

Appendix P
Site Visit Interview Protocol: School Psychologist/Counselor

U.S. Department of Education State Bullying Laws and Policies Implementation Study
Field Interview Protocol
School Counselor/Psychologist

The U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring a study about bullying in schools. The purpose of the study is to find out how districts and schools are implementing state laws and policies related to bullying. We are asking you to share your observations about bullying among students on your school campus and your experiences responding to bullying situations. [SCHOOL NAME] has been randomly selected as one of 24 school sites nationally to participate in the bullying study. You have been invited to participate in this study because you may be knowledgeable about bullying practices in this district or on this school campus.

POTENTIAL RISKS OR BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks involved in taking part in this study. Participation may not benefit you personally. However, the information gathered in this study may be valuable for developing effective policies for responding to bullying in schools.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will not share information identifying you or your district with anyone outside of the study team except if required by law. No one in your school or district administration will be told of your responses to interview questions and your responses will not be tied to any review or evaluation of your professional performance. Responses will be summarized in individual case studies for districts and schools to provide examples of policy implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific individual and does not identify a school or district by name.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION/WITHDRAWAL

If you agree to complete the interview, you will be considered a participant in a research study on the implementation of state bullying laws and policies. Your participation in the research study is completely **voluntary**. You may decide not to join, to only answer some questions, or to leave the study at any time. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate.

U.S. Department of Education State Bullying Laws and Policies Implementation Study
School Counselor/Psychologist Interview

Respondent Information

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

1. How **long have you worked for the district** in this position?
- Less than one year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3 -4 years
 - 5-9 years
 - 10 years or more

2. What are your **specific roles and responsibilities with regard to preventing or responding to bullying problems** on this school campus or in your school?

Problem Definition

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

3. **Tell me about bullying that happens among students at your school.**
- 3a. How do you **recognize a bullying situation** when you see one? What criteria do you use to determine when a conflict between students should be defined as bullying? What challenges do you encounter when determining whether or not an incident constitutes bullying behavior?
- 3b. In what ways are bullying **behaviors disruptive**?
- 3c. Are there **individual students or groups of students** in your school who are more vulnerable to bullying? If so, who are these students, and why are they more likely to be targeted?

Development of District/School Site Policy

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

4. Tell me about the bullying policy at your school.
- 4a. Were you **involved in developing the policy**? If yes, what was your role?
- Yes
 - No
- 4b. [If school psychologist participated in policy development] What challenges did you **encounter in developing the policy**?

Development of District/School Site Policy

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

- 4c. Were there any **areas of disagreement on key policy provisions**? If so, what were the issues and **how were they resolved**?

Communication

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

5. **Tell me about the bullying policy at your school.**

- 5a. How were you **informed about the school bullying policy**?

- Posted on the district website
- Posted on school campuses
- Published in the district employee manual
- Discussed in staff meetings
- Reviewed as part of in-service training
- Other communications

- 5b. How **familiar are you with the specific requirements** in the policy?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not at all familiar

- 5c. How **clearly does the policy communicate** expectations to school personnel, students, and families?

School Personnel Training

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

6. **Tell me about your involvement in training related to bullying prevention or enforcement of policies.**

- 6a. Were you involved in the development of staff training on bullying issues? If yes, what was your involvement?

- Yes
- No

- 6b. Have you **participated in bullying training**?

- Yes
- No

School Personnel Training

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

6c. Was participation in **training voluntary or required**?

- Training was mandatory
- Training was voluntary

6d. What **issues or topics** were covered in the training curriculum?

- How to identify or recognize bullying behavior
- How to appropriately intervene in bullying situations
- How to implement or enforce bullying policies
- How to promote positive school climate
- Other _____

6e. How useful was the **training information**? What about it was helpful or not helpful?

Prevention

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

7. Tell me about any bullying prevention or education program for students at your school. Describe the program and its components.

7a. Have there been any **challenges to implementing the school programs or approaches to address bullying** (prevention, intervention, and whole-school approaches to promote school climate)? If so, what are these challenges and how can they be resolved?

7b. What have been the most important benefits of the school program thus far?

Investigations and Written Records

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

8. Tell me about what happens when students become involved a bullying incident that is reported to the school administration.

8a. Have you personally ever been involved in a bullying investigation?

8b. What are your specific **roles and responsibilities related to investigating reported incidents of bullying and determining consequences**?

8c. Are there any specific **steps taken by the school to safeguard victims or witnesses** from further bullying or retaliation? Describe these safeguards.

Investigations and Written Records

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

8d. Does the school take any **specific steps to safeguard groups or classes of students** who are frequent targets of bullying?

8e. What have been some of the most **significant issues or challenges related to investigating** bullying behavior?

Cyberbullying

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

9. We are interested in understanding more about the issue of cyberbullying among students within the district and how cyberbullying incidents are addressed.

9a. What are the **challenges associated with the identification, reporting, and investigation of cyberbullying incidents**?

9b. How does the district address concerns regarding **rights of free speech** when responding to cyberbullying incidents?

9c. Does the school **enforce student codes of conduct for off-campus bullying** or cyberbullying behavior that disrupts the school environment? If so, what criteria are applied to determine school jurisdiction over off-campus incidents? What are the challenges to enforcement?

9d. What are the **limits of school jurisdiction over off-campus conduct**? Are there any challenges associated with these limits over jurisdiction?

Supports for Targets of Bullying

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

10. Tell me about the types of resources or supports that are available to students who bully and students who have been the victims of bullying at school.

10a. How **frequently are students referred to you for bullying issues**?

- Every day
- Once or twice a week
- Once or twice a month
- Once or twice a year

Supports for Targets of Bullying

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

10b. Which **students are typically referred?**

- Bullies
- Bullying victims
- Both bullies and bullying victims

10c. What types of **counseling or support services are available to victims (e.g., counseling, mental health referrals)?**

- School or district provides mental health counseling to students
- School or district provides mental health counseling through cooperative agreements with community-based providers
- School or district refers students to community-based mental health providers
- No mental health services or linkages

10d. What types of **counseling or behavioral intervention services are available to aggressors (e.g., counseling, mental health referrals)?**

- School or district provides mental health counseling to students
- School or district provides mental health counseling through cooperative agreements with community-based providers
- School or district refers students to community-based mental health providers
- No mental health services or linkages

10e. How are **determinations made about whether to refer students** to counseling services?

10f. Does the school provide any **ongoing follow-up to assess the mental health needs** of victims?

10g. What are some of the most significant **challenges to providing assistance to bullying victims?**

Policy Application and Effectiveness

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Elaboration

11. Tell me about some of the challenges associated with implementing the bullying policy in this school?
[PROBES]
- What are the particular components or requirements of the policy that are most challenging to put into practice?
 - What is it about these components that makes them challenging?
 - How have you coped with these challenges? What have you done to resolve them in particular cases?
 - What (additional) steps would help you put the policy into practice in your school?
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12. Are there components or requirements in your school's bullying policy that stand out as particularly effective in addressing bullying? If yes, what are these components? What makes these components of the policy effective?
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13. How **effective** are your school's bullying policies in reducing bullying problems?
[PROBES]
- Which problems are most effectively addressed?
 - Which problems are least effectively addressed?
 - What specific policy components or requirements contribute most to effectiveness?
 - What specific policy components or requirements contribute the least to effectiveness?
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14. Have you **observed any changes in the school environment** since the bullying policy has been implemented?
- Increased awareness of bullying
 - Increased reporting of incidents
 - Increased consistency of enforcement
 - Improved school climate
 - Reduced frequency of bullying
 - Other: _____
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15. What **advice would you give to others schools** that are developing bullying policies and programs?
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