

Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan

Support Plan Recommendations

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**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan

Overview

The development of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan began in December 2011 and was completed in October 2013 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Office for Safe Schools Office. The purpose of the plan is to identify needs and provide recommendations, which will best support efforts to reduce bullying behavior in schools by supporting the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based bullying prevention efforts in Pennsylvania's schools. The plan highlights past bullying prevention efforts of state agencies, organizations and foundations and their interest in future collaborative efforts. The plan also includes information on the current status of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in Pennsylvania schools and highlights other bullying prevention efforts and programs.

Information and data for the Bullying Prevention Support Plan was obtained from a broad group of stakeholders through multiple means. Bullying prevention accomplishments, needs and recommendations were summarized from a fact-finding work group, comprised of 26 professionals representing various sectors in the fields of education and violence prevention and the survey results from 1,251 public school administrators, 75 OBPP trainers and the education departments of Pennsylvania's institutions of higher education. In addition, key informant interviews were held with eight statewide partners and one national partner to recognize roles, accomplishments and to identify future goals as collaborative partners in bullying prevention. All this information was taken under consideration by Mary Dolan, Bullying Prevention Consultant for the Safe Schools Office in order to identify needs and make recommendations to the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan.

From this work, six core themes emerged and served as the framework for the six Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan recommendations. They include: statewide collaboration; bullying prevention program support; statewide training infrastructure; bullying prevention education; data-driven decisions; and connections with school climate initiatives. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is committed to statewide bullying prevention support based on the final plan.

Implementation strategies began during the 2013-14 school year and include the addition of OBPP certified trainers, the formation of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Partnership, establishing the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention ConsultLine and the development of Pennsylvania's School Climate Surveys.

1. Demonstrate collaborative efforts to expand and sustain bullying prevention education and efforts to support safe and secure learning environments

Identified Need

Over the past decade, various state agencies, organizations and school district representatives have come together to examine school safety needs in Pennsylvania's schools. In December 2001, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) partnered to address the growing need to improve schools climates and more specifically bullying prevention. The first statewide Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) training of trainers, which was a result of the partnership efforts of PCCD and PDE, led to the wide scale implementation of a research-based bullying prevention program. These early collaborative efforts among governmental agencies paired with state and federal funding helped to support bullying prevention program implementation, increase awareness and provided general bullying prevention education. The Highmark Foundation's Healthy High 5 Initiative was launched in 2007 and provided resources to build upon this strong foundation of research-based bullying prevention efforts. The unique addition of a private foundation brought new perspectives and increased funding opportunities for schools at a time when government funding allocations for school safety was decreased. Legislation passed in 2010 resulted in the requirement for the State Board of Education to convene and consult with a state wide advisory committee which included a police chief, juvenile public defender, school superintendent, school principal, district attorney, solicitor of a school district, special education supervisor, special education advocate, an in-school probation officer and one designee from PDE, PCCD, the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Pennsylvania State Police. This is the only state wide safe schools advisory board mandated by law.

Most recently, the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Coalition was formed and currently has representation from the Center for Safe Schools, PCCD, PDE, the OBPP, Penn State University's EPISCenter, and the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at Winber Research Institute (WRI). Members of the coalition report on current state wide bullying prevention efforts and strategize collaborative opportunities to support schools.

Description of Need

Pennsylvania's rich history of having a collaborative, cross-systems statewide approach has resulted in many positive bullying prevention outcomes for the schools in the Commonwealth; however, there can be challenges associated with statewide collaborative efforts. Advisory boards and coalitions may be unaware of each other's efforts and although they may share similar purposes and goals they may not be communicating with each other on a regular basis. This potential lack of awareness, of common goals, can result in duplication of efforts and the inefficient use of resources and expertise to address the needs of the schools. Bullying prevention needs are currently addressed by numerous state and local governmental agencies, non-profit

groups, associations, organizations, etc. Statewide bullying prevention partners have convened groups with representation from these various entities over the past decade. Currently, state government has not convened an advisory group to specifically address bullying prevention.

There is a need to continue to identify stakeholders who have been involved in bullying prevention initiatives, yet have not had the opportunity to participate in statewide collaborative efforts. For example, professionals, agencies and organizations in the fields of early childhood, special education and higher education have been examining bullying prevention needs, and at times producing tools and resources but have not been identified as partners in bullying prevention. Statewide initiatives, such as the Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative (PASPI) have asked for support from key leaders in the field of bullying prevention to examine overlap of these two critical youth issues.

Student voice and meaningful engagement in bullying prevention efforts are essential when examining the effectiveness of state-wide bullying prevention initiatives. As bullying prevention efforts have moved into the secondary level, students have not had the opportunity, on a regular basis, to provide input at the state level concerning goals and feedback on past, current and future bullying prevention efforts.

1-1 Identify leadership and coordination for the advisory or leadership group

Identify key bullying prevention leaders who are positioned to organize and coordinate a state-wide bullying prevention coalition.

1-2 Create a new coalition or expand the existing Pennsylvania bullying prevention coalition

Engage members of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Coalition in a discussion concerning the goal to expand and build upon existing coalition efforts to determine their interest in growing their coalition.

1-3 Identify multi-system stakeholders committed to building ongoing, collaborative partnerships to reduce bullying behavior in schools and communities

List the current statewide agencies and organizations that provided information for the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan and the names of emerging partners. Convene a meeting for current bullying prevention partners and emerging partners to review the findings of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Support Plan research and the six recommendations. Determine interest from potential members to collaborate on a regular basis to address the bullying prevention needs of Pennsylvania's schools.

1-4 Establish a framework which would best support a statewide approach to bullying prevention

Utilize a framework focused on the strengths and contributions of key stakeholders and leaders who could help to move bullying prevention efforts forward.

1-5 Identify the mission and goals of a statewide bullying prevention coalition of advisory group

Articulate how the coalition will work collaboratively to expand and support bullying prevention efforts throughout the Commonwealth.

1-6 Establish an effective and transparent communication plan for coalition members

Create a communication plan to assure the group efforts are developed and delivered to the schools in the most efficient manner.

1-7 Create an open membership atmosphere to welcome new and emerging partners

Identify new and emerging bullying prevention partners, and invite them to join this collaborative effort. Reach out to sectors (such as students, parents, and early childhood and higher education stakeholders) who have not been had the opportunity to collaborate on bullying prevention efforts at the state level. Increase awareness of the statewide bullying prevention partnerships to encourage new membership and to grow existing efforts.

1-8 Identify students who can give voice to bullying prevention needs

Obtain student feedback on past, current and future bullying prevention efforts/programs at the secondary level and provide opportunities for students to become co-leaders in statewide efforts.

2. Build upon the foundation of over one decade of research-based bullying prevention efforts.

Identified Need

The first statewide training of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) Trainers was conducted in Pennsylvania in December 2001. Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) and coordinated by the Center for Safe Schools, a statewide approach was launched to support schools in their efforts to implement comprehensive, research-based bullying prevention programs. These early efforts combined with additional support from other state agencies, organizations and private foundations over the past 10 years and have resulted in Pennsylvania having the largest cadre of OBPP trainers in the nation comprised of approximated 200 certified trainers and over 800 schools having implemented this research-based program. Over the past decade, the OBPP was the number one implemented school wide bullying prevention program in Pennsylvania. This research-based, bullying prevention program primarily focused on grades K-8 implementation with OBPP trainers receiving the tools and resources to implement in schools containing grades K-8. More recently the OBPP training model was expanded to include high school level resources, which in turn would better support district-wide implementation. Statewide partnership efforts have resulted in increased OBPP support in the areas of research, program readiness, fidelity to the model and program sustainability. Participation in a national OBPP Quality Assurance System

(OQAS) pilot project has resulted in Pennsylvania having the first schools in the nation to achieve this award, indicating the highest level of fidelity to the OBPP model. Statewide collaborative efforts have resulted in the largest implementation of the OBPP in the U.S., reports on bullying prevention outcomes, enhancements of the program model and bullying prevention education. Pennsylvania's approach to bullying prevention has been examined by state leaders as an effective method to support safe and secure learning environments. Pennsylvania has been referred to as a national leader in bullying prevention by the OBPP developers at Clemson University. To date, the OBPP is the single most implemented research-based bullying prevention program in Pennsylvania.

Description of Need

Research-based prevention programs were designed to be implemented with fidelity to the program model to ensure positive outcomes. The OBPP Trainer Certification Course is designed to train professionals in the program model who would then be qualified to implement and help to sustain the OBPP with fidelity to the program model. The OBPP highly suggests that schools work with a certified trainer before, during and after initial implementation for a period of no less than 18 months. The Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) should be provided with OBPP updates and informed of new resources which can enhance the program efforts. New hires and staff who would like to join the existing committee need to be provided with training opportunities to keep the program fresh and to assure that all adults are well-versed in the program model. Even the most experienced BPCCs are left with challenges to sustain the program when there is a turnover in administration, teaching and/or support staff. There are schools that have a large transitory population of students posing challenges to provide uniform messages concerning school climate and expectations.

With increased implementation of the OBPP at the high school level, additional research needs to be conducted concerning program effectiveness, implementation challenges and successes. Although program effectiveness at the high school level has been examined by state leaders, a wide-scale effort to collect feedback and suggestions from high school students has not been undertaken.

Identifying other research-based bullying prevention programs, approaches and curricula, and the associated supports needed to implement and sustain these efforts needs to be examined in order to ensure a fair distribution of support for other programs. However, current state-level databases containing information on school climate programs currently utilized in Pennsylvania are indicating that no other research-based bullying prevention program has been implemented on such a wide-scale basis as the OBPP.

2-1 Support a statewide network of OBPP certified trainers (Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network)

The Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network (Network) is currently coordinated by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Center for Safe Schools and building capacity of the existing Network will help to support the OBPP in Pennsylvania's schools.

2-2 Provide the opportunity for LEAs to have a certified OBPP trainer

Although Pennsylvania has the largest cadre of OBPP trainers in the nation, support at the local level helps to ensure program success.

2-3 Provide new hire trainings for schools that have implemented the OBPP

To address the challenge of staff turnover and to ensure all adults understand the OBPP model, additional trainings are needed.

2-4 Provide Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) add-on trainings

BPCC members step down for various reasons and new members need access to trainings which will provide a more in-depth understanding of the program.

2-5 Provide regional networking opportunities for schools who have implemented the OBPP

Schools that have participated in past networking opportunities have expressed the importance of having these opportunities to share challenges and successes, and to learn from one another.

2-6 Identify regional expertise in the OBPP model to support readiness, initial implementation and sustainability to the program model

Across the state, a limited number of highly qualified OBPP trainers are available to share their expertise acquired from over a decade of OBPP implementation experience. Model OBPP implementation sites exist throughout the Commonwealth and staff members, who coordinate these efforts, have knowledge concerning all aspects of how to ensure positive outcomes.

2-7 Support the Olweus Quality Assurance System (QAS)

The QAS process is designed to recognize the schools that have achieved the highest level of OBPP implementation with fidelity to the program model. Having this opportunity to participate in the QAS process can provide incentive to sustain the program and with the highest level of fidelity.

2-8 Conduct research on OBPP high school implementation which will include staff, student and parent input on how the program model can be most effective when implemented at the high school level

Communicate with OBPP program developers to determine if an assessment tool has been developed to gather this data and/or design a survey for Pennsylvania's OBPP trainers to utilize when supporting high school implementation efforts.

2-9 Identify other evidence-based bullying prevention programs and provide associated support

It has been suggested over the past 10 years that statewide support for bullying prevention should not be centered on only one program. Although a second comprehensive research-based bullying prevention program has not been widely implemented in Pennsylvania's schools, it is important to identify and support other evidence-based programs which have demonstrated positive outcomes.

3. Increase capacity of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network (Network) to serve Pennsylvania's schools.

Identified Need

The Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network is currently comprise of 200 plus members with 130 members listed as active. All members have received training in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) and have obtained various levels of certification and hold additional qualification such as Olweus Technical Assistant Consultants and Olweus Quality Assurance site visitors. Professional development on OBPP enhancements in the areas of readiness, fidelity and sustainability have occurred for a limited number of trainers. Professional development topics related to bullying prevention are offered to all members of the Network. Trainers are available to train in all regions of the Commonwealth and are employed in many fields of prevention; however a limited number of trainers are employees of local educational agencies (LEAs). Networking opportunities occur on a regional level. The PA Bullying Prevention Network is coordinated by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Center for Safe Schools.

Description of Need

Needs assessments are conducted to determine professional development opportunities at regional meetings and through online (Third Thursdays coordinated by the Center for Safe Schools) learning. The Center for Safe Schools surveyed the Network in 2012 to determine the needs of Pennsylvania's OBPP trainers. Maintaining interest and momentum for OBPP and blending OBPP with other school wide programs were the top two needs identified by trainers.

The scheduling of Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network's professional development events and networking meetings are based on the availability of funding to provide such opportunities. Although a number of trainers indicate their availability to provide OBPP implementation statewide, various regions of the Commonwealth do not have easy access to trainers or find it challenging to receive ongoing support. Pennsylvania schools continue to express an interest in implementing the OBPP. The Highmark Foundation's Healthy High 5 Initiative provided a unique opportunity for a limited number of trainers to receive a more in depth understanding in the areas of readiness, fidelity and sustainability to the OBPP model. The opportunity to share these new OBPP support skills with active members of the Network has not yet occurred. A limited number of trainers have received training and field experience in the Olweus

Quality Assurance System (QAS) and Pennsylvania OBPP schools are requesting the opportunity to enter into the QAS process. OBPP trainers are challenged to maintain OBPP trainer certification, which is coordinated by Olweus program developers. Olweus Technical Assistance Consultants (OTAC) are located throughout the United States and provides support to new trainers. Non-Pennsylvania OTACs, although highly qualified OBPP trainers, may not be aware of the needs unique to Pennsylvania schools and communities.

3-1 Provide professional development opportunities to members of the Network on current bullying prevention topics

At a minimum, areas of need identified on the 2012 Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network Survey should be addressed through trainings and online education. Coordinated efforts to offer continuing education will help to ensure the leveling of trainer skills and knowledge.

- a. Schedule regular Network meetings, which include professional development on bullying prevention topics and OBPP updates.
- b. Appeal to state bullying prevention partners and outside agencies to communicate professional development opportunities.
- c. Link with professional development opportunities to obtain and maintain OBPP trainer certification.

3-2 Provide opportunities for Network members to gain a more in-depth understanding of the OBPP model

From the time of initial implementation of the OBPP in Pennsylvania's schools, a great deal of experience and knowledge has been gained in the areas of readiness, fidelity and sustainability of the program model. The trainers in Pennsylvania have varying levels of expertise and the sharing of strategies learned in the field will help to increase the number of highly qualified trainers.

3-3 Increase the number of OBPP trainers qualified as the Olweus QAS site visitors

A small percentage of Pennsylvania's OBPP trainers have experience in the QAS process. Participation in QAS helps to ensure fidelity to the program model and favorable outcomes for the school. As the first state in the nation to participate in this process, which is guided by Olweus International, valuable QAS tools and knowledge gained are ready to be shared with other highly qualified trainers.

3-4 Increase LEA access to OBPP trainer services

Trainer services need to be easily accessible to LEAs and their services need to be cost effective. The addition of trainers to underserved regions where LEAs are requesting to implement and/or sustain OBPP efforts will help to increase support at the local level.

3-5 Increase capacity of the Pennsylvania OTACs to provide support to Pennsylvania OBPP trainers

Provide OTAC networking opportunities to share experiences and knowledge of OBPP implementation and sustainability. Although OBPP OTACs receive ongoing program updates from the OBPP Director of Training, they do not connect with other Pennsylvania OTACs on a regular basis. Increased networking will help to support new Pennsylvania trainers beyond the required 18-24 months of OTAC support included in the Train Certification Course contract.

4. Continue and Expand Bullying Prevention Education for Schools, Communities and Future Educators.

Identified Need

For over a decade key partners in bullying prevention efforts have provided bullying education for school staff, students, parents and community partners on topics such as: how to recognize, respond and prevent bullying behavior; understanding evidence-based approaches; key components of comprehensive bullying prevention programs; and the impact of bullying prevention on school climate. Helpful resources were developed and made available for parents through the efforts of these statewide partnerships. Bullying prevention institutes, conference workshops, networking sessions and webinars were offered to provide educators, bullying prevention trainers, parents and community members with opportunities to learn more about this important issue.

Schools throughout the Commonwealth have been engaged in bullying prevention education, initiatives and program implementation to various degrees and currently are not required to provide education or training on the topic of bullying prevention. The Pennsylvania bullying prevention legislation was passed in 2008 and amended the Pennsylvania School Code by requiring all local educational agencies (LEA), public schools, school districts, career and technology centers, and charter schools to develop and adopt a bullying prevention policy. A copy of the bullying policy must be submitted annually to the department. Although it must include information related to the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention and education programs, the law states that the policy *may* provide for research-based prevention, intervention and education programs. Schools reported using a variety of methods to address bullying prevention education on the 2012 Pennsylvania Public School Principal's Survey conducted by PDE's Safe Schools Office from comprehensive programs to assemblies. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Survey (2012), conducted by the Safe Schools Office, showed that colleges and universities are providing bullying prevention education through various approaches from embedding it into existing coursework to guest lectures. The top four responses on the principal's survey, concerning bullying prevention professional development, are cyber-bullying, bystander behavior, parent/community engagement and individual interventions for students who bully others.

Although Pennsylvania has made a significant investment since 2001, in one research-based bullying prevention program (OBPP), state partners, schools and communities continue to seek information concerning other bullying prevention programs, approaches and/or curricula.

Description of Need

Pennsylvania's public schools are not required to implement bullying prevention programs, approaches or curricula, and are not required to provide professional development on the topic of bullying prevention. As schools and communities (including elected officials) continue to face and address the many challenges associated with providing safe and secure learning environments, they continue to seek information on how to recognize, respond and prevent bullying behavior and resources to support their efforts. State legislators have requested information from the Safe Schools Office to better understand bullying in schools and efforts undertaken to date to improve school climate. The Pennsylvania Principal's Survey (2012) indicated the need for education on parent/community engagement, bystander behavior, individual interventions for students who bully others and cyber-bullying. Stakeholders are seeking both online and in-person events to increase their knowledge on these topics. The development of a strategic plan for online professional development among agencies and organizations who provide webinar opportunities (such as the Center for Safe Schools' Third Thursday webinars, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Safe & Supportive Schools webinars) could help bullying prevention partners avoid duplication of efforts and maximize professional opportunities available to schools and communities.

Although schools are asking for support to implement or sustain the OBPP, it is important to continue to examine other bullying prevention programs, approaches and/or curricula and connect schools with the opportunities to review these resources.

Pennsylvania's Higher Education survey (2012) showed that bullied prevention education is not addressed in all pre-service education programs. However, when this topic is prioritized for future teachers the most frequently used strategy is that of embedding bullying prevention in exiting coursework. Pennsylvania's postsecondary institutions are requesting more information on the issue of cyber-bullying and access to other resources. It was also expressed that it would be helpful if PDE would provide a consistent message on how to best prepare future teachers to recognize, respond and prevent bullying in the schools. Bullying prevention education and efforts in the areas of early childhood and special education need to be examined and expanded upon.

Many key partners in bullying prevention have provided and continue to provide learning opportunities and downloadable resources however; resources of time and money have been listed as barriers to accessing professional development opportunities.

Schools continue to seek creative solutions on how to increase parental participation in bullying prevention educational opportunities. Calls to PDE from concerned parents often involve the need to differentiate between bullying and conflict, and how to work in

partnership with the school to address bullying situations and to prevent further incidences. Other state partners receive calls from parents seeking support for bullying situations and guidance on how to resolve these situations in the schools, communities and in the virtual world, as well.

4-1 Identify bullying prevention partners who are currently offering online educational opportunities for future teachers, educators, parents and community members

Work in collaboration to select webinar topics based on local, regional and statewide needs assessments. Notify schools, parents and communities of these learning opportunities. Offer Act 48 credit when possible.

4-2 Support regional professional development for educators based on local needs assessments to increase learning opportunities and to provide networking opportunities

Work in collaboration with key state partners to select topics related to bullying prevention and offer in-person educational opportunities. Examine needs expressed on statewide surveys to prioritize professional development topics. Offer Act 48 credit when possible. Partner with the intermediate units for regional events.

4-3 Disseminate information to LEAs, institutions of higher education and parents/community members concerning the availability of resources, which have been developed by Pennsylvania partners in bullying prevention, state organizations and federal agencies

Compile a resource list and make the list available to schools and communities.

4-4 Determine if there is a need to print and distribute free online bullying prevention resources to schools and communities

Identify potential funding sources to produce hard copy bullying prevention resources for schools and communities and make the availability of these resources known.

4-5 Utilize expertise of members of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network to provide bullying prevention education to requesting LEAs, parent/community organizations and Pennsylvania's institutions of higher education

Survey members of the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network to determine interest and availability to support schools and communities in continuing bullying prevention education.

4-6 Coordinate and refine parent support efforts for parents/guardians who are seeking guidance on how to respond to a bullying situation in the school and/or community

Identify state agencies, organizations and individuals who are providing technical assistance to parents who are reporting bullying situations and who are seeking support to resolve these incidents of bullying. Compile a summary report of best practices (for parent support) and distribute to entities that are receiving these calls.

4-7 Examine the benefits of creating a media campaign to raise awareness and help educate targeted audiences on how to recognize, respond and prevent bullying

Identify experts to assist with the development of a media campaign centered on research-based, bullying prevention information.

4-8 Provide future teachers with courses, course units, modules or workshops on how to recognize, respond to and prevent bullying in the schools

Identify existing bullying prevention educational opportunities for future teachers and make this information available to all Pennsylvania higher education institutions. Provide guidance from PDE on requirements of Pennsylvania law in regard to bullying prevention, and information on best practices and research-based programs to future teachers.

4-9 Examine the need for bullying prevention education and/or programs for the early childhood population

Collaborate with statewide organizations and governmental agencies that support early childhood education to assess needs for bullying prevention.

4-10 Examine bullying prevention efforts developed for special education needs

Collaborate with statewide organizations and governmental agencies that support special education to assess needs for bullying prevention education.

5. Utilize Data to Identify and Address Bullying Prevention Needs.

Identified Need

The Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Principal's Survey, conducted in 2012 by the PDE's Safe Schools Office, helped to provide information concerning statewide bullying prevention needs. Results of this survey provided data on issues such as: efforts to support safe and secure learning environments; bullying prevention efforts; familiarity with the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program OBPP; support needed to sustain OBPP implementation; barriers to bullying prevention; professional development needs; support needed to increase efforts; and the impact of school district bullying prevention policies. Schools continue to request funding to support their bullying prevention efforts when applying for state grant funding (Safe Schools Targeted Grant). The OBPP is listed most frequently when identifying a specific bullying prevention program on the Safe Schools Targeted grant applications. In addition, LEAs contact the Safe Schools Office for funding to support bullying prevention existing efforts and to implement new programs.

The Principal's Bullying Prevention Survey (2012) data shows School-Wide Positive Behavior Support and the OBPP as the two most frequently used programs in Pennsylvania to address bullying in the schools. Additional data from this statewide survey points to specific barriers schools are facing and professional development needs.

PDE, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Center for Safe Schools and Windber Research Institute have collected and analyzed data over the past 11 years from school staff, parents and students, the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Network (OBPP), state-level workgroups and key stake holders to assist with data-driven decision making that will best support bullying prevention efforts. Most research projects have centered on the implementation, sustainability and/or effectiveness of the OBPP and research projects on other bullying prevention programs approaches and/or curricula have not been conducted. In addition, these organizations have produced research briefs and publications, which contain essential information which can be utilized by key partners as they work to advance their bullying prevention efforts in Pennsylvania. The OBPP developers, located at Clemson University, have expressed their deep appreciation for Pennsylvania's research efforts and their hope for continued bullying prevention research in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's higher education institutions were surveyed in 2012 concerning bullying prevention preparation for future teachers. Only 28 percent of the respondents indicated that they have course work dedicated to school safety topics. "Having no room in the required coursework to add this topic" was listed as the number one barrier prohibiting their program from better preparing education majors to recognize, respond and prevent bullying behavior in schools.

The need to examine bullying prevention as it related to the fields of special education and early childhood, as well as suicide prevention continue to emerge.

Description of Need

Pennsylvania's key partners in bullying prevention have demonstrated data-driven decision making when identifying and addressing the needs of the schools and the certified OBPP trainers. With the majority of bullying prevention research projects being focused on the OBPP, there appears to be a need to examine other approaches to bullying prevention. Strategies need to be developed on how to best support Pennsylvania's institutions of higher education in their efforts to prepare Pennsylvania's future teachers to address bullying in schools. The bullying prevention needs of various populations (such as early childhood, special education, future teachers) need to be identified. The majority of Pennsylvania bullying prevention studies have been focused on K-12 schools. Ongoing communication among key partners concerning research findings and the development of new bullying prevention research projects, is needed to best utilize data when aligning strategies to meet identified needs. Funding opportunities to support research efforts need to be identified and justification for ongoing research needs to be communicated to all stakeholders and potential funders who remain committed to providing Pennsylvania's youth with safe and secure learning environments.

5-1 Conduct ongoing needs assessments to determine the bullying prevention needs of schools, parents and communities members

Identify bullying prevention partners who are interested in conducting research and provide opportunities to collaborate on the development of such research projects.

5-2 Conduct ongoing needs assessments to determine the needs of the Pennsylvania OBPP trainers and to gather trainer input concerning OBPP implementation and sustainability

Work in collaboration with key partners to assess the professional development needs of Pennsylvania's bullying prevention trainers and the needs of the OBPP schools they are supporting.

5-3 Examine the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program to assist key partners with decisions concerning the continued support for the OBPP in Pennsylvania

Conduct a meta-analysis of research projects which have examined the effectiveness of the OBPP internationally, nationally and in Pennsylvania. Identify bullying prevention partners who are interested in conducting new research on the effectiveness and sustainability of the OBPP in Pennsylvania's schools.

5-4 Conduct research to identify bullying prevention programs, approaches and curricula utilized in Pennsylvania's schools (other than the OBPP) to prevent and/or address bullying in schools

Identify bullying prevention partners who are interested in conducting research and provide opportunities to collaborate on the development of such research projects.

5-5 Identify educational fields and populations which need further study in regard to bullying prevention needs

Identify bullying prevention partners who are interested in conducting research and provide opportunities to collaborate on the development of such research projects.

5-6 Communicate outcomes of all statewide bullying prevention research projects to schools, communities, statewide partners and key stakeholders

Determine an effective distribution method to share outcomes of bullying prevention studies to assist key partners in data-driven decision making.

6. Integrate Bullying Prevention Efforts with School Climate Initiatives.

Identified Need

Schools continue to request funding and support for programs, approaches and curricula which support their efforts to increase school safety and to improve school climate. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) and the School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SW-PBIS) framework are examples of two evidence-based approaches, utilized in Pennsylvania's schools, to address bullying in schools and to improve school climate. When the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Principal's Survey (2012) asked about programs, approaches and/or curricula in place to support safe and secure learning environments, bullying prevention was listed as the number one answer for all grade levels. The OBPP and SW-PBIS were selected, almost equally, as the number one response when participants were asked to indicate which programs/approaches or curricula are most frequently used to support bullying

prevention efforts in the schools. In addition, the survey captured information concerning sustainability of the OBPP in Pennsylvania's schools. The number one barrier listed, which affected sustainability, was the implementation of other programs and school initiatives. A state-level OBPP-Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports workgroup was convened to examine these challenges and the findings further support the need to provide schools with guidance when selected both OBPP and/or PBIS. Schools indicated that they utilize many other approaches to improving school climate, such as class meetings, school counselor lessons, Student Assistance Program (SAP), student assemblies, character education and conflict resolution. As bullying prevention efforts have moved forward to include the secondary level student, the need to engage students in efforts to improve school climate needs to be examined.

Description of Need

Schools have expressed that they have faced many challenges when selecting, implementing and sustaining frameworks, programs, approaches and curricula to improve school climate. Accessing affordable prevention resources, school climate inventories, understanding best practices and knowing how to integrate numerous initiatives can leave schools feeling overwhelmed. New funding opportunities for specific initiatives or staff training mandates can put schools in the position of making choices concerning which efforts to sustain and which to end. Recommended resources and support from professionals who have expertise in improving school climates and who understand the connections between bullying prevention and school climate improvement are needed to guide schools through the process of strategically planning school climate improving initiatives. Tools and resources are needed to guide integration of other school climate programs with comprehensive bullying prevention programs. For example, schools that have implemented School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (SW-PBIS) have shown how the two programs intersect and other schools have stated the need to select one over the other. Student Assistance Program (SAP) is another example of a school wide program, which utilizes a team or committee approach and whose referral might include students who are bullying others or who are being bullied. Schools need tools and resources on how to meet the challenges associated with forming more than one school climate improving team or committee and how to involve students as agents of change.

6-1 Provide professional development opportunities which will help staff assess and prioritize needs, identify resources and integrate bullying prevention into the school's overall efforts to improve school climate

Develop a strategic plan, among key partners in bullying prevention, to provide professional development opportunities.

6-2 Develop tools and resources to support the integration of bullying prevention and other school wide climate frameworks, programs and approaches

Identify opportunities for experts in the fields of bullying prevention and school climate improvement to develop tools and resources to support schools.

6-3 Provide information on the availability of tools and resources designed to help schools integrate bullying prevention efforts with other school climate improving initiatives

Compile a resource list of tools designed to help schools integrate bullying prevention efforts and distribute the list to schools and communities.

6-4 Provide professional development on how to engage students as co-leaders using shared decision making with adults (in the school and community) who are working to improve school climate

Identify resources to empower and purposefully engage youth to create positive change in schools and communities.