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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE EXAMINES IMPACT OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

New study recommends strategies to address bullying and support victims

WASHINGTON – The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) today released *Bullying in Schools: An Overview*, the first of five bulletins examining bullying in schools and support schools can provide bullying victims. **Bullying is a complex social and emotional problem impacting children and schools. In extreme cases, victims face shooting, physical assaults or other harassment that may cause them to turn to suicide.**

“Parents and schools across the country worry about the devastating harm bullying can cause, and we share this concern for our nation’s children,” said Jeff Slowikowski, OJJDP’s Acting Administrator. **“This new study highlights the impact of bullying and recommends effective anti-bullying strategies that schools can implement to keep students safe.”**

Conducted by the National Center for School Engagement in 2007, the OJJDP-funded study focused on the connection between bullying, truancy and low academic achievement and examined whether engaging students in academics or extracurricular activities mediates these factors.

Bullying does not directly cause truancy, researchers found. A caring school community where students are challenged academically and adults support them can serve as a powerful antidote. Victimization often distances students from learning and contributes to myriad other problems, including truancy and academic failure. The researchers found “bullying in a box” curriculums—generic, pre-fabricated anti-bullying curriculums—to be an ineffective substitute for intentional, student-focused engagement strategies.

The researchers further recommended these strategies for schools:

- Offer mentoring programs;
- Provide students with opportunities for community service;
- Address the difficult transition between elementary and middle school (from one single classroom teacher to teams of teachers with periods and class changes in a large school); and
- Start prevention programs early.

OJJDP’s bullying series examines the relationship among bullying, school attendance, school engagement, and school achievement; presents survey findings of young adults bullied in grade school; provides teachers’ observations on efforts to ameliorate school bullying; and compares findings to existing research on bullying.

This bulletin, *Bullying in Schools: An Overview*, is available at: www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/234205.pdf

The full report, *Peer Victimization in Schools: A Set of Quantitative and Qualitative Studies of the Connections Among Peer Victimization, School Engagement, Truancy, School Achievement and Other Outcomes*, is authored by Ken Seeley, Martin L. Tombari, Laurie J. Bennett, and Jason B. Dunkle. It is available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/app/publications/abstract.aspx?ID=256074>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.