

Prevention of School Bullying Task Force
Listening Sessions Summary

Quantitative Information per site

Bemidji

When: April 18, 2012

Who: Student Session

- *Twenty-five 11th-12th grade students*
- *Sixteen 4th-6th grade students*
- *Eight parents of students*

Community Session

- *Fourteen community members (included educators, parents, advocacy groups, citizens)*

Rochester

When: April 26, 2012

Who: Student Session

- *Twelve middle school students*

Community Session

- *Twenty-five community members (principals, superintendent, teachers, pastors, parents, advocacy groups, citizens)*

St. Cloud

When: May 1, 2012

Who: Student Session

- *Six High School students (five attending Apollo High School and one attending Tech High School)*

Community Session

- *Twenty-Two community members (included parents, faculty, administrative members of ISD 742, and community groups)*

Mankato

When: May 14, 2012

Who: Community Session

- *Forty-three community members (parents, superintendents, administrators, counselors, teachers and advocacy groups)*

Common Themes (as indicated by both Community Members and Students)

1. *There is a lack of awareness that bullying occurs online, in schools, and in the community.*

“Schools are saying there isn’t an issue and [bullying] doesn’t exist. It is time for school systems to admit there is an issue.”
- Rochester, April 26, 2012

“Bus drivers seem to be blind to [bullying]. There is a lack of supervision on buses and there is the impression that bus discipline is lax.”
- St. Cloud, May 1, 2012

“The worse [type of bullying] is on the internet and cyberbullying. Parents and teachers need to be more aware.”
- Mankato, May 14, 2012

“Adults need to know when problems in the school are happening.”
- Mankato, May 14, 2012

“The adult community is accepting things that are not acceptable.”
- Mankato, May 14, 2012

2. *Cyberbullying has been a growing concern for both students and community members.*

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“Fights are happening online right during school.”
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

“Cyberbullying is happening on Facebook, Twitter, and through pictures on cell phones.”
- Mankato, May 14, 2012

3. *All members of the community, including citizens, teachers, parents, and students need to be educated on what constitutes as bullying.*

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“Bullying is about powerful taking vulnerable. It happens at every age level. Educate on being helpful, respectful human beings”
- Rochester, April 26, 2012

“Kids don’t always recognize bullying.”
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

4. *There is a need for clear and concise action steps to both prevent and intervene bullying in schools and the community.*

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“There needs to be efforts to address different dynamics. I see disconnect between the bus system and school; we don’t address what parents say to kids. The kids are getting mixed messages because we haven’t figure this out.”
- Rochester, April 26, 2012

5. *Prevention of bullying should occur first and foremost in the home and in the community.*

“Parents are the teachers. The school is the tool to get the job done.”
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

“The school is not the place to lay all the blame. Schools are not teaching how to bully, the kids are bringing it to the school.”
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

6. *There is a need for an active relationship to exist between parents and schools.*

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- *“Parents need the knowledge on how to address bullying and how to get help from the school.”*

- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

7. *Lessons learned in schools need to be clearly conveyed and re-articulated within the community, and vice versa.*

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- *“We need to give the same messages within the family and the school.”*
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

8. *There is a need to empower youth to recognize bullying when it occurs and to take appropriate action against it (i.e. conflict resolution).*

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- *“I can’t wait for my conflict resolution class on Fridays. If every kid knew conflict resolution, there would be less bullying in the schools.”*

• Bemidji, April 26,
2012

“Kids need a path to report.”
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

“Kids don’t recognize what bullying is. They don’t realize it could be perceived as bullying and it looks like. They need to be taught how to stand up for themselves and how to get other students to stand up for other students.”
- Rochester, April 26, 2012

9. *Promote both inclusiveness and tolerance of GLBT, special needs, and minority youth in the schools and community.*

- *“We need to engage all parents to get schools to react better to gay issues in the media.”*
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

10. *Verbal forms of bullying need to strongly be recognized and addressed.*

- *“Bullying is insidious and not always direct. It’s the atmosphere as much as behaviors; hearing ‘That’s so gay.’”*
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

- *“Adults need to understand that bullying is not just physical.”*
- St. Cloud, May 1, 2012

Unique Findings from Individual Sites

Bemidji (Students)

1. *There is concern regarding the consequences of addressing bullying.*

- *“Lots of kids say don’t do anything, because I do something and sometimes it makes it worse.”*
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

2. *Youth want schools to address bullying.*

- *“I want the school to have the answers, not for me to have the answers.”*
- Bemidji, April 18, 2012

Bemidji (Parents)

1. *Parents indicated that there were no concerns regarding bullying at Schoolcraft (specific school in Bemidji).*

2. *Bullying is often prevented from occurring because parents and the school have found the best strategy to handle conflicts and to discuss diversity.*

- *“Kids have a sense of being able to vent and to feel safe.”*

- *“Differences are talked about and respected.”*

3. *Some parents indicated that once a child shows signs and are at-risk of becoming bullies, there is little to prevent it from occurring.*

- *“It is almost too late.”*

Mankato

- 1. There is a perceived correlation between violence in the home and bullying.**

“There is a correlation between domestic violence in the home and bullying.”

- 2. There is a need for a guideline for the intolerance of bullying to exist among schools in the same district.**

“We need consistency from school to school. There is a lack of consistency even within a district.”

- 3. There is too much focus placed on the Adequate Yearly Progress measurement as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act and less focus on the consequences of bullying.**

“There is so much focus on AYP. What really matters is the well being of kids. What good is AYP if kids are suffering?”

Rochester

- 1. There is concern for how much jurisdiction schools have for bullying outside of an academic setting.**

“How much jurisdiction do schools have when it comes to cyberbullying?”

- 2. The solution to prevent bullying occurs in systematic changes.**

“We need to know it’s not a silver bullet. Systematic change is needed for long lasting impact.”

St. Cloud

- 1. Adults in the community and school need to be more approachable.**

“Adults have an authoritative feel about them. Adults need to exhibit patience to encourage student trust.”

- 2. Bullying should be equally addressed and disciplined when involving males and females.**

“”There is a double standard of males versus female language. Some kids flaunt it. If a female is sexually active, she is referred to as a ‘slut,’ but if a male is sexually active, he is a ‘player.’”