



WHY THIS MATTERS

Children in Wisconsin are bullied at a consistently higher rate than the national average. Wisconsin is ranked the 11th worst performing state in the nation overall, and the number 1 worst state for the bullying of black, non-Hispanic children age 6-17 years old.¹ Whether the child is a victim or perpetrator, bullying can have serious poor mental health outcomes. Parental involvement, school climate efforts, and effective legislation are critical to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of bullying.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Kids who are bullied can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues. Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- ▶ Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.
- ▶ Decreased academic achievement and school participation. GPA and standardized test scores are likely to decline and students are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.²

Although instances of school shootings and completed suicides receive a high level of attention, they are relatively rare. Bullying has been noted as one of the many possible contributing factors for children who think about suicide or homicide.

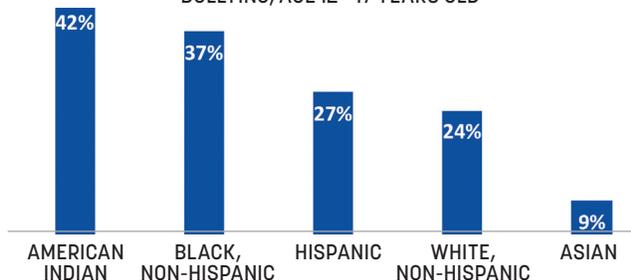
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN?

Wisconsin participated in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2017 which showed **4 out of 10 students felt bullying was a problem at their school, and those who reported being a victim were also more likely to report poor mental health and suicidality.**⁴

FACE TO FACE BULLYING AND FIGHTS ARE STILL MORE COMMON THAN INSTANCES OF CYBERBULLYING.⁵



RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF ADOLESCENTS EXPERIENCING BULLYING, AGE 12 - 17 YEARS OLD⁶



The Bullying Prevention Program Assessment Tool developed by the Department of Public Instruction, demonstrates nine components that are necessary for schools to construct an effective bullying prevention initiative and assists in guiding its effectiveness.

A subsequent study found that those schools that used the tool saw the rate of reported bullying drop by 50% compared with the schools that didn't use the tool. As schools' scores on the assessment increased, bullying decreased.⁷



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LAWS MATTER

The U.S. Department of Education recommends several legislative components that states can adopt to reduce bullying. Three specific components were highly associated with reduced bullying and cyberbullying:

- ▶ Having a definition of where and in what circumstance the anti-bullying law applies.
- ▶ Having a description of prohibited behaviors.
- ▶ Having requirements for school districts to develop and implement policies.⁸

Wisconsin laws do not provide a definition of any type of bullying, procedure for reporting and investigating, or consequences. The law requires the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to create a model bullying policy, but schools are not mandated to adopt it.

WISCONSIN SCHOOLS RESPONSE TO BULLYING



Percentage of schools with a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention.⁹



Schools that prohibit harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity.¹⁰



Schools with a designated staff member to whom students can confidentially report student bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression.¹¹

WHAT WE CAN DO

➔ PARENTS:

- **Monitor your child's social media sites and browsing history**, if you have concerns that cyberbullying may be occurring.
- Learn what your district's anti-bullying approach and policies are, and have an **open relationship with your child's teachers**.
- **Get involved in your child's school safety/school climate committees**.

➔ SCHOOLS:

- Establish an **anonymous reporting system** that offer students a safe place to report bullying.
- **Increase the training** of all school staff to ensure prevention efforts are successful.
- **Include students** on school safety/climate committees to provide effective strategies when developing prevention activities.
- Access resources through the **Department of Public Instruction website**.

REFERENCES:

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- ³ Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. (2016). New national bullying and cyberbullying data. Cyberbullying Research Center. Retrieved from <https://cyberbullying.org/new-national-bullying-cyberbullying-data>.
- ⁴ McCoy, Katherine. 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Summary Report. Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2018.
- ⁵ 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Summary Report. Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Summary Tables.

- ⁶ National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data query. 2016-2017.
- ⁷ Kids in Crisis: Bullying is everywhere, but data on it isn't. Could tracking help? (2019, June 10). Retrieved from: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2019/06/05/kids-crisis-bullying-everywhere-but-data-isnt-could-tracking-help/3290376002/>.
- ⁸ Hatzenbuehler ML, Schwab-Reese L, Ranapurwala SI, Hertz MF, Ramirez MR. Associations Between Anti-bullying Policies and Bullying in 25 States. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2015;169 (10):e152411. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.
- ^{9,10,11} Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2018 School Health Profiles Report. Trend Analysis Report-Principal Survey. Data Tables.

