have sadly failed. As a former teacher and principal, I have been on the forefront of many of these initiatives. It is not from lack of attention, resources or effort by school employees that these efforts have failed. But what we've done and continue to do is not working.

According to the Kansas Communities That Care Survey, from 2014 to 2018, the number of students reporting being bullied at school on a regular basis (defined as 1 to 2 times a week) or every day increased. In 2008, 28% of students reported being bullied sometimes, regularly, or every day. In 2018, that number was 27.29%. In nearly 11 years, we've seen a decrease of less than 1 % despite or best policies, programs and intentions.

On page 3 of the KSDE document, the warning signs of being bullied include:

- Loses interest in school or other activities with peers
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed
- Hurts themselves
- Talks about suicide

This committee has heard the increased mental health needs of students and according to the Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force which was created in 2018 in response to rising numbers of Kansas youth attempting and dying by suicide, the number of suicides by Kansans 18 years of age and younger more than doubled between 2005 and 2015.

Bullying is a serious, detrimental, long-standing threat to the well-being of far too many Kansas children. The Kansas State Board of Education concurs when they state, “bullying is a serious issue affecting Kansas schools by creating a negative effect on the social environment of schools and a climate of fear among students as well as inhibiting students’ ability to learn and leading to other anti-social behavior.”

So what is a parent to do when bullying occurs according to the Kansas State Board of Education? On page 5 of their statement, the parent or guardian is to talk to the school administration. If the bullying gets worse and you need additional help, consider the following (see table). I want to draw your attention to the disclaimer at the bottom of the page:

“Please note that though the federal Departments of Health and Human Services and Education and KSDE care deeply about bullying, they are limited to intervene in specific cases; bullying and other discipline policies and laws are set at the state and local levels.”

The Kansas State Board of Education states that “The State of Kansas recognizes its responsibility to safeguard schools to ensure physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all Kansas students and school staff.” In keeping with that responsibility, that is the why victims of bullying need the Kansas Hope Scholarship Act.

I want to be clear about what this bill does and does not.

This bill

- Gives victims of bullying and their parents a chance at a fresh start
- Allows parents of a bullying victim the option of keeping their child in the current school.
- Allows parents to transfer their child to another public school OR qualified private school.

If a parent chooses to transfer the student, the BASE aid would follow the students as outlined in Sec. 6.

This bill does NOT

- Force a student to leave a school or go to any other specific school.
- Violate student privacy laws in the reporting of bullying.

In closing, Madam Chair, I want to share two examples:

In the September 24, 2011 Wichita Eagle, a parent of a 14-year-old student who committed suicide is quoted as saying his daughter took her own life at least in part because she was frustrated and depressed after being threatened and called names by other students. He goes on to say, "we knew she was being bullied and that some crap was going on at school ... we tried to make the school aware of it. They knew what was going on, but they didn't do anything about it."

In a November 2017 KWCH news story, the family of a 6th grade student who took his own life said that they believe he may have been bullied at school and online.

I truly think every person here wants what is best for all students and agrees that bullying is a serious problem. That is why we should be able to put our students first. They deserve your support for the Hope Scholarship Act.

Thank you, Madam Chair and committee. I'll stand for questions at the appropriate time.

occurs off-campus, you can still help. Remember even cyberbullying that occurs off-campus can affect how students behave and relate to each other at school.

- Closely monitor the behavior of the students involved at school for all forms of bullying.
- Investigate to see if those who are cyberbullied need support from a school counselor or school-based health professional.
- Notify parents of students involved in cyberbullying.
- Talk with all students about the negative effects of cyberbullying.

Contact law enforcement. Notify the police if the aggressive behavior is criminal. The following may constitute a crime:

- Threats of violence
- Child pornography and sexting
- Taking a photo image of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy
- Harassment, stalking, or hate crimes
- Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages
- Sexual exploitation
- Extortion

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the Committee:

I'm not going to read my testimony to you. I will, however, highlight a few items:

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