Prevention and Intervention of Workplace Bullying in Schools

A Report Prepared for the National Education Association

Catherine P. Bradshaw, Ph.D., M.Ed.
Kate Figiel, Ed.M.
Johns Hopkins University

National Education Association
Human and Civil Rights Department
Rocío Inclán, Director
The National Education Association is the nation’s largest professional employee organization, representing 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

Reproduction: No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission from NEA Human and Civil Rights, except by NEA-affiliated associations and NEA members. Any reproduction of this material must contain the usual credit line and copyright notice. Address communications to Editor, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-3290.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .................................................................................................................. 2

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND OVERVIEW OF AIMS ................................................................. 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ..................................................................................................... 4

1. Define workplace bullying. ........................................................................................................ 4
2. Describe staff experiences with different forms of bullying. .................................................... 6
3. Summarize characteristics and consequences of workplace bullying. ................................. 9
4. Summarize approaches for preventing workplace bullying. ................................................... 14
5. Provide behavior support plans and suggested strategies for preventing and responding to workplace bullying. ................................................................................................................. 24

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS ...................................................................................... 28

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................................... 29

SELECTED RESOURCES ............................................................................................................. 34
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report

The goal of this paper is to review the literature on workplace bullying in order to gain a better understanding of the seriousness of this form of bullying, identify characteristics of the bullying, and summarize promising strategies for preventing or intervening in workplace bullying.

Primary Aims of the Report

AIM 1: Define workplace bullying.
AIM 2: Describe staff experiences with different forms of bullying.
AIM 3: Summarize characteristics and consequences of workplace bullying.
AIM 4: Summarize approaches for preventing workplace bullying.
AIM 5: Provide behavior support plans and suggested strategies for preventing and responding to workplace bullying.

Summary of Key Findings

Relatively few U.S. policies address issues of workplace bullying among educators.
There is some overlap among workplace bullying, physical victimization, and harassment. It is important to distinguish among these different types of maltreatment of educators.
Some educators may not feel comfortable disclosing incidents of workplace bullying.

Conclusions and Implications

Professional development should be provided to teachers and ESPs to address issues of workplace bullying.
Educators need to learn their rights and reach out to the NEA and other organizations for support in addressing and responding to workplace bullying.
Policies should be expanded to directly address the issue of workplace bullying.
Additional research is needed to better understand the needs of teachers and ESPs related to the prevention of workplace bullying.
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND OVERVIEW OF AIMS

Background

There are growing concerns about the rates of bullying in U.S. schools (Nansel et al., 2001; Robers et al., 2011; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012), and these issues affect not only the students, but also the teachers and Education Support Professionals (ESPs) working in those schools (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & O’Brennan, 2011; Dinkes, Cataldi, Lin-Kelly, & Snyder, 2008). The National Education Association (NEA) has had a long history and strong commitment to providing professional development and technical assistance to its members on bullying prevention. Moreover, the NEA recently launched a bullying prevention campaign, called Bully Free: It Starts with Me, that built on some original research on bullying and school connectedness conducted by the NEA in conjunction with researchers at the Johns Hopkins University (Bradshaw et al., 2011).

Yet, an area that continues to be overlooked in the research and prevention programming is workplace bullying among teachers and ESPs. Identified by the NEA membership as a growing priority, the current report focuses on the topic of workplace bullying and its relevance to teachers and ESPs and the broader NEA membership. With 3 million members nationwide, the NEA is in an ideal position to both address the critical issue of workplace bullying and advance the research on strategies and policies to prevent workplace bullying in schools across the country.

Specific Aims

The goal of this report is to review the literature on workplace bullying in order to gain a better understanding of the seriousness of this form of bullying, identify characteristics of the bullying, and summarize promising strategies for preventing or intervening in workplace bullying. The following specific aims will be examined in this report.

Aim 1: Define workplace bullying.

We define workplace bullying and describe how it differs from other forms of mistreatment, such as harassment, including sexual harassment.

AIM 2: Describe staff experiences with different forms of bullying.

We describe staff experiences and examine potential solutions to the problem of workplace bullying and other forms of violence against adult staff currently in effect in various places, operating at the systems level, the organizational level, and the individual level.

Aim 3: Summarize characteristics and consequences of workplace bullying.

We summarize some of the characteristics of workplace bullying and other forms of violence against educators, including teachers and ESPs, and summarize findings about the outcomes of workplace bullying.

Aim 4: Summarize approaches for preventing workplace bullying.

We summarize the extant research on effective approaches for preventing workplace bullying against educators (i.e., teachers and ESPs), including legal, organizational leadership, professional development, and school-wide prevention programming strategies.

Aim 5: Provide behavior support plans and suggested strategies for responding to workplace bullying.

We outline a set of recommended strategies that may be used by districts, administrators, and educators to address workplace bullying, including student bullying of staff.

In recent years, school bullying has received growing attention by the media, educators, and policymakers; this has resulted in new legislation,
increased professional development on bullying, and the adoption of various school-based programs. While bullying prevention programs show great potential to improve the emotional and physical safety of children in schools (Ttofti & Farrington, 2011), studies have generally not examined the extent to which they provide a direct benefit for teachers and ESPs or impact workplace bullying. Like students, teachers and ESPs may suffer from unhealthy organizational climates, harassment, and bullying which can have devastating consequences for the educators, and by extension harm the students they work with (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & O’Brennan, 2010). Although there is limited research specifically on educators being bullied by students, superiors, or colleagues, the issue of workplace bullying is the focus of increased concern.

**AIM 1: Define workplace bullying.**

**Workplace Bullying**

Workplace bullying has been studied worldwide, with a great deal of research being conducted in Europe, although more recently it has gained attention in the U.S. Heinz Leymann (1990) is credited as the first to identify the construct of workplace bullying, which he adapted from that of bullying among youth, as studied by Olweus (1993) and others (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). As defined by Olweus (1993), bullying among youth typically includes intentional and repeated aggressive acts that can be physical (such as hitting), verbal (such as threats or name calling), or relational (such as spreading rumors or influencing social relationships). Bullying among children typically occurs in situations where there is a power or status difference (Bradshaw et al., 2010; CDC, in press).

Workplace bullying has many different definitions, for example, “the phenomenon that includes negative workplace behavior including such behaviors as being humiliated or ridiculed, being ignored or excluded, being shouted at, receiving hints that you should quit your job, receiving persistent criticism, and excessive monitoring of your work” (Simons, 2008, p. E49). Other definitions include “repeated and persistent negative actions towards one or more individual(s), which involve a perceived power imbalance and create a hostile work environment” (Salin, 2003, p. 1214-1215).

From a legal perspective, some state bills have been proposed that address “abusive work environments,” defining them as “a workplace where an employee is subjected to abusive conduct so severe that it causes physical or psychological harm,” where abusive conduct is defined as “conduct of an employer or employee in the workplace, with malice, that a reasonable person would find hostile, offensive, and unrelated to an employer’s legitimate business interests” (Martucci & Sinatra, 2009). Winning a case requires the testimony of a medical or psychological professional that there has been harm (e.g., emotional, psychological, physical, and/or financial) caused as a result of the abuse (Namie, 2012b).

Despite slightly different emphases, workplace bullying definitions tend to include four conditions or characteristics (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). In order for an interaction to be considered workplace bullying, it must have **intensity** (perpetrator’s actions are perceived by the target as harmful), **repetition** (occurring at least twice weekly), **duration** (ongoing for a minimum of six months), and **power disparity** (the target feels that it is difficult or impossible to defend him or herself).

Due to some differences in the labeling of the behaviors, there is great variability in the estimated prevalence of workplace bullying (Namie & Namie, 2009). Some of this stems from differences in the extent to which individuals use the word “bullying” to describe their experience. Researchers generally find a higher rate of workplace
bullying by asking people to recount the negative acts workers experience than when they ask individuals to self-identify as being workplace “bullied.” It is possible that some people do not identify with the term “bullying,” which may imply weakness (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). However, the word “bullying” is commonly used in the research to describe incidents at work in which workers are ridiculed or humiliated, prevented from access to information necessary for their jobs, physically threatened, pressured or coerced to miss entitlements like vacation time, being ignored, being treated in an angry or hostile manner, or receiving insinuations that one should quit (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). The gap between worker self-labeling of bullying and researcher identification of bullying makes it challenging to determine true prevalence estimates of workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying can take several different forms. One study examined the most common forms of workplace bullying experienced. From a list of 40 workplace bullying behaviors, the 5 most commonly experienced behaviors were: 1) information being withheld which affects one's performance; 2) one's decisions, procedures, and judgment are questioned; 3) tasks are set with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines; 4) attempts are made to belittle and undermine one's work; and 5) recognition, acknowledgement, and praise are withheld (Riley, Duncan, & Edwards, 2009).

Harassment

In the exploration of workplace bullying and workplace bullying prevention, it is useful to examine workplace harassment, a construct closely related to workplace bullying but distinct because its long history of legislation establishes protections for employees and liability for employers. Discriminatory harassment is conceptually different from bullying because harassment harms an individual for being a member of a protected class, such as race/ethnicity or sex, whereas bullying may have nothing to do with a person’s group membership (Martucci & Sinatra, 2009). Unlike bullying, harassment can occur without singling out a particular target, without repeated acts, and without specific intent to harm; rather, harassment is defined by creating a hostile environment for individuals of a particular group known as a protected class (Ali, 2010).

Over time, a number of federal laws have named many groups as protected classes; individuals in this group can sue for discriminatory harassment and are protected by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) (Ali, 2010). Perhaps most famously, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin (Ali, 2010). Sex is protected by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and disability is protected by two acts, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Ali, 2010).

A letter from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights urges schools to identify discriminatory harassment cases even when an incident may seem to be covered by a bullying policy. Bullying policies in some schools may add additional protected classes or stronger responses, but others may have weaker requirements for response (Ali, 2010). This letter was intended to protect students and does not mention workplace protections for educators (Ali, 2010).

However, modeling a standard for protecting educators in their work environments, the NEA (2000) has a comprehensive definition of harassment in its policy for its own employees. NEA defines unlawful harassment in the following way: “physical or verbal conduct (including graphic or written depictions) based on an employee’s actual or perceived race, color,
sex (whether sexual in nature or not), religion, national origin, protected activity, age, disability, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, or political affiliation that a) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance, or b) creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment” (p. 1).

**Sexual harassment.** Sexual harassment is a form of harassment based on gender and is classified as discrimination (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2006). The AFT (2006) states that in order to be considered sexual harassment, an act must be both severe and pervasive, and it lists examples of sexual harassment that include verbal, physical, visual, job endangerment, gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, and sexual coercion. There are two prohibited forms of sexual harassment: a) quid pro quo harassment, in which accepting or rejecting unwanted sexual conduct is used to determine employment decisions like promotions or firing; and b) hostile work environment. Sexual harassment is even more common than workplace bullying, as between 40 and 90% of all women in the workforce have experienced it at some point (AFT, 2006).

**AIM 2: Describe staff experiences with different forms of workplace bullying.**

**Prevalence of Workplace Bullying**

Bullying in the workplace is now acknowledged as a widespread problem. In 2006, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that workplace bullying was at epidemic proportions in 15 European Union countries. Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2007) found that the prevalence of workplace bullying was slightly higher in the U.S. than in Europe and posited that this might be explained by greater workplace inequality.

The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), a U.S.-based national nonprofit, commissioned a survey of workplace bullying prevalence using a sample of 2,092 U.S. adults, which was weighted to be representative of the population by region, party, age, race, gender, education, and religion (Zogby International, 2010). This study did not give specifications for intensity, frequency, or duration of the bullying activity; instead, it defined workplace bullying simply as “repeated mistreatment at work, including sabotage by others that prevented work from getting done, verbal abuse, threatening conduct, intimidation, or humiliation” (p. 5). It found that 35% of workers had experienced workplace bullying and another 15% had witnessed it—fully half of the American labor force directly exposed to workplace bullying. Namie and Namie (2009) estimated that the prevalence of workplace bullying is at least 13% at any time, while the lifetime prevalence rate for workplace bullying is closer to 30%.

**Workplace Bullying of Educators**

In trying to understand the prevalence of workplace bullying of educators, we draw upon several different studies from the U.S. and abroad. For example, the NEA Bullying Survey was conducted in spring 2010 to examine a variety of issues related to bullying and school connectedness (Bradshaw et al., 2011). The survey was completed by 5,064 NEA members, of whom 82.1% (n = 2,163) were Professionals/Teachers and 17.9% were ESPs (n = 2,901). The findings indicated that approximately 18% of teachers and 13.7% of ESPs reported that they were workplace bullied by someone else at the school where they currently work. Teachers were approximately 27% more likely to have been workplace bullied as compared to ESPs. Additionally, educators who work in urban environments were 36% more likely to report that they were workplace bullied (OR = 1.36; p < .001) than those in suburban or rural environments. See Figure 1 for the individuals identified as the perpetrators of the workplace bullying.
Another study of 1,547 school staff members (e.g., teachers, school psychologists, guidance counselors, ESPs) at 109 public elementary, middle, and high schools in Maryland examined rates of staff victimization (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O’Brennan, 2007). Over 22% of staff reported having been bullied at the school by either another staff member (8.8%), a student’s parents (7.7%), or a student (6.3%). Middle school staff (34%) were more likely than both elementary (17.3%, OR = 0.39, p < .001) and high school staff (20.7%, OR = 0.47, p < .05) to have been bullied at the school. Among staff who were bullied at school, middle school staff were more likely than elementary staff (OR = 4.19, p < .001) to have been bullied by a student. Interestingly, staff who perceived that they had effective strategies for handling a bullying situation were nearly 40% less likely to report that they had been bullied at the school (OR = 0.62, p < .05).

The American Psychological Association’s Violence Directed Against Teachers Task Force recently led a large national survey of teachers focused on the issue of physical victimization (Espelage et al., 2012; McMahon et al., 2012). Nearly 3,000 teachers (K-12) from 48 states completed an anonymous web-based survey in which 80% reported at least one victimization experience. The vast majority of the offenses (94%) were committed by students. Approximately half of the victimized teachers reported being aggressed against by two or more different types of perpetrators (e.g., students, other staff, parents). Nearly three out of four teachers (72.5%) had been harassed, and just over half experienced a property offense, such as property damage or theft. Approximately 40% were physically attacked (Espelage et al., 2012; McMahon et al., 2012).

A 2005 report by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF) summarized data from 350 teachers and 61 ESPs who were members of the OSSTF. They found that about half of those surveyed reported an experience
of workplace bullying; this rate was somewhat higher than expected, given the findings from other studies. This discrepancy may be explained by differing definitions of workplace bullying. Additionally, the Ontario survey found that teachers and ESPs experienced similar rates of workplace bullying regardless of community size, gender, full time or part time status, or region (OSSTF, 2005).

Workplace bullying by principals and other staff

The Ontario study also found that principals or other authority figures were deemed responsible for 25% of cases of workplace bullying against teachers and ESPs (OSSTF, 2005). A 2009 survey of Australian school teachers, ESPs, and administrators (a self-selected group most of whom had experienced workplace bullying) found that a power imbalance due to job position (such as a principal towards a teacher) was a major factor in workplace bullying behavior (Riley, Duncan, & Edwards, 2009). Co-workers were named as responsible for 19% of workplace bullying offenses against teachers, a much lower percentage than the U.S. finding (OSSTF, 2005).

Workplace bullying of adults by students

Revisiting the definition of workplace bullying, we recall that it has four major characteristics: frequency, intensity, duration, and power imbalance. At first glance, the idea that teachers or ESPs are at a power disadvantage to students may be illogical, since a classroom or other school environment is clearly established with the adult as the assumed authority figure. However, the teacher, bus driver, or coach, for example, is greatly outnumbered in the classroom, on the bus, or on the field by the students. Thus, it is not surprising that students have been identified as a major source of workplace bullying experienced by teachers, with 36% of cases in Ontario (OSSTF, 2005) and 29-30% of cases in the U.S. sample indicating a student as the perpetrator (Bradshaw et al., 2011). Additionally, a study in Ireland found that 28% of students admitted to workplace bullying teachers (James et al., 2008). Workplace bullying behaviors by students against teachers typically involve insubordination and disruptive classroom behaviors, some of which can cause the teacher physical harm as well as emotional damage (James et al., 2008). Although behavior management can be challenging for educators, it can be improved with experience, professional development, and mentoring. However, considerably fewer professional development and mentoring supports are available to ESPs than to teachers (Bradshaw et al., 2010, 2011).

Given that teachers and ESPs are held accountable by the principal, parents, and the district for what happens to students in all school situations, a teacher or ESP may actually have more to lose than does the student by engaging in a power struggle. This power differential may occur when students are not subject to appropriate rewards for correct behavior or consequences for incorrect behavior. Teachers and ESPs may feel that they are limited in appropriate ways of correcting student behavior when administrators do not follow through with consequences. When students bully teachers, they take advantage of this power imbalance.

A form of mistreatment experienced by teachers and ESPs that has been studied more commonly is school violence, which often includes emotional abuse or threats. Acts of physical or nonphysical violence may overlap with bullying if the educator feels in a position of powerlessness. Stories of violence against educators, though rare, receive a great amount of attention. For example, in East Bakersfield, California, the local teachers union discussed fear for their safety at school, describing incidents such as a homemade bomb in the bathroom and alleged drugs and weapons on campus (Dinh, 2011). In January 2011, middle school students in Carson City, Nevada, posted a Facebook page called “Attack a Teacher Day”
(Simpson, 2011). Unfortunately, there is a general dearth of research on violence against ESPs. More research is required in this area, as ESPs work with students across different school contexts that have lower levels of supervision (e.g., bus, cafeteria), which may put them at increased risks for victimization. As noted above, ESPs generally have less training in prevention and intervention strategies for handling student behavior problems.

The National Center for Education Statistics regularly collects information on teacher victimization in their Indicators of National School Crime and Safety; however, the Center does not report statistics on other school staff, such as ESPs. In school year 2007-2008, 7% of teachers were threatened by students at their school, and 4% of teachers were physically attacked by their students (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2011). A large study of school violence in Minnesota also surveyed teachers and found that the yearly reported rate of nonphysical violence against teachers was 38.4%, (Gerberich et al., 2011). According to a study of over 150,000 teachers and ESPs conducted in Pennsylvania by the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), 96% of acts of physical violence against teachers and ESPs are committed by students (Tiesman, 2011). School violence against teachers has been documented around the world as well. A study of school violence against teachers in Slovakia found that about 50% of teachers had experienced one of the following forms of victimization in just the previous two weeks: harmful verbal behavior, harmful physical behavior, damage to personal property, social coercion, or manipulative behavior aimed at socially isolating the target (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007). In a Canadian study, the rate of teachers experiencing some form of violence over the course of their careers was 80% (Wilson, Douglas, & Lyon, 2010). These latter two studies, unfortunately, did not include ESPs.

**AIM 3: Summarize characteristics and consequences of workplace bullying.**

**Outcomes of Workplace Bullying in Schools**

The impact of workplace bullying on teachers and ESPs is significant. For example, the OSSTF report found that 10% of bullied teachers and ESPs missed time from work as a direct result of the experience; 53% experienced physical and emotional consequences including loss of sleep, loss of appetite, anxiety, depression, compromised self-confidence, and increased substance use; and fully 34% of targets sought psychological treatment for their workplace bullying-related problems (2005). Educators and administrators who are bullied at work often become isolated from their colleagues and their work, questioning their competence and suffering in their performance (de Wet, 2010). Frustration, anger, trouble sleeping, irritability, sadness, and anxiety were the most common teacher symptoms of both physical and nonphysical victimization (Gerberich et al., 2011). Workplace bullying has been associated with stress as well as a decrease in job satisfaction (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Bond (2010) found that, over time, workplace bullying led to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly in workplaces with a low psychosocial safety climate, which was defined as “freedom from psychological harm at work” (Law, Dollard, Tuckey, & Dormann, 2011, p.1783).

Teachers and ESPs targeted by acts of violence at school suffer many negative consequences. They tend to be in poorer health, have less job satisfaction, and report that their jobs are more stressful than non-abused educators (Tiesman, Hendricks, Konda, & Amandus, 2011). Research on teachers only shows that those who experienced violence against them by students were more likely to experience negative affect and
decreased job satisfaction (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007). Teachers who were the targets of violence by their students had a 61% chance of experiencing physical consequences and an 84% chance of suffering emotional consequences (Wilson et al., 2010). Violence experienced by a teacher was a significant predictor of poor emotional outcomes and teaching ability (Wilson et al., 2010). Similarly, harassment and discrimination in the workplace also are associated with poor mental health and problem drinking, especially for women and racial minorities (Rospenda, Richman, & Shannon, 2008).

Not only are targets of workplace bullying affected, but witnesses of workplace bullying also have more negative perceptions of their workplace and are less productive than those who do not experience workplace bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Actual workplace violence predicts teachers’ negative outcomes, but also the fear of experiencing workplace violence has been shown to negatively impact teaching and cause emotional distress (Wilson et al., 2010). Teachers who fear the threat of workplace violence have been found to be less motivated in their jobs than their colleagues (Vettenberg, 2002). Furthermore, the psychological aspects of workplace mistreatment may create more problems than violence itself. Educators who experience non-physical workplace bullying have lower job satisfaction, higher stress levels, and lower overall health than those who experience physical workplace violence (Gerberich et al., 2011). These findings clearly indicate that it is critical to address the threats, fear, and psychological mistreatment experienced by teachers and ESPs, as they are possibly even more damaging than physical violence.

The Origins of Workplace Bullying

Having reviewed the literature on what workplace bullying is and why it is a major problem for teachers and ESPs, we will now explore the research on the origins of workplace bullying. Having a better understanding of the environments and dynamics that give rise to workplace bullying will inform the solutions used to address it.

Demographic risk factors. As noted above, the Ontario study found that teachers and ESPs were about equally targeted by workplace bullying regardless of school size or area (OSSTF, 2005). However, the teacher-only findings from the U.S. Indicators of National School Crime and Safety show a number of risk factors for educator victimization, including school location, instructional level, and teacher gender, experience, and education (Robers et al., 2011). Teachers are more likely to be threatened in urban schools than in rural or suburban ones (Espelage et al., 2012; McMahon et al., 2012; Robers et al., 2011); likewise, schools with inadequate resources and poor building safety tend to have more teachers targeted (Gerberich et al., 2011).

The experience of workplace violence has also been shown to differ by instructional level, as middle school educators generally report more threats and incidents of violence than high school teachers, who, in turn, are more at risk than elementary school teachers (Robers et al., 2011). Teacher characteristics like age, teaching experience, and education have an unclear relationship to the experience of violence. A study of teachers in Los Angeles found that schools with more highly educated and more experienced teachers actually had higher rates of violence against teachers (Casteel, Peek-Asa, & Limbos, 2007). However, Gerberich et al. (2011) reported that teachers who were younger and unmarried were more likely to face physical and nonphysical workplace violence than their colleagues. Teachers of special education and speech pathology appear to be especially at risk of experiencing violence and victimization at school (Gerberich et al., 2011). Male teachers are more likely to be threatened or assaulted than female teachers (Espelage et al., 2012; McMahon et al., 2012; Robers et al., 2011).
National data show that a higher rate of workplace violence occurs in urban schools (Casteel, et al., 2007). A Virginia study of 280 high schools found that aspects of the school climate were related to teacher victimization (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, in press). Specifically, teacher victimization was less common in high schools with greater clarity of the school rules, as perceived by students and staff. Similarly, teacher victimization was lower in schools where the teachers reported that students were more comfortable seeking help for their problems.

Finally, threats and violence against teachers vary by region. For example, Washington, D.C. was the area with the highest rates of workplace violence, such that 17% of teachers reported being threatened with injury, compared to 3% in North

### Table 1. Percent of Teachers Threatened and Attacked, by State (2007-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>MO</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>NB</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>NH</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>TN</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>UT</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>WV</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>WY</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. NA = not available. Teachers who taught only prekindergarten students are excluded. Private school teachers are excluded because the data are not state representative. The public sector includes public, public charter, and Bureau of Indian Education school teachers. Details may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates of number of reports are rounded to the nearest 100. Data Source: Roberts, S., Zhang, J., Truman, J., & Snyder, T. D. (2011). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2011. Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Educational Statistics. Bureau of Justice Statistics.
Dakota. Eight percent of teachers in Maryland were physically attacked in 2007-2008, compared to 2% in New Jersey, New Hampshire, and North Dakota (Robers et al., 2011).

Theories of workplace bullying. Several theories of workplace bullying explain that it comes about as a result of system-induced status struggles beyond the control of a given employee or employer. For instance, Simons (2008) explained bullying and conflict in the workplace using a theoretical framework of oppressed groups. Because the nurses she studied are trained in a system of care largely subordinated to another system, that of medicine, they are an oppressed group, and this oppression gives rise to struggling among themselves, a precursor to workplace bullying. Workplace bullying may also be a natural result of the capitalist system in which workers basically have little status other than that they are used by the employer for their labor (Beale & Hoel, 2011). In modern workplaces, managers balance the tendency to view workers as valuable solely for their labor with the idea that the organization benefits from long-term relationships with and investment in the skills of their employees. This tension gives rise to power struggles between bosses and employees. These theories seem disheartening because they imply that workplace bullying is inherently a part of our contemporary system of labor, yet they also express the deep-rootedness of workplace bullying that educators who have experienced workplace bullying might perceive about this problem. Even if our system of labor means that the possibility of workplace bullying will never fully be eliminated, there is hope: many people go through their work lives without experiencing workplace bullying at all, and many workplaces successfully create environments that minimize or prevent workplace bullying. And some education unions are working diligently to address and eliminate workplace bullying.

Characteristics of jobs and workplaces prone to workplace bullying. Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, and De Cuyper (2009) found that workplace bullying involves inappropriate coping with job stress; aggressors take out their stress on others, while targets maladaptively allow themselves to be taken advantage of. Several characteristics of the work environment can lead to job stress, including overwork, lack of role clarity, and low job autonomy (Agervold, 2009; Baillien et al., 2009; Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007). The first such characteristic, overwork, is not uncommon in schools. Teachers often balance full teaching loads with planning, grading, tutoring, family outreach, and extra curricular activities. Education support professionals likewise face high workloads with a variety of tasks. In the current economic downturn, doubtless many ESPs find that they must bear the burden of the school’s inability to hire additional staff and the stress of job uncertainty or instability.

Lack of role clarity, where an employee is continually uncertain about who is responsible or accountable for what work (Agervold, 2009; Baillien et al., 2009; Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007), can also be seen in schools. Teachers and some ESPs are frequently expected, with varying levels of guidance, to fill the roles of mentors, counselors, tutors, family liaisons, learning disorder diagnosticians, and problem behavior interventionists. Lack of role clarity may impact teachers when they are unfairly held accountable for the academic success of all their students, although some students may struggle due to factors teachers do not control, such as sleep levels and mental health. For ESPs, an example of lack of role clarity might occur when a school administrative assistant is asked to supervise students during lunch or on the playground, or when food service staff are asked to clean up trash on the cafeteria floor or in the hallways. Role clarity can be compromised any time a person’s job require-
ments change or when orientation and training processes do not fully make all responsibilities clear. This is a common concern when there are staff cutbacks.

Low job autonomy is another job characteristic associated with workplace bullying environments (Baillien et al., 2009; Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007). For school staff this might look like too-highly structured curricula, an excess of programming, or micromanagement by the principal. Educators may be limited in their ability to discipline students, depending on the support provided by the administration or the district. Unhappy teachers in East Bakersfield, California, believed that the increase in students bullying teachers was due to the district policy limiting suspensions (Dinh, 2011); in other words, their autonomy in the classroom was removed; thus, they became potential targets for workplace bullying. A lack of autonomy can be the case especially for ESPs, who may not have even the authority that comes with being the head of the classroom. Students may be more clearly instructed in being respectful toward teachers than toward ESPs. ESPs may be viewed as having lower status at the school, making them particular targets for students and other staff. Again, it is likely that ESPs do not receive the same training and support in dealing with behavior problems that teachers do (Bradshaw et al., 2010, 2011), which, in turn, exposes them to greater risk.

Characteristics of the organizational culture have also been identified that relate to workplace bullying. One such characteristic is a culture of gossip and teasing (Baillien et al., 2009). School disorder or chaos is another way of characterizing the quality of an organization in which the organization lacks: a) transparency—expectations, rewards, and punishments clearly visible to employees; b) accountability, or clear role divisions; and c) capacity to motivate employees (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006). A chaotic environment such as this might give rise to bullying because workers are under stress or simply because the unpredictable environment leads workers to vie for order and power.

Styles of leadership of an organization have often been associated with workplace bullying. For example, workplace bullying tends to occur in organizations characterized by autocratic management styles (Agervold, 2009). Autocratic bosses may themselves bully or may set an example for the organization that condones harshness instead of emphasizing the value of each person’s contribution. While observers identify workplace bullying bosses as autocratic, targets actually see them as unpredictable in their leadership style (Hoel, Glasso, Hetland, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2009). Correspondingly, laissez faire leadership styles can also contribute to a climate of workplace bullying (Hoel et al., 2009). This suggests, consistent with the finding above, that the lack of role clarity may contribute to workplace bullying.

Leaders can be perpetrators of bullying and can enable bullying in the workplace, but they also have an influence on the types of workplace bullying prevention programs and policies that are in place at the school. Most employers do not believe that workplace bullying happens at their site, which might explain why employers were more likely to do nothing in response to a reported incident of workplace bullying than to attempt to address the situation directly (Grubb, Roberts, Grosch, & Brightwell, 2004). There has been little research documenting how principals respond to complaints of workplace bullying by educators; however, it is quite likely that principals who do not adequately or appropriately respond to educators’ claims contribute to the damage caused by workplace bullying and signal to educators that the behavior is acceptable.

Several researchers contend that with the right tensions in place, combined with value conflicts
among workers, workplace bullying dynamics will emerge on their own as individuals vie for power (Baillien et al., 2009). Even with the above characteristics of jobs and work environments, there is no guarantee that workplace bullying will occur (Salin, 2003). There must also be motivational structures in place to support the workplace bullying. For instance, some schools might reward workplace bullying, however inadvertently, by practices such as determining pay raises based on relative performance reviews, which might encourage individuals to make co-workers look bad. At the same time, there must be a triggering event such as layoffs or high voluntary turnover for these dynamics to evolve into full-scale workplace bullying (Salin, 2003).

**AIM 4: Summarize approaches for preventing workplace bullying.**

**Potential Solutions to Workplace Bullying of Teachers and Education Support Professionals**

Given that the literature reviewed above on workplace bullying of teachers and ESPs comes from both the research on school prevention and the work on organizational psychology, it is no surprise that the potential solutions take multiple forms. Such approaches include whole-school prevention frameworks that call for enhanced structures of expectations, consistent consequences, and targeted intervention programs for students and educators. Also included are policies, reporting systems, and professional development trainings, many of which are led by human resource departments. Below we summarize some strategies to prevent workplace bullying.

**Addressing Demographic Risks**

Many of the risk factors for workplace bullying and violence in schools described above cannot be changed by interventionists because they refer to fixed characteristics of schools and teachers. Still, it is useful for district planners, unions, and the educators they support to understand that fair and just allocation of research-based prevention resources may mean that some schools or staff should be given priority; for example middle schools, urban schools, and special education and speech language pathology teachers tend to be at greatest risk for violence and bullying by students, and thus may need to be targeted for supports (Gerberich et al., 2011; Robers et al., 2011).

**Legal Protections**

At the systems level, there are potential legal and policy solutions to workplace bullying. While nearly all states have passed educational policies related to bullying at school, these policies generally focus on student-to-student bullying. There are, however, many federal and state laws in place protecting targets of harassment, which can be used to protect educators in some workplace bullying incidents that also qualify as harassment. Harassment involves mistreatment of someone because of his or her membership in a certain group or protected class, whereas workplace bullying involves mistreatment of someone with less power or who is put in a position of less power. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on specific protected classes: of race, color, religion, and national origin (AFT, 2006). This law refers specifically to the protected classes that distinguish harassment from workplace bullying; and, according to the Supreme Court, it definitely does not require that workplaces be civil and fair on the whole (Martucci & Sinatra, 2009). The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which offers equal protection under the law, has also been used to support cases brought by people in protected classes (AFT, 2006). It is possible that this same law could be used to protect persons who are bullied and powerless in the workplace. As noted above, a recent report from the U.S. Department of Education provides additional
guidance on the difference between workplace bullying and harassment; however, this guidance focuses largely on students as targets (see Ali, 2010).

In 1998, two Supreme Court cases made clear that employers have the responsibility to protect employees from harassment, and that having a policy against harassment as well as a clear and accessible reporting system may protect them against lawsuits (NEA, n.d.). It is easily conceivable that this ruling might be more broadly interpreted to include cases of workplace bullying. Many employers see establishing a written policy as a viable way to prevent workplace bullying and, thus, protect themselves from lawsuits.

In contrast to the laws and history on harassment, there are no laws in place explicitly protecting people from workplace bullying in the United States. Since 2003, versions of what is known as the Healthy Workplace Bill have been considered in 21 states; 12 of these states are actively pursuing legislation in 2012 (Namie, 2012c). In general, like anti-harassment laws, the bill does not require any state agency to enforce it but would protect employees by allowing them the right to sue their employers or the bully for lost wages and other damages due to an abusive work environment (Namie, 2012b). The bills vary from state to state, but for the most part they do not directly address “workplace bullying.” As described above, many of them instead protect against “abusive work environment” (Martucci & Sinatra, 2009).

The U.S. has generally been behind the curve on legal protections against workplace bullying, as several other countries have adopted national workplace bullying legislation (Namie, 2012a). For example, Scandinavian countries have had such legislation since the mid-nineties. In the UK, harassment laws are broad enough to cover workplace bullying incidents. The first country to make workplace bullying a criminal offense is Australia. Canada first passed several anti-workplace bullying laws in individual provinces, but it later passed an overarching occupational health code which protects federal workers (Namie, 2012a).

Although no formal federal legal protections are in place in the U.S. protecting adults from workplace bullying in general, nearly all states have now passed laws on school bullying, starting with Georgia in 1999. For the most part, state bullying policies are written to protect students from bullying by other students, but in some cases they include acts of bullying committed against adults (United States Department of Education [USDoE], 2011). In fact, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Utah all have legislation regarding bullying or cyberbullying with language inclusive of teachers and ESPs (USDoE, 2011). For instance, Utah’s cyberbullying policy mentions specific penalties for electronic harassment against adults. Arkansas’s definition of bullying includes “the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, or threat or incitement of violence by a student against another student or public school employee…” (USDoE, 2011, p. 133). Kansas defines bullying as “any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act or threat that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student or staff member…” and goes on to specify harms against staff members as well as students (U.S.DoE, 2011, p. 137).

In other cases, the wording of the laws may be broad and vague enough to be interpreted as a protection for adults being bullied in the workplace. The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA; n.d.) has produced a resource summarizing the state bullying policy law updated in 2010; the law now prohibits bullying by students, teachers and ESPs, and administrators. Although
it does not specifically state that bullying of teachers and ESPs is prohibited, NSEA notes that workplace bullying of adults could be prosecuted under the law. When state law does not protect educators, district policies still can and in some cases do (USDoE, 2011). Even states that do not currently protect educators from bullying could modify their bullying laws to address bullying directed at adults either by students or by other adults.

For educators working in a union environment, other legal protections are available. Unions offer varied and valuable mechanisms for dealing with workplace bullying. First and foremost, one can ensure that enforceable protections against workplace bullying are included in the language of current and future negotiated contracts. If provisions in the contract are violated, the employee has the right to file a grievance. The procedures to follow when filing a formal grievance are carefully outlined in most contracts. In addition to negotiating for district or state training on workplace bullying (including but not limited to official definitions, common examples, prevention of and remedies for workplace bullying) for all employees affected by the contract, the union can make such training available to association (building) representatives, elected officials of local unions and union staff. When workplace bullying issues surface between contract bargaining periods, association members also have the right to bring the problem to the local association’s joint labor-management team, which is required to hold meetings on a routine basis.

Strategies for Promoting Healthy Organizational Culture

At a more localized level, organizational culture factors among staff that play into workplace bullying, such as gossip and teasing (Baillien et al., 2009) or chaos from a lack of transparency, accountability, and motivation (Hodson et al., 2006) may be addressed in several ways. Because organizational culture depends on the group of individuals in the workplace, creating a strong team is important. Private institutions may have greater control over their organizational culture than public schools in that they have more autonomy in their hiring process. Nonetheless, all employees in an institution can strengthen organizational culture by being respectful and encouraging to fellow staff and communicating clearly about their workload, need for support, and ability to support others. Strong leadership from the principal, whether by modeling or policy-setting, can establish high standards for accountability for specific tasks, rewards for good work, and treating others with respect. Employers can enhance the perceived psychosocial safety of the school by promoting strong communication about workloads and needed supports in order to help employees at all levels manage stress (Bond, 2010). Employers showing support for employees who are targets of workplace bullying may decrease bullying and/or moderate the effects of bullying (Law et al., 2011).

In many cases, a human resources-style approach like written policies or staff awareness trainings can solve an organizational culture issue. Those responsible for preventing workplace bullying make an effort to assess the quality of relationships in the workplace (Cleary, Hunt, Walter, & Robertson, 2009). Staff must be trained to recognize harmful bullying and report it appropriately so that the issue can be addressed (Cleary et al., 2009). Likewise, staff must develop individual strategies for communicating effectively to prevent and cope with stress (Cleary et al., 2009), something that can be supported by workplace structures like group reflections at meetings or staff retreats.

Coherent organizational policies must be in place in order to prevent bullying. For instance, teachers in East Bakersfield, California, felt that the problem of being bullied by students stemmed from pressure on the school system to reduce
suspensions, leaving dozens of students in school who would otherwise have been serving disciplinary sentences at home (Dinh, 2011). In such a situation where the district has made a dramatic change in discipline policies, it must offer the schools and teachers the necessary supports to transition to alternative—but effective—consequences for students with problem behaviors.

Workplace Policies
A commonly discussed prevention strategy is to have a clear standing policy against workplace bullying or harassment. The NEA anti-harassment policy for its employees goes above and beyond federally mandated protections by expanded protected classes. As noted in greater detail above (see page 5), the NEA prohibits harassment. The NEA (2000) policy also prohibits retaliation against those reporting harassment, reassures confidentiality, and sets up a reporting procedure through Human Resources, requiring a manager who hears of harassment to report it. The NEA recommends that managers make an effort to prevent harassment before it occurs by encouraging good communication, and suggests that its managers set a good example for employees, consistently discourage any small instances of harassment, and take all complaints seriously (NEA, n.d.).

Only about a third of workplaces have a clear and specific policy on workplace bullying, whereas 10% have a policy that is not enforced. Approximately 12% of employers provide training to prevent workplace bullying but do not have a formal anti-bullying policy. Moreover, 45% of employers lack policies and practices to prevent workplace bullying (Zogby International, 2010). This finding speaks to the importance of formal anti-bullying policies. In fact, the Minnesota Study of Educators analyzed nine written school policies addressing sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and threats. They found that schools with a formal policy for reporting harassment, verbal abuse, and threats had a lower incidence of these problems directed at teachers (Feda, Gerberich, Ryan, Nachreiner, & McGovern, 2010). Lower rates of violence were also related to the reporting process being confidential (Feda et al., 2010).

In addition to lobbying for and adopting a local policy on workplace bullying, a protocol which gives staff specific guidance for addressing workplace bullying must be developed and disseminated. Local associations must insist that routine in-service training about the policy and protocol are made available to all employees. A sample workplace bullying policy statement is adapted

Sample

Workplace Bullying Policy Statement
Institution X considers workplace bullying unacceptable and will not tolerate it under any circumstances. Workplace bullying is behavior that harms, intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates an employee, possibly in front of other employees, clients, or customers. Workplace bullying may cause the loss of trained and talented employees, reduce productivity and morale and create legal risks.

Institution X believes all employees should be able to work in an environment free of bullying. Managers and supervisors must ensure employees are not bullied.

Institution X has grievance and investigation procedures to deal with workplace bullying. Any reports of workplace bullying will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially, and impartially.

Institution X encourages all employees to report workplace bullying. Managers and supervisors must ensure employees who make complaints or witnesses are not victimized.

Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who bullies a co-employee, including managers and supervisors. Discipline may involve a warning, transfer, counseling, demotion, or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

The contact person for bullying at this workplace is:

Name: __________________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________

A second sample district policy about workplace bullying is from the local affiliate of the Sweetwater County School District in Wyoming.

**Leadership**

School principals have great ability to prevent job characteristics among teachers and ESPs that give rise to workplace bullying. Since we know that being overworked creates unhealthy workplace stress (Agervold, 2009; Baillien et al., 2009; Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007), principals can advocate for appropriate funding for their school so that there are sufficient staff to do the work at hand, allowing teachers appropriate space in their schedules for planning, grading, and other responsibilities beyond instruction. Principals can protect their employees from a lack of role clarity (Agervold, 2009; Baillien et al., 2009; Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007) by clearly including the teacher’s responsibilities beyond the classroom in the teacher’s contract, as well as by communicating the roles of ESPs in the building. For instance, if a school has a family outreach coordinator, it does not necessarily mean that teachers are not responsible for calling students’ families if their grades are slipping. When it comes to giving educators job autonomy, principals can include teachers and ESPs in decision-making processes at the school, especially decision-making regarding changes in their job responsibilities.

In order for workplace bullying prevention efforts to succeed, buy-in by leadership is essential (Cleary et al., 2009). Not only is there a high percentage of employers who do not appropriately prevent workplace bullying (Zogby International, 2010), but many fail to resolve existing problems. One study indicated that 53% of employers took no action to resolve reported instances of workplace bullying, and 71% actually retaliated in some way against the person reporting (Namie & Namie, 2009). For teachers to be able to successfully implement classroom interventions for workplace bullying, the principal must provide support, particularly in cases where the teacher is the one being bullied and, thus, at a power disadvantage (James et al., 2008). Principal support is also critical in instances when ESPs are bullied.

**School-based Prevention Programs**

In addition to the prevention strategies coming from organizational psychology, many of which focus on adult-adult interactions, a rich body of research on school prevention of student bullying behavior exists. A report published by the NEA reviewed a wide variety of research on school-wide bullying prevention, summarized here (Bradshaw et al., 2010). For the most part, bullying prevention programs have focused on student-to-student bullying, but an important first step in designing school violence interventions to help teachers and ESPs will be to collect proper data on existing interventions already known to prevent student-to-student bullying.
Universal prevention programs. A number of interventions are designed to prevent bullying by encouraging positive behaviors generally. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus et al., 2007), Good Behavior Game (Embry, 2002), and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS; Sugai & Horner, 2006) are three such examples. PBIS shows great promise in terms of reducing classroom discipline problems as well as improving school climate, and reducing bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Leaf, in press; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012). Similarly, social emotional learning curriculum programs such as Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS; Greenberg, Kusché, Cook, & Quamma, 1995), Steps to Respect (Frey et al., 2005; Van Schoiack-Edstrom, Frey, & Beland, 2002), and Second Step (Grossman et al., 1997), explicitly teach students social emotional skills to allow them to get their needs met peacefully (Bierman et al., 2010). The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences created the What Works Clearinghouse to identify the most rigorously evaluated programs, and identifies Positive Action, Connect with Kids, Too Good for Violence, Caring School Community, and Skills for Adolescents as programs which modify students’ behaviors by teaching social-emotional skills or character values (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011). These social emotional skills include self-awareness, making friends, and regulating emotions, and have been shown to positively impact student behaviors and reduce aggression (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2003). As a result of the positive impacts on aggressive behavior, these programs should also reduce the number of educators targeted by student violence; however, no programs to our knowledge have collected such data to examine these types of effects on adults.

Targeted intervention programs. Universal prevention programs have great potential to teach the majority of students the appropriate way to behave and manage conflicts instead of resorting to bullying, and they may also help staff learn to prevent bullying behaviors effectively (Bradshaw et al., 2010). However, even with good universal prevention, some students will likely have additional need for support. Schools that do not implement universal prevention programs may find themselves with a greater number of students requiring intervention.

In cases of students where universal prevention methods are not used or have not been successful (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008), schools need to employ specific interventions for students who bully teachers. Some schools may choose to use social emotional skills programs like the ones described above to intervene with specific students only. Another common intervention component is a functional behavioral assessment, which enables school staff to evaluate the triggers and reinforcements for a student’s misbehavior and then remove those stimuli. In addition, a number of evidence-based programs now exist that are designed specifically to intervene with students who already exhibit bullying behaviors (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011). These programs have some similarities with universal prevention programs that teach social skills such as empathy, but targeted programs tend to be more intensive and focused. Targeted school interventions may be administered in a small group or one-on-one. They typically include explicit instruction in conflict resolution. The student, often with the help of family members, also learns to create an anger management plan (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011). Two research-based examples of such programs include Reconnecting Youth (Eggert, Thompson, Herting, & Nicholas, 1995), a
widespread program that has reached hundreds of thousands of students across the country, and Cognitive Behavioral Training Program for Behaviorally Disordered Adolescents (Child Trends, 2007).

Depending on the severity of the case or resources available at school, students who bully may also be paired with community mental health providers for individual therapy including cognitive-behavioral techniques for emotion regulation (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). One such program is the Bullying Intervention Program (BIP; Swearer & Givens, 2006).

**Restorative Practices**

Many traditional methods of disciplining students, such as suspension and expulsion, have been found to have harmful outcomes for students—particularly students of color—such as dropping out of school, delinquency, and later imprisonment, in a phenomenon known as the school-to-prison pipeline (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Wald & Losen, 2003).

Instead, some schools are beginning to turn to restorative practices, a term used for a number of different strategies all marked by high levels of support for the young person paired with high levels of structure and accountability (Zaslaw, 2010). Typically, a group of stakeholders from the school and community will meet together with the offender to discuss how the young person can be held accountable and be held responsible for righting the wrong he or she has caused (Zaslaw, 2010). A circle format, where each invited stakeholder sits together in an egalitarian space and receives equal time to talk, may be used to emphasize that each person in the community is valued, including the offender (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2010). A common outcome of a restorative justice process is that the student must perform a particular service to make up for the harm done; for instance, a student who wrote some bullying or harassing language on the wall would be required to clean or repaint all of the walls in the building (Wearmouth, Mckinney, & Glynn, 2007). Although these approaches have not been studied extensively within the context of student bullying of educators in schools, they may prove helpful for bullying directed at adults.

There are, however, some concerns that restorative justice practices and the more general conflict resolution approaches may be less effective or even hurtful for student-to-student bullying (Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2011). Therefore, educators are cautioned about using these approaches in the context of traditional student-to-student bullying because they bring targets and perpetrators face-to-face, which may further emphasize the power difference and result in revictimization for the target.

**Professional Development Programs for Educators**

Given that the problem of teachers experiencing bullying in the workplace comes from both students and other staff, it would be helpful to bring together wisdom from school interventions and professional development strategies for preventing adult-on-adult workplace bullying. Some school-wide programs, such as PBIS (Sugai & Horner, 2006; Waasdorp et al., 2012) and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus et al., 2007), provide training to both teachers and ESPs in how to promote a positive school climate based on awareness and positive social interactions. They also teach educators how to develop school-wide rules to prevent student bullying (Knoff, 2007). These types of school-wide programs can be adapted to address the prevention of student bullying of educators by explicitly teaching how to behave appropriately toward all staff. There are also several promising studies on coaching and mentorship models for educator professional development (Pas, Bradshaw, & Cash, in press). Coaches can work with teachers and
ESPs to address behavior problems by helping them develop effective skills for managing bullying and other challenging behaviors. Coaching efforts are most successful when they are done without making the educator feel intimidated or evaluated.

Professional development is a common human resources strategy used to prevent workplace bullying. In Finland, a national health and safety law against workplace bullying was passed in 2003. As a result, approximately 27% of human resources departments conducted workplace bullying prevention trainings within three years of the passage of the law (Salin, 2008). There is considerable variability in the provision of professional development on workplace bullying within the U.S., as there are no laws and few policies requiring it.

Union Support

Education unions offer several mechanisms to support employees who are being bullied in the workplace, whether by other adults or students. In an earlier section, the availability of contract language, grievance procedures, training programs for all employees, specific training for association (building) representatives, and joint labor-management team meetings were cited (p. 16). Of these, the strategy that is most likely to reduce workplace bullying is education and training. Some NEA affiliates have activated workplace bullying committees and campaigns. But generally, education leadership, including union leadership, is mostly under-educated on workplace bullying. Building awareness of this growing problem is essential. When employees learn the definition of workplace bullying, many suddenly realize that they too have been bullied at work. Association representatives and staff also need specific training on how to approach workplace bullying issues, so they don’t add to the harm already done to the employee. Unions can be part of the solution.

Another mechanism used by some associations is the passage of a union resolution against workplace bullying. A sample union resolution is provided below, authored by David Yamada, a leading researcher on workplace bullying, a professor of law, the director of the New Workplace Institute at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, and the author of the Healthy Workplace Bill, which has been introduced in many state legislatures since 2003.

1. Whereas, the social and economic well-being of the State is dependent upon healthy and productive employees;

2. Whereas, surveys and studies have documented between 16 and 21% of employees directly experience health-endangering workplace bullying, abuse, and harassment, and that this behavior is four times more prevalent than sexual harassment alone;

3. Whereas, surveys and studies have documented that abusive work environments can have serious and even devastating effects on targeted employees, including feelings of shame and humiliation, stress, loss of sleep, severe anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal tendencies, reduced immunity to infection, stress-related gastrointestinal disorders, hypertension, and pathophysiologic changes that increase the risk of cardiovascular disease;

4. Whereas, surveys and studies have documented that abusive work environments have serious consequences for employers, including reduced employee productivity and morale, higher turnover and absenteeism rates and significant increases in medical and workers’ compensation claims;

5. Whereas, unless mistreated employees have been subjected to abusive treatment at work on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin
or age, they are unlikely to have legal recourse to redress such treatment;

6. Whereas, legal protection from abusive work environments should not be limited to behavior grounded in protected class status as that provided for under employment discrimination statute;

7. Whereas, existing workers’ compensation plans and common-law tort actions are inadequate to discourage this behavior or to provide adequate redress to employees who have been harmed by abusive work environments;

8. BE IT RESOLVED that our union will address workplace bullying through member awareness, steward training, joint labor/management committees, and collective bargaining and legislative initiatives.

**Negotiated Anti-Bullying Language in Collective Bargaining Agreements**

An important solution to workplace bullying is for local associations to bargain language in their collective agreements. Such language recognizes the employees’ right to a safe working environment. If such language is in place and a building principal or superintendent fails to take action, the association could file a grievance and possibly take it to arbitration.

The NEA maintains a database of model or current contract language in use in various states. An analysis of the database found the following sample language on the following topics: freedom from harassment and abusive language; student discipline, as related to harassment of adults; and hate crimes and conduct. Relevant sections are reproduced below.

**Freedom from Harassment and Abusive Language**

(Note. The term bullying was not found in any of the model contract documents on file.)

**Akron, Ohio: ESP Contract, Section 8.09 – Assault**

A. No employee is ever required to tolerate any act of gross or flagrant misconduct, including derogatory, abusive or vile language, acts of violence, threats of assault or insubordination.

B. Verbal assault is any threatening or abusive language directed at a member by any individual. Abusive language includes, but is not limited to, harsh, coarse, or insulting works that are injurious, improper, hurtful, offensive, or reproachful. They may include the degradation of a person based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or handicap.

**Pinellas, Florida: Teachers Contract, Article XXXIV – Complaints**

C. No employee of the Board shall be subject to harassment, abusive language, and/or upbraiding by parents, other citizens, students and/or other Board employees.

**Alaska: Model Language, Article III – Personnel**

24.2 The association and the district agree that employees are entitled to work in an environment free from any kind of harassment.
Student Discipline


26.1 The District and the Association are jointly committed to providing quality educational programs in a warm, open, supportive environment which protects the safety and security of all students and staff. Therefore, the parties agree that optimal teaching and learning climate for staff and students requires a no tolerance policy for weapons, dangerous devices, and assaultive behavior. The parties recognize the increasing incidence of weapons, dangerous devices, and serious assaults in the schools, and recognize that with such serious misbehaviors, experience has shown that normal sanctions less severe than expulsion have failed to preserve a safe and orderly educational environment.

26.2 To achieve the above consistent with student due process and other legal requirements, the parties agree to collaboratively develop improved security procedures, expand training opportunities for all staff, and engage in cooperative problem solving to strengthen the working relationships among the administration, staff, students, and the community.

Alaska: Model Language, Article III – Personnel, Section 15 – Student Discipline

15.8 The district shall prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any individual who physically or verbally abuses or intimidates or interferes with an employee performing his/her duties. To accomplish this end, the district will provide the affected employee with legal counsel at no cost to the employee.

15.9 The district shall post a clearly visible decal or sign in a prominent place in each major entrance and exit of every school building in the district. This decal or sign shall state: “The district shall prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any individual who physically or verbally abuses or intimidates or interferes with any employee within performance of his/her duties. Parents and guardians of students who willfully or maliciously damage or destroy school property will be liable for cost of such damages.”

15.10 Any act of violence or force by a student toward a teacher, administrator, support personnel or a contracted employee shall be grounds for immediate suspension or expulsion.

Illinois: Model Language, Article 14 – Employee Protections

14.7 Bus Aides. The Employer will provide an Aide to accompany all bus runs where more than occasional discipline problems exist. The Aide will be assigned to the bus run until an acceptable student behavior exists.

Hate Crimes and Conduct

Alaska: Model Language, Article III – Personnel, Section 15 – Student Discipline

(Note. Nearly identical language is found in the Washington State Contract Reference Guide, Section 29, with one exception as noted below.)

15F.1 Gangs, hate groups and similar organizations or groups that advocate violent discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics (including race, color, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, or handicap) are inconsistent with the fundamental values and the educational environment of the district. Activities and members of such groups that cause or could cause intimidation of another person or interference with the district’s educational
role are prohibited on district property and at all school functions.

15F.2 Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal abuse of another person, including district employees; discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics, as defined above; the use of language, codes, gestures or objects that provokes or that could provoke violence; and the use of language, codes, gestures or objects that disrupts or that could disrupt classroom activities or school functions.

Washington State section 29 includes slightly different prohibitions from Alaska’s section 15F.2:

29.2 Such prohibited activities include, but are not limited to: the congregation of members, the solicitation or recruitment of members, the possession of group paraphernalia and materials, the intimidation of others, including employees, advocacy of discrimination, and any other behavior, such as wearing of group colors or insignia and the use of language, codes, gestures that provoke violence or seek to advocate the purpose and objective of such groups.

15F.3 Any student who engages in the conduct prohibited by this section will be subject to immediate expulsion.

15F.4 Student speech is protected by the Constitution unless it is “vulgar” or substantially “disruptive.” School officials or staff must have a “reasonable belief” that the speech is likely to cause disruption before a school may punish non-vulgar speech.

AIM 5: Provide behavior support plans and suggested strategies for preventing and responding to workplace bullying.

Recommended Strategies for School Districts and Administrators to Prevent and Respond to Workplace Bullying

Promote Policies to Prevent Workplace Bullying

- Create and distribute a written policy prohibiting bullying and workplace bullying by and against students, teachers, ESPs, and administrators.
- Advocate for the passage of a Healthy Workplace Bill in your state.
- Modify school bullying rules to include protection against workplace bullying of educators, including ESPs.
- Inform all educators annually about the school’s and/or district’s policy on workplace bullying.

Implement Procedures and Practices to Respond to Workplace Bullying

- Design, publicize, and implement a reporting system for workplace bullying that protects the identity of reporter and shields them from retaliation.
- Take all reports seriously.
- Communicate directly to all educators that workplace bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Ensure that grievance procedures are in place for educators to confidentially report incidents of workplace bullying without fear of retaliation.
- Develop a system to track data on all reports of workplace bullying incidents.
- At the school level, specify possible consequences for workplace bullying, to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
Work to Improve School Climate

- Model high standards for interpersonal interactions and organizational culture; promote respect, courtesy, and teamwork.
- Make efforts to minimize stress at your school.
- Advocate for funding in your schools to ensure proper staffing.
- Communicate clear roles in staff contracts, minimizing role confusion.
- Be transparent about processes for evaluating and rewarding good work.
- Support job autonomy for employees by including teachers and ESPs when possible in decision-making processes that involve their work.

Require Annual Professional Development for Teachers, ESPs, and Administrators on the Following Topics:

- Prevalence, risk factors for, and consequences of workplace bullying.
- How to identify signs and symptoms of workplace bullying.
- Process for reporting workplace bullying.
- Concrete strategies for preventing and responding to workplace bullying for all staff, including ESPs.

Attend to the Unique Needs of ESPs

- Tailor professional development for ESPs.
- Address issues of ESP equity, status, authority, and power directly with all staff.

Recommended Strategies for Educators in Responding to Workplace Bullying

Know Your Rights: Policy Awareness and Advocacy

- Be knowledgeable about the policy at your school and the laws in your area on harassment and workplace bullying.
- Advocate for the passage of a Healthy Workplace Bill in your state.
- Advocate for modifying school bullying rules to include protection for workplace bullied educators.

Work to Improve the Climate of Your School

- Promote positive organizational culture by treating others with respect and assuming the best intentions first; encourage others on your team to do the same.
- Foster healthy methods of coping with stress.

Educate Yourself and Others around You

- Insist on comprehensive training for all staff on workplace bullying.
- Know how to recognize if you are being bullied at work.
- Know the process for reporting workplace bullying.
- Keep records and detailed documentation of any and all incidents of workplace bullying you personally experience or see among other colleagues.
- Create and distribute educational materials on workplace bullying.
- Use workplace bullying training to organize co-workers.
- Recruit new members by offering training on workplace bullying.
- Work toward your association being the go-to resource that understands workplace bullying.
**Speak Up**

- Communicate clearly and effectively with colleagues and superiors about your workplace concerns.
- Advocate for your workplace needs and those of your colleagues.
- Be direct in your communications with superiors about your concerns related to workplace bullying. Include an NEA representative in these discussions.
- Document all concerns in writing and copy an NEA representative in all written communications.
- If in-person conversations become heated, remain calm. Ask for clarification and help from the union.
- Raise the issue of workplace bullying with your local NEA association in order to increase members’ awareness of the topic. This will help the NEA better advocate for your rights.

**Know When to Get Help**

- If talking with your superior doesn’t help or your superior is the perpetrator of the workplace bullying, enlist the help of someone else, like a union representative, human resources staff, or a district point of contact.
- If you have been workplace bullied, get help from a counselor or mental health provider to help you cope with the experience.
- Talk to a friend or colleague about your experiences and brainstorm some options for responding.

**When All Else Fails**

- Seek legal counsel regarding your rights.
- File a grievance with your local NEA affiliate.
- Consider requesting a transfer to another school instead of risking your health.

**Recommended Strategies for Responding to Student-to-Staff Bullying**

**Prevention of Student Bullying**

- Provide all educators, including ESPs, with annual professional development on managing student behavior problems and bullying.
- Identify a coach or behavior management mentor to work with teachers and staff. Consider recent educator retirees in the community as paid workers or volunteers for this position.
- Form a committee to discuss school-wide behavior improvement.
- Instruct students in social-emotional skills (e.g., empathy) to prevent bullying and aggressive behavior. Recommended programs include PATHS, Steps to Respect, Second Step, Positive Action, Connect with Kids, Too Good for Violence, Caring School Community, and Skills for Adolescents.
- Hold periodic meetings for teachers and ESPs to share insights on effective behavior management strategies for particular students.
- Implement school-wide anti-bullying programs along with other prevention programs, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which have been shown to reduce bullying and improve the overall school climate as perceived by both students and educators.
- Collect and use data on student discipline strategies to make new policy and program decisions, and monitor program impacts.
- Educate families and community members about the prevalence and causes of bullying.
Implement Intervention and Remediation Approaches

- Use targeted approaches to work with specific students in need of greater support at school. Create individual treatment plans for each student.
- Include families as much as possible in planning for all student supports.
- Create a menu of supports for the students who bully, including academic and socio-emotional interventions.
- Conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to understand what is reinforcing the bullying behavior, then remove these reinforcers.
- In small groups or one-on-one, instruct students in anger management and conflict resolution. Recommended programs include Reconnecting Youth and Cognitive Behavioral Training Program for Behaviorally Disordered Adolescents.
- Institute a restorative justice process to hold students accountable for their actions and identify specific restitution for the harm done.
- Provide individual counseling for adult targets of bullying by students.
- Provide individual community mental health counseling for students who bully educators. Therapy should do the following:
  - Use a research-based program such as the Bullying Intervention Program
  - Give specific training in replacement skills such as empathy
  - Teach anger management
  - Instruct in cognitive behavioral techniques for emotion regulation.
- Offer ongoing professional development for educators on how to respond to bullying when it occurs in classroom and non-classroom settings.

Continuum of Consequences

- Assign negative consequences to the student for bullying behaviors. These can include:
  - Loss of privileges
  - Service or reparation to the harmed educator
  - Reassignment to a new classroom
- Work with the family to transfer the student to another learning environment
- Use exclusion techniques such as suspension and expulsion only as needed to protect the target.
- Reward students who have previously bullied and now show signs of positive behavior.
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this report was to summarize the research on workplace bullying, as perpetrated by other educators, superiors, and students, and provide recommendations and behavior support plans to address workplace bullying. The available research on workplace bullying against teachers and ESPs indicates that it is a widespread problem in the United States and around the world. Workplace bullying results in significant impairment for educators, many of whom may suffer from a range of psychological and physical problems including anxiety, sleep loss, and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress as a result of the victimization (Gerberich et al., 2011). Workplace bullying of educators also impacts the students because their teachers, mentors, and ESPs are less prepared to do their jobs effectively.

Unfortunately, little has been done legally or otherwise to protect educators from bullying in the workplace. While all 50 states now have policies and even legislation against bullying, these policies nearly always refer to student-on-student bullying and fail to address circumstances of students bullying staff or adults bullying other adults. There are also a number of policies and laws that protect educators, along with all workers, from harassment. Although there is some overlap, acts of bullying often are not considered harassment unless they are related to a worker’s status as a member of a protected class (e.g., a Muslim teacher is called a terrorist by her students).

As student-on-student bullying has received great attention, various bullying prevention and intervention programs have become far more common in schools. These programs tend to target student-on-student behaviors, and while they may possibly reduce student acts of bullying against teachers, they have not been empirically validated for this purpose. It is also conceivable that the process of leading coordinated student intervention programs may diminish staff-on-staff workplace bullying by strengthening leadership around a culture of respect, improving elements of organizational culture such as role clarity and lack of transparency for expectations, and modifying other conditions that give rise to workplace bullying. However, further research is needed on how the existing student interventions may reduce student bullying of educators and workplace bullying of school staff against one another.

More research is also needed to explain which schools and which teachers are more at risk for workplace bullying and why, in order to identify appropriate interventions and properly allocate resources. There is also a need for more research on the impact of workplace bullying on ESPs specifically. Much of the research on workplace bullying and violence against educators focuses on teachers, and even work that includes ESPs tends to lump them together with teachers. As we suggested above, there may be important differences in the risks posed to ESPs as compared to teachers, due to possible differences in the levels and types of training and support as well as social status in the school. Research clearly comparing the experiences of teachers and ESPs would give a better understanding of how to create appropriate interventions.

National leadership is needed to advocate for greater research and professional development on this subject, particularly as it relates to ESPs, whose possible vulnerability demands special attention. NEA should support the development of new interventions for workplace bullying against educators and the testing of existing youth- and school climate-focused prevention efforts on educators’ risk for involvement in workplace bullying. The findings of this investigation point toward the need for more professional development at all levels, including individual educators, school administration, district leaders, and national policymakers. As evidence-based practices emerge for this specific problem, NEA can play a leadership role in promoting these practices nationwide. NEA can demonstrate leadership in the area of workplace bullying prevention by providing additional education and professional development to union members and the public to prevent and curb the effects of workplace bullying.


REFERENCES


National Education Association. Anti-harassment policy. [powerpoint presentation].


SELECTED RESOURCES

Websites and Organizations

California Healthy Workplace Advocates
- A grassroots organizing effort for the Healthy Workplace Bill
- [http://www.bullyfreeworkplace.org/](http://www.bullyfreeworkplace.org/)

National Education Association
- Article: When educators are assaulted: What NEA affiliates are doing to protect members from violent and disruptive students. By Michael D. Simpson, NEA Office of General Counsel.
- [http://www.nea.org/home/42238.htm](http://www.nea.org/home/42238.htm)
- [http://www.nea.org/bullyfree](http://www.nea.org/bullyfree)

National workplace bullying survey available at:

Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation
- Report of educators’ experiences with bullying

Workplace Bullying Institute
- Scholarly research, news, and advocacy information on preventing and ending workplace bullying
- [http://www.workplacebullying.org](http://www.workplacebullying.org)

Policy Information and Informational Brochures on Workplace Bullying

Delaware Department of Education.

Government of Western Australia

Iowa State Anti-Bullying Site And Resources

La Quinta, CA Unified School District Policy
- [http://web1.dsusd.k12.ca.us/RESOURCES/Pages/part.aspx](http://web1.dsusd.k12.ca.us/RESOURCES/Pages/part.aspx)

Maryland State Department of Education.
- Maryland’s model policy to address bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Baltimore, MD: author.
Nevada State Education Association


United States Department of Education

- Government report analyzing bullying laws and policies in 50 states and Washington, D.C.

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries


Books

- Parsons, L. Bullied teacher, bullied student: How to recognize the bullying culture in your school and what to do about it. (2005). Markham, Canada: Pembroke.

Additional Articles
