

## **Summary of Bullying Prevention Presentation February 16, 2010**

### **PANEL:**

**Anne Lewis**, Director, Student Services

**John Lody**, Director, Diagnostic and Prevention Services

**Cathy Schwaery**, Coordinator, Behavior Support

**Beth Doyle**, Guidance Specialist

**Marilyn Jackson**, Supervisor, Guidance Services

**Allyne Zappala**, Coordinator of Substance Abuse Prevention

### **Anne Lewis**

Each school addresses school environment concerns in their School Improvement Plan (SIP). Each School Improvement Plan is located on individual school websites.

LCPS has a Bullying Prevention Committee and is working to develop a more universal approach to addressing these issues. Ms. Lewis emphasized that this is a “work in progress” and that it will continue to develop and evolve.

### **Definition of Bullying:**

- Is an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or a series of acts that occur in a school setting;
- School setting shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.
- is severe, persistent, or pervasive;
- is directed at another student or students;
- occurs in a relationship characterized by an imbalance of power; and
- has the effect of doing any of the following:
  - substantially interfering with a student’s education;
  - creating a threatening environment; or
  - substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

A school may add to the definition of bullying acts that occur outside a school setting, if those acts

- are severe, persistent or pervasive;
- are directed at another student or students;
- have the effect of doing any of the following:
  - substantially interfering with a student’s education,
  - creating a threatening environment, or
  - substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Bullying behavior is a subtype of the broader concept of peer aggression and victimization; bullying prevention approaches must focus more broadly on reducing all forms of aggressions and victimization, regardless of the intent, frequency, and power differential.

### **Cathy Schwaery**

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a research and evidenced-based practice for creating a common vision of behavioral expectations through consistent language and practices among staff and student. PBS is a framework of tiered approaches to address ALL the needs of ALL the members of the school community.

[www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) This is a nationwide initiative to deal with effective school discipline, including bullying prevention. Ex: In (ES) Elementary Schools there is a universal sign the school adopts for every child to signal to another child to prevent bullying and build self advocacy skills.

Currently there are 31 schools participating in PBS. LCPS link to PBS:

<http://cmsweb1.loudoun.k12.va.us/50990419143321/blank/browse.asp?a=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&c=80885&50990419143321Nav=|&NodeID=3473>

### **Marilyn Jackson & Beth Doyle**

In Elementary School the positive things being done include: guidance counselors providing lessons on character education in the classrooms two times a month. While the term 'bullying' may not be overtly used in these lessons, the outcome is the same. The teachers support these positive lessons, and the lessons meet state standards. Staff is also trained on Social Cruelty each year to help identify inappropriate behavior.

Guidance counselors trade lesson plans and ideas with each other and from school to school. This year's 4<sup>th</sup> grade pilot program used information provided by students on issues that matter to them to plan their lessons. The direction for the school system is to use best practices and programs like, Best Buddies and Circle of Friends. The Bullying Prevention Committee is collecting data on these programs.

### **Allyne Zappala**

There are two peer programs being offered at a few Middle Schools (MS) and High School (HS). Students learn about differences and developing tolerance to student differences. Students are trained to help other students. Each new student is assigned a peer helper. Safe School Ambassadors Program has 40-50 students trained and taught how to intervene and positively influence in their own social group. They are trained to specifically handle situations and encourage awareness and tolerance.

## **John Lody**

Threat Assessment was implemented 5 years ago in the school system and it deals with violence prevention and resolving underlying conflicts. The idea is to assess threats when they are made known and then deal with them individually. The purpose is to understand risks and reduce risk of violence.

The model comes from the FBI's framework on threats relating to school systems. This is not to profile but to handle from a front end to prevent escalation. There are teams at each school including a psychologist and a social worker. Loudoun County Mental Health Services will conduct a Mental Health Assessment if a substantive threat has occurred.

## **Wrap Up Comments: Anne Lewis**

Future plans include training school bus drivers on how to identify and deal with bullying on the bus. Some schools have used the PBS program to assist them in dealing with bus related issues with good outcomes.

The Bullying Prevention Committee is working to complete their framework by May 2010 and expects to implement their recommendations by September 2010. The SEAC expressed interest in working with the Committee to provide parent perspective.

## **Parent Concerns:**

- Disability awareness for staff and students to increase acceptance and tolerance.
- Prevention of bullying is a big concern for our students with disabilities.
- It is a concern not only how the school supports the victim but also how the school handles the student who is doing the bullying.
- How are bullying complaints tracked at the Central Administrative level?
- Modification of guidance materials on bullying for students with disabilities.
- Proactively teaching self-advocacy skills to students with disabilities.
- The need for peer support/friendship programs across the district.