A Multi-Tiered Approach to Bullying Prevention

Research suggests that a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention (BP) is most effective. This includes universal strategies aimed at building an inclusive school climate where clear behavioral expectations are taught, reinforced and consistently addressed; selective prevention to address the needs of students who have greater needs than the general student population; and intensive strategies for students whose needs are not addressed in selective prevention. This multi-level prevention system is overseen by a team that uses data to monitor student needs and responses to tiered interventions.

**TIER 1 Universal**
- Sustained focus on school climate:
  - Systematic instruction on schoolwide behavioral expectations
  - Inclusive norms/routines
  - Signals and reinforcement systems for prosocial behavior
  - Effective classroom management
  - Use of surveys and other data
- Common definition of bullying
- Clear BP policies and expectations for bullying reporting and follow-up
- Teacher and staff training on BP and intervention, including emphases on equitable trauma informed care
- Tracking system(s) for identifying potential bullying across settings
- Knowledge and skill-based instruction for students on BP, cyberbullying prevention, bystander expectations, and online citizenship
- Classroom meetings or social emotional learning (SEL) lessons focused on: self and interpersonal awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, perspective taking, and social problem-solving
- Caregiver education on BP, digital parenting, and cyber safety

**TIER 2 Selective**
- Active supervision in bullying “hot spots,” including on-the-spot interventions when bullying is suspected
- Teach/reteach social-behavioral expectations in settings where bullying frequently occurs
- Referral system for identifying students who need more support:
  - Schoolwide data systems
  - SAP
  - Teacher nomination/ratings
  - Student and caregiver reports
- Direct SEL instruction for students who show early signs of problem behavior according to data. May focus on:
  - Social problem-solving skills
  - Self-management strategies
  - Friendship skills
  - Communication skills
  - Empathy-building
  - Peer support groups
- Create space for students to play a role in BP and shifting school climate:
  - Student voice on school climate team
  - Pro-social and social justice clubs/youth engagement opportunities

**TIER 3 Intensive**
- On-the-spot interventions by adults
- Individual meetings with students and caregivers
- Individualized plan for students who bully others:
  - May include regular check-ins, mentoring, skill practice/application, psychoeducational interventions for students and caregivers, etc.
- Individualized supportive planning with students who are bullied:
  - May include supportive check-ins, mentoring, plans for safety/support, follow-up meetings with caregivers, etc.
- IEP or 504 meetings for students already identified for individualized support
- Referral to SAP or behavioral health services and community supports, as needed