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## Decreasing Incidents of High School Cyberbullying

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# Decreasing Incidents of High School Cyberbullying

by  
Erica N. Dawson

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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## **Approval Page**

This applied dissertation was submitted by Erica Dawson under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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## **Abstract**

Decreasing Incidents of High School Cyberbullying. Erica N. Dawson, 2018: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Keywords : cyberbullying, bullying, decrease, incidents, high school

With the Internet being an ever-growing part of everyone's lives, the nature of bullying has evolved. Cyberbullying is a new problem with far reaching implications and is a problem that is growing fast. However, there is a limited amount of research available. Most of the research has been conducted from 2007 until the present with little research available before 2001. The purpose of this study was to decrease the percentage of incidents (students participating and students victimized) of cyberbullying at a public high school in a large school, suburban school district, in the southeastern region of the United States, by implementing various interventions. The sample population was a nonprobability convenience sample. The sample was comprised of 512 students for the pre-survey and 498 for the post-survey, in grades 9-12.

A pre-survey was administered at the beginning of the study to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization and perpetration. The interventions occurred over a five-month period and included: advisement lessons, a book display in the media center, an anti-cyberbullying student pledge, informational bulletin board, digital brochures, and an assembly with the district attorney. A post-survey was administered at the end of the five-month period of the study to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying in the sample population. The difference between the pre and post responses was used to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. While there was a decrease in reports of bystander experiences and cyberbullying participation, there was an increase of 1-3% in cyberbullying victimization, specific victimization experiences, and specific perpetration behaviors.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Topic of Study

Bullying has been a problem for years, particularly among adolescents. With the Internet being an ever-growing part of everyone's lives, the nature of bullying has also evolved. Cyberbullying is a new problem with far reaching implications and a problem that is growing fast (Eden, Heiman, Olenik-Shemesh, 2013).

Cyberbullying is the victimization of an individual or group where the victimizer uses technology as the medium for inflicting harm. The bullying can occur in several avenues such as email, text, instant messaging, or social network sites. It can also occur in various forms such as spreading rumors, impersonating others, threats, morphing photographs and other types of humiliation and trickery, stalking, or exclusion.

**The research problem.** According to research conducted by Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin in 2010 (and reported by Caralee Adams (2010)), approximately 50% of the students they surveyed reported experiencing cyberbullying. Boys and girls tend to equally cyberbully or be victims of cyberbullying, but the incidents seem to occur more in high school than elementary or middle schools (One in three teens reported experiencing cyberbullying (as cited by Hart & Caven, 2013)). As the number of victims continues to grow, the social, emotional, and academic implications for students will only continue to increase.

**Background and justification.** In May of 2014, the researcher spoke with a high school principal to gather information on cyberbullying cases at the school. The principal said the school does not keep a record of cyberbullying cases but does keep the data for traditional bullying cases and cases of student aggression that could be a symptom of

cyberbullying. This report is the Student Discipline Summary (Gwinnet County Public Schools, 2014). During the 2013-2014 school year, there were 249 cases of threatening/intimidating or physical contact with another student and five incidents that were classified as bullying.

“Cyberbullying is not a term that students seem to use and view it as an adult word for gossip, rumors, and ‘smack’ that takes place on the Internet” (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014, p. 100). Cyberbullying, if not addressed (as was the case in eight of the 50 states’ bullying legislation as of 2011 (Zubrzycki, 2011)), can cause students to suffer in such a way they fail academically, become socially withdrawn, and in extreme cases can become violent or suicidal (Adams, 2010). Students who suffer from cyberbullying or participate in it perceive their school climate as poorer than those who are uninvolved (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011).

**Deficiencies in the evidence.** The topic of cyberbullying is fairly new (The first case of cyberbullying to reach public notoriety was from Quebec, Canada in 2002 (Bauman, 2010).); therefore, there is a limited amount of research available. Most of the research has been conducted from 2007 until the present, with little research available before 2001. This could be because Facebook (one of the most widely used social media networks) was not widely used until 2006 (Bauman, 2013). In another study by Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja (2010), they reported that the small amount of available research on cyberbullying mainly focused on the prevalence rather than implications and interventions. In addition, the setting of the research studies was predominantly in middle schools and outside the United States.

**Audience.** By quantitatively determining the prevalence of cyberbullying,

educators will be made aware of the seriousness of the problem, which will make the issue a matter of importance to address like traditional bullying. Furthermore, by the researcher implementing interventions (during which students will learn about the types of cyberbullying, prevalence of cyberbullying incidents, outcomes of previous incidents, and methods of reporting), a safer school environment will be created. In addition, victims and their peers will feel more comfortable reporting incidents, and cyberbullies (aware of the consequences of their actions) will be convinced to stop and will encourage others to stop. Research has shown that it is more effective to implement such interventions for groups or the whole school rather than individually (Poyhonen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2012).

### **Definition of Terms**

**Advisement class.** This is a daily class period with a duration of 25 minutes. During this time, students can receive tutoring, make up missed assignments, complete homework, and receive information about school and community events. Students participate in teacher-led lessons about grade appropriate social and academic behavior. Such lessons are developed by the advisement team (a school counselor, teachers, the media specialist, and paraprofessionals). The classes consist of approximately 30-35 students who are assigned to the class based on their grade level. “The Gwinnett County Public Schools Advisement Program is designed to support the strategic priorities by helping develop productive relationships between students and school faculty. Each school's advisement program builds upon three foundational principles of Relationship, Respect, and Resilience (3R's).” (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2018).

**eCLASS (electronic Classroom Learning and Assessment Support System).**

eCLASS is a “digital Content, Learning, Assessment and Support System that is providing the district an integrated learning management system to enhance student engagement and the learning process” (GCPS, 2018).

**Purpose of the Study**

Sheri Bauman, Russell Toomey, and Jenny Walker (2013) recommended that cyberbullying intervention programs extend beyond the middle schools and into high schools. Such programs must include all the stakeholders (parents, educators, students, and the community), include information on all mediums in which cyberbullying could occur, be ongoing, be proactive rather than reactive, and focus on ethical and digital responsiveness and responsibility (Couvillon & Llieva, 2011).

The purpose of this study was to decrease the percentage of incidents (students participating and students victimized) of cyberbullying at a high school in a large school district in the southeastern region of the United States by implementing various interventions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

This review is divided into 6 sections. The review begins with the types of bullying because cyberbullying is the newest type of bullying but shares characteristics of other types of bullying. Having an understanding of traditional bullying allows for a better understanding of cyberbullying. The types of bullying are followed by the characteristics of bully groups: bullies, victims, and bully/victims. Reviewing the characteristics of each group will allow the most effective interventions to be used to decrease incidents of being cyberbullied or of cyberbullying. The consequences of bullying (for both the bully and victim) are reviewed next. This is followed by the approaches to stopping bullying that students and parents can do as well as interventions that schools are using to address the issue of bullying. The final section is a review of cyberbullying including the types of cyberbullying, legislation in place, and suggestions for interventions.

### Types of Traditional Bullying

Traditional bullying involves hostile actions that occur over time and involves the deliberate, repeated dominance of the bully or bullies over the victim (Bauman, 2010). It is also known as a type of abuse and is divided into direct tactics and indirect tactics. Direct tactics include physical and verbal bullying, while indirect tactics, also referred to as relational bullying, include psychological bullying.

**Physical bullying.** Physical bullying includes slapping, pushing, kicking, stealing, spitting, and punching. This type of bullying also extends to the initiation practice known as hazing (Dittrick, Beran, Mishna, Hetherington, & Shariff, 2013).

**Verbal bullying** includes teasing, name-calling, harassing, mocking, and threatening (Dittrick et. al, 2013). This is considered one of the most common forms of traditional bullying.

**Psychological bullying.** This is also known as indirect bullying, or relational bullying, and includes intentional exclusion, gossiping, intimidation, manipulation, or spreading rumors (Bauman, 2010; Hart & Caven, 2013).

### **Characteristics of Bullies**

While bullies are not all the same, some characteristics tend to be common among them. Pure bullies are those who bully others but who are not victims. Pure bullies are often characterized as aggressive, highly functioning males with a lack of self-control (which is why students with ADHD are more likely to bully) who score low on tests that assess the bully's emotional intelligence in regard to the feelings of others. (Jansen, Ormel, Reijneveld, Veenstra, & Verhulst 2011; Lomas, Stough, Hansen, & Downey, 2012). Students with high-functioning motor skills often use these skills as an outlet for their aggression in the form of physical bullying. In one research study, children who had high aggression and high functioning motor skills as preschoolers were more likely to be bullies than not (Jansen et. al., 2011).

Physical dominance (being stronger or taller) is another risk factor for a student being a bully. Students with low self-control, who also perceive themselves as physically dominate, are more likely to bully because of their positive attitude towards violence. Students who have been exposed to inter-parental violence (i.e. parents engaging in verbal or physical violence against each other) are also more likely to be bullies. This could be due to a need to avoid what is occurring at home (Mustanoja, Luukkonen,

Hakko, Räsänen, Säävälä, & Riala, 2011) or because bullies tend not to feel support from the adults in their lives, either because they are neglected or overindulged (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). Another factor is the bully suffers from low self-esteem, particularly those with narcissistic personalities (Fanti & Henrich, 2015). Additionally, Ken Rigby (2012) stated that other reasons students engage in social bullying are they feel justified due to an actual or perceived wrong or prejudice, or they find the behavior entertaining due to the reaction it elicits from the victim (relinquishing of desired items) or their peers (social acceptance). An additional reason is the bully is simply sadistic and finds pleasure in the hurt of others.

These factors are not all encompassing. Margot Peeters, Antonius Cillessen, and Ron Scholte (2010) surveyed 806 eighth graders in The Netherlands. The students nominated an unlimited number of classmates for each of nine categories; they also completed a bullying survey and a survey to measure the strength or weakness of their inter-personal relationships and concern for others (Machiavellianism). This data allowed the researchers to define three categories of bullies, and not all of these categories align with traditional notions of factors that contribute to bullying.

One-hundred twenty of the 806 participants were identified as bullies and were categorized as popular-socially intelligent bullies, popular-moderate bullies, or low-popular, low-socially intelligent bullies. The popular-socially intelligent bullies are leaders among their classmates and have a natural affinity for making friends. They are very comfortable at school and have a good relationship with their peers and parents (Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012); however, they are highly aggressive, physically and verbally, and have a low concern for others. They use their social skills and intelligence

to manipulate others.

Popular-moderate bullies are similar to those who do not bully except the popular-moderate bullies are more popular and more aggressive. Low-popular, low-socially intelligent bullies are not only less intelligent and less popular than the other two categories, but they are also less aggressive. They are also less able to make friends, with one reason being they are not leaders among their peers (Peeters et al., 2010). Disabled students can fall into this category. In addition to types of bullies, there tends to be differences among cultural and gender groups. Minorities are not only more likely to admit to pure bullying but are also more likely to be identified as pure bullies (Bauman et al., 2013). In addition, girls are increasingly being identified as bullies, not only of other girls but also of boys.

### **Characteristics of Victims**

As with bullies, victims of bullying are not all the same but have some commonalities. Pure victims are those who are bullied by others but who are not bullies. Pure victims are often characterized as low functioning, (Jansen et. al, 2011). Poor motor skills have been shown to result in poor performance in both individual and team games and sports, which may reduce children's sense of competence. This in turn reduces success within peer groups.

Other reasons for victimization include differences in appearance or behavior. Differences in appearance can include things that appear at birth such a birthmark, bigger or deformed features, or glasses. Such behavioral differences include the lack of social skills, the inability to notice social cues, emotional instability, or learning disabilities. Sexual orientation may also be a catalyst for bullying (Hart & Caven, 2013).

Boys are more likely to be bullied in elementary and high school, and there has been an increase in the number of boys who are bullied by girls. Boys are less likely to report the victimization by girls because boys are known as the stronger sex. Though girls often experience more victimization in middle school, they were less likely than boys to report being victims of traditional bullying. Minorities were also less likely to report being bullied than their White counterparts.

Psychologically, victims have been shown to be quiet, withdrawn, depressed, and anxious. They self-report being lonely and unhappy. Furthermore, they have higher self-control yet lower emotional intelligence in regards to emotional management and control and using emotions in decision-making. This lack of assertiveness and aggressiveness makes them targets (Lomas et al., 2012), which continues as they get older.

### **Characteristics of Bully/Victims**

Bully/victims are those who participate in bullying as well as who are victims of bullying. Psychologically, this group of students is more depressed and isolated than pure victims. This isolation may be a result of their feelings of a lack of support from teachers, parents, and classmates. Those in the bully/victim group have identified negative family relationships. Along with negative familial relationships, those with mild disabilities are believed to be more vulnerable to being bully/victims. Additionally, in another study of 508 adolescent psychiatric patients, 50.0% of the female bully-victims engaged in bullying behavior after witnessing a violent crime (Mustanoja et al., 2011).

### **Effects of Bullying**

Bullying can have detrimental effects (physically, socially, and emotionally) and consequences for the victim as well as the bully. It is a behavior, which, if not addressed,

is often continuous for the bully and the victim.

**Victims of bullying.** Victims experience numerous negative effects because of the bullying. Repeated bullying, particularly in the early years of life, can have an adverse effect on the brain; the brain can become smaller. “Love shapes the brain positively; fear shapes the brain negatively” (Hart & Caven, p.69, 2013).

Physically, victims of bullying report relying on illegal substances as a means of escape or coping. Some even resort to physical mutilation or suicide/suicidal thoughts to escape the bullying. In a one month period in 2010, there were 12 public reports of teenagers who committed suicide after being bullied (Bates, 2011). Younger children, who tend to experience more physical bullying, are more prone to suffer from physical ailments such as headaches, stomachaches, or a change in eating/sleeping habits. In addition, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been associated with being a victim of bullying. Of 481 Norwegian students who admitted to being bullied, 33% (more girls than boys) were classified as experiencing clinical PTSD because of the bullying, particularly those who experienced frequent bullying (Idsoe, Dyregrov, & Idsoe, 2012).

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a feeling of severe, long-term (at least a month) distress that is brought about by a traumatic event. The distress can result in a feeling of numbness after mentally reliving the event repeatedly. The person constantly tries to avoid people and things that are associated with the trauma. In a survey of middle and high school students, 15% of the students admitted they missed school at least once in the past 30 days due to feeling unsafe at school because of bullying (Idsoe et al., 2012).

Victims also experience emotional effects. Being bullied can make victims feel ashamed and miserable. They also report feeling stupid, unattractive, and angry. Through

adulthood, victims also commonly experience depression, loneliness, moodiness, and anxiety. Such anxiety can lead to younger children who do not want to be out of the presence of their caregivers and older children who withdraw from the family (Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

**Bullies.** Bullies are involved in a practice that is considered a type of conduct disorder. There are some similarities between bullies and victims in some of the effects that bullying can have. Bullies are also more likely to have suicidal thoughts and symptoms of depression than those not involved in bullying (Lieberman & Cowan, 2011). Bullying is also associated with lower academic performance (associated with the aggressive behavior rather than academic ability) decreased school attendance, and higher disciplinary referrals (Feldman et al., 2014). These effects are more likely to become even worse in high school for girls who bully in middle school.

Later in life, those who have bullied are more likely to suffer from higher levels of anger and aggressiveness. Due to this, Dan Olweus (the founder of bullying research) reported that 60% of those who bullied in grades 6-9 had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24 (as cited by Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

### **Approaches to Stopping Bullying**

Victims and bystanders give many reasons for not reporting bullying. However, to prevent or intervene in incidents of bullying, a group effort will be required. Such an effort is not just the responsibility of the school but also students, parents, and other community members (Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

**Student approaches.** Some bullies have reported they feel trapped in the bullying and do not know how to stop, while others feel empowered by their classmates as a result

of being bullies because they have classmates who admire them and lack sympathy for the victims (Fox, Elder, Gater, & Johnson, 2010).

Some adolescents believe that one of the best ways for bullying to stop is for the victim to stand up for himself or herself. This is the aim of the *Bullies to Buddies*, a victim assertiveness program that was developed by Izzy Kalman in 1986. Instead of seeking to eliminate bullying in schools, Kalman's program focuses on making the victim no longer a victim in a game format. The participants learn why they are being victimized and how to make it stop (Kern, 2010).

Bystanders (people not involved as a bully or victim) sometimes do not report the bullying because they blame the victims. Of 176 Swedish ninth-graders surveyed about bullying, 42% blamed the victims in some way. They believed the reasons the victims were chosen were that they looked or behaved differently, irritated the bully, were physically or emotionally weak, had done something bad, or were easy targets (Thronberg & Knutsen, 2011). This inactivity (on the part of bystanders) has an effect on the bullies. Bystanders must be educated about the effects of bullying as well as how to intervene. Bystanders can help by:

- “Telling the bully what he or she is doing is wrong
- Inviting the victim to leave the situation with them
- Not laughing or otherwise encouraging the bully
- Talking to the bully in private and conveying support to the victim
- Including the victim in their activities and/or helping that individual avoid other potential bullying situations
- Avoid spreading rumors about what has happened” (Kipper & Ramey, p. 37-38, 2013).

**Parent approaches.** Pure victims and bully/victims reported less feelings of depression when they had parental support, particularly bully/victims. Parental support has an even greater impact than teacher support. Bullying is not simply a rite of passage that children must endure; it is an act of violence and should be treated as such. Children cannot be told to simply fight back due to the greater risk of retaliation; children cannot be advised to simply ignore the bully either. Simple actions on the part of a parent can help in giving victims the confidence and hope to stop the bullying (Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

1. **Bully Talks:** This involves parents intentionally setting aside time each day (at least 15 minutes) for meaningful discussion with their children. During this time, parents should ask direct questions about daily life (What was one good thing that happened today? Anything bad? What is lunchtime like at your school? Whom do you sit with? What do you talk about? What does bullying mean to you? What do you usually do when you see bullying going on?). These conversations should be frequent and start at a young age. Younger children may enjoy storytelling about their day while older children may require a more subtle approach. The purpose is for children to know their parents are actively paying attention to their lives.

2. **Awareness:** Parents should do their best to know the friends of their children as well as those friends' parents. Not only should they know them but spend time interacting with them. Awareness also extends to having an understanding of their child's world. Parents should know (not adopt) popular culture.

**School approaches.** Approaches currently in use are varied. School is the place with the greatest occurrence of traditional bullying, with on the way to school having a

greater prevalence than at school. Failure to respond to bullying can lead to great financial costs for the school district and the community (Hart & Caven, 2013).

1. Increase student reporting of bullying: Students must not only feel comfortable reporting incidents but feel assured that something will be done. One way of increasing student reports of bullying is by setting up opportunities for students to report anonymously or in a non-threatening manner, such as bully boxes or hotlines (a method used in North Dakota, where students can also report threatening behavior through text message (Zubrycki, 2011)).

2. Reduce times of minimum supervision: Unsupervised areas provide an easy advantage to bullies unless they are given other activities to divert their attention from their planned acts of bullying. Bullying usually occurs during times of minimum supervision because there is not an adult present to stop or prevent it (Zubrycki, 2011).

One approach that can be taken is to assign all teachers designated duty stations between classes, during recess, during lunch, before school, and at the time of dismissal. However, it is not enough to simply increase the number of teachers, but the supervisors must be actively observing students (i.e. increase proximity to students), be aware of signs of bullying, and be prepared to stop the bullying (Zubrycki, 2011).

3. Professional development: Teachers and other school staff should be educated about the prevalence of bullying, the effects, the signs, and ways of preventing or stopping it. Awareness is the first step for school officials; unfortunately, many are oblivious to the bullying or the seriousness of the bullying that takes place in their schools. Educators must understand that bullying is a problem that occurs across genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses and that cannot be resolved by simply ignoring it.

4. **Bibliotherapy:** This approach involves using books to expose students to bullying and allows the teacher to address the topic without stigmatizing the bullies or the victims. There is quite a bit of children's literature that addresses bullying. While some books address multiple forms of bullying, Teresa Long and Kristina Alexander (2010) revealed that most (56%) of the K-3 literature they studied addressed verbal bullying, which is the most common type of traditional bullying. From bullying literature, students can learn to have sympathy for those being bullied through learning the effects of bullying on the victims. In addition, they can learn the positive and negative roles bystanders have in the bullying.

5. **Bullying program templates:** Schools can also use bullying programs that have already been created. Such programs often include step-by-step instructions and lesson plans.

1. **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP):** This program was developed by Dan Olweus, who is considered a pioneer in the field of bullying research. The program includes a school-wide questionnaire, staff training, and four principles to guide the program (Hart & Caven, 2013)
2. **Safe and Caring Schools:** This is a program that is “designed so that teachers can incorporate social and emotional learning into daily instruction... [to] build self-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making” (Hart & Caven, p. 105, 2013).

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is an indirect means of bullying that is identified as aggressive

behavior. In a survey of 1,963 middle school students, 21% of survey participants admitted to cyberbullying two or more times within a 30-day period (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). In a survey of Taiwanese tenth graders, 29.6% reported being cyberbullied (Change et al., 2013). In a study commissioned by Microsoft in 2012, 54% of children ages 8 to 17 expressed concern that they would be cyberbullied (as cited by Kipper & Ramey, 2013). Like traditional bullying, cyberbullying is over time and involves an imbalance of power between the victim and bully or bully/victim. The means of attack is through electronic communication. Cyberbullying has other distinct characteristics that distinguish it from traditional bullying:

1. It is difficult to escape: Since most traditional bullying occurs at school or on the way to school, once the victim gets home, he or she is able to escape it. Victims of cyberbullying can still receive electronic attacks anywhere (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014).

2. Breadth of audience: Cyberbullying has the potential to reach a larger audience than traditional bullying due to the vast means of attack. In a survey and focus groups of 3,356 middle and high school students, ages 12-18, 55% responded that they used social media sites every day or a few times per week. One male, high school student in a focus group said “once information is ‘on Facebook, or any type of Internet, it just blows up because Internet’s everywhere no matter where you are at.’” (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014).

3. Anonymity of the bully: Cyberbullying is not a face-to-face attack, which makes the bully feel even more comfortable participating. A cyberbully can blame others for the bullying since it is difficult to know exactly who used the phone or computer accounts. In addition, the bully is often not able to see the effects of his or her attacks, which can decrease feelings of sympathy, empathy, or remorse. Seventy-four percent of

the students identified as cyberbullies by Marilyn Campbell, Phillip Slee, Barbara Spears, Des Butler, and Sally Kift (2013) said they did not feel their cyberbullying had an impact on their victims' lives. The anonymity also makes it even more difficult for victims and bystanders to report the victimization. It also makes the victim feel even more distrustful, fearful, and paranoid because the perpetrator could be anyone (Bauman, 2010).

### **Legislation**

Though it did not receive the notoriety of the Quebec case of 2002, the first reported case of cyberbullying occurred in 1998 in Missouri. A student created a website that had negative, though not defamatory, comments about school administration. After the student was suspended for 10 days, a lawsuit was filed, and the student won. The precedent setting judgment was that a school cannot discipline a student for cyberbullying unless the school can prove the bullying occurred in the school, or it caused a disruption to the learning environment, activities, or discipline or it infringes on the civil rights of students (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011).

Defining what constitutes a substantial disruption to the learning environment is still open to interpretation. In the case of *JC vs. Beverly Hill Unified School District* of 2009, an eighth-grade student was depicted in a YouTube video, which called her such names as "slut", "brat", and "spoiled". The very upset student reported the incident to her counselor and told the counselor she felt unable to focus in her classes, so the cyberbully was suspended for two days. The cyberbully's family filed a lawsuit and won because the federal judge felt the school district could not prove a substantial disruption to the learning environment besides the fact that the cyberbully was immature in her actions, and the victim may be overemotional in her response (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). Such

legal responses can discourage victims from reporting being cyberbullied or cause them to take matters into their own hands in a negative manner.

In 2005, no states had cyberbullying policies, but as of 2012, 45 states had anti-bullying laws that addressed cyberbullying (as cited in Wenger, 2012). For example, in Georgia, The End to Cyberbullying Act was passed in 2011 and allows schools to punish students for cyberbullying, which occurs in or outside the school, if the bullying is directed to a student or school personnel. Arkansas took the same stance with the passing of Act 115 (Diamanduros & Downs, 2011). Texas has a very specific online harassment law that details the various offenses defined as cyberbullying such as impersonating someone, threats, and cyberstalking (Stewart & Fritsch, 2011), and with the increase in cyberbullying, New Jersey and Maryland require each school to have an anti-bullying specialist who reports incidents to the states (Zubrzycki, 2011; Wenger, 2012). In 2012, New York's governor helped to pass a law that requires schools to establish protocols to deal with cyberbullying.

In addition to implementing a policy, the Seattle Public School District created their own cyberbullying curriculum in 2009, which addresses misconceptions, builds empathy, teaches online safety, and provides strategies for preventing and addressing victimization (Holladay, 2010). Some types of cyberbullying constitute a crime. Threatening violence, cyberstalking, child pornography, and cyber hate are illegal (Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

### **Types of Cyberbullying**

In addition to threatening, spreading rumors and lies, exclusion, or embarrassing or impersonating (masquerading) others, there are several other types of cyberbullying

that occur within these mediums. Flaming is mean spirited personal attacks and interactions while harassment is illegal hostility based on gender, race, age, or sexual preference. Denigration means to demean or disrespect in a variety of formats. This is the most common type of cyberbullying (Chang et al., 2013). Outing and trickery are related to each other. A victim is tricked into revealing personal information, which is then shared with others; the bully has malicious intent in doing so. Finally, there is cyberstalking, which is just like stalking in that the victim is repeatedly harassed or threatened in attempts to hurt or scare the victim; this just occurs in an electronic format (Bauman, 2010).

### **Cyberbully Characteristics**

Cyberbullies tend to be those who seek a higher social status, though they are usually already a part of the in-crowd. They usually come from upper class families and would not be associated with traditional bullying. Other cyberbullies are seeking revenge, particularly if they are victims of traditional bullying. Cyberbullying is viewed as a “safer” way of retaliating because there is not a need to be physically dominant like in traditional bullying, and the perpetrators are often spared from seeing the effects of their bullying on the victims (Bauman, 2010). Twenty-four percent of students ages 8 to 17 reported being a cyberbully at some time in their lives, and 25.7% said they were cyberbully/victims in the last three months, especially if they felt anger or frustration due to stress (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012; as cited in Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

In relation to traditional bullying, students who are traditional bullies are more likely to also cyberbully due to viewing any type of aggression as a normal response

(Burton, Florell, & Wygant, 2013). This could be due to being exposed to aggression in the home or because cyberbullies are more likely to play mature violent-rich video games (Dittrick et al., 2013). Unlike traditional bullying, there is more conflicting research about whether girls are more often cyberbullies (Cheng et al., 2011; Burton et al., 2012). Also, among middle and high school students, minorities tend to participate in cyberbullying more often, and older students (eighth graders and twelfth graders) more than younger students (sixth and seventh graders and ninth through eleventh graders) (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011; Bauman et al., 2013).

The middle school cyberbullies are also more likely to drink alcohol than traditional middle school bullies, while the high school cyberbullies are more likely to engage in risky Internet behaviors such as sharing passwords, talking to strangers, and posting personal information (Peleg-Oren, Cardenas, Comerford, & Galeas, 2012; Chang et al., 2013).

### **Cyberbully Victim Characteristics**

Twenty-three and eight-tenths percent of students reported being victimized in the last three months and 25.7% reported being cyberbullies and cybervictims (Mishna et al., 2012), with girls being more likely to report being victimized rather than boys and high school seniors being more likely to be victimized than any other grade level (Bauman et al., 2013). In addition, past research has reported that students who are victims of traditional bullying are more likely to also be victims of cyberbullying (Burton et al., 2013).

Cyberbullying victims are frequently characterized as those with low academic performance and those who are different from other students due to appearance and

socioeconomic status (Chang et al., 2013; Weber & Pelfrey, 2014). They also tend to be more likely be depressed, helpless, stressed, and antisocial, live in a negative family environment, and have less school commitment (Guo, 2016).

### **Effects of Cyberbullying**

The same effects that traditional bullying can have on victims are present for cyberbullying victims, such as anger, yet the fear that cyberbullying victims feel is also a result of sometimes not knowing their attackers. Boys are more likely to respond with fear and girls with frustration and not understanding why they are being targeted (Adams, 2010). In addition, the embarrassment that is felt can be a result of mean spirited posts or having personal or distorted pictures posted or texted to a large audience. The hopelessness that is felt is a result of the difficulty in stopping the attack (especially since those cyberbullied in high school are 3.11 times more likely to experience cyberbullying in college than their counterparts who did not experience cyberbullying in high school (Beran, Rinaldi, Bickham, & Rich, 2012)). Additionally, there is an inability to escape because emails and texts can be sent and updated at any time.

The bullying can also lead to the victims being distracted and unable to concentrate on their schoolwork, which can lead to absenteeism and/or low academic achievement (Bauman, 2010). Some more severe effects could include anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and thoughts of suicide.

According to Marilyn Campbell et al. (2013), there is very little research on the effects of cyberbullying on the bullies, so the researchers conducted a study of 3,000 Australian students from the ages of 9 to 19. In the study, 8.9% of those surveyed admitted to cyberbullying others. These students were reported to have more discipline

problems, more cases of hyperactivity and emotional problems (anxiety and depression), and negative peer relationships.

### **Approaches to Stopping Cyberbullying**

**Student approaches.** Leandra Parris, Kris Varjas, Joel Meyers, and Hayley Cutts (2012) interviewed 20 high school students to evaluate how they dealt with or felt they would deal with being cyberbullied. The researchers created three categories from the students' answers. The categories were reactive coping, preventive coping, or believing there was no way to stop the cyberbullying. Reactive coping includes avoidance, acceptance, justification, and seeking social support. It involves attempting to stop the cyberbullying from continuing. Ignoring the bullying is a popular response (Weber & Pelfrey, 2015).

Prevention coping involves taking steps to stop the cyberbullying from occurring, such as talking to people in person rather than communicating via electronic communication, so tone is not misconstrued. They also suggested increased security and awareness of safety measures to take when using technology, such as not sharing passwords with others (Those involved in cyberbullying were reported to be more likely to share their passwords with others (Mishna et al., 2012).). Those who felt nothing could be done felt that there would be no consequences for the cyberbullies because they can remain anonymous and bypass electronic restrictions.

Not all of these methods are positive ways of coping with cyberbullying. Victims must be taught how to properly respond to being cyberbullied. They must not immediately delete messages but learn to capture the bullying for evidence, such as through taking a screen shot, so the cyberbullying can be shared with an adult (Adams,

2010). Students should also set higher privacy settings because several teachers noted that the students who were most often cyberbullied were the ones with low privacy settings (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014). Another method is a tool that Facebook is developing. The tool is a button entitled “this is a problem”, which allows users to report posts that are mean or threatening. “Clicking the new button takes users through a questionnaire to rank their emotions and see how serious the problem is. Users then get a list of suggestions on how to resolve the issue based on how serious the complaint is” (as cited by Kipper & Ramey, p. 83-84, 2013).

One of the best strategies to combat cyberbullying is positive peer pressure since students usually do not feel adults are knowledgeable about technology and because Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin (2013) reported that students who claimed that their friends cyberbullied were more likely to also engage in the behavior. Peers can encourage bullies to stop bullying by not offering an audience and voicing their disapproval as well as not passing on inappropriate messages or pictures (Adams, 2010).

**Parental approaches.** Parents have an even more important role in preventing or stopping cyberbullying than traditional bullying because cyberbullying most often occurs outside of school. High school students are more likely to tell their parents (their mothers) rather than a teacher (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014). There are several reasons why students (particularly middle school students) do not report incidents of being cyberbullied to their parents.

One reason is that students view their teachers and parents as unknowledgeable about cyberbullying. In one study, 50% of students were involved in cyberbullying, yet only 23.4% said their parents supervised their Internet use, and 26.9% reported their

parents have parental controls on their Internet usage. In a survey of 221 middle school students, cyberbullies and cybervictims were four times more likely to live in households where the caretakers did not have their passwords for their Internet communications. This could be because the same students reported that 47% of caregivers never sent text messages and 42% never used email (Bauman, 2010), so students may perceive if their caregivers do not use the technology, they are not knowledgeable enough about technology to prevent its negative aspects such as cyberbullying. Another reason that children do not report cyberbullying to their parents is fear of their reaction. In focus groups of middle and high school students, one of the middle school students knew that it was best to report cyberbullying to her parents but was afraid they would get angry and remove her technology or report it to the school, which could worsen the situation (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014).

Parents must be aware of the types of cyberbullying, signs of cyberbullying, and prevention methods because if students perceive adults as knowledgeable, they are more likely to report bullying to their parents. Additionally, in a survey of 301 sixth-grade students, Denise and Michael Accordino (2011) reported that students who reported a close relationship with their parents were .25 times less likely to experience cyberbullying with each increasing degree of reported closeness. It is important that parents not only have a strong relationship of open communication with their child but are also educated in the most effective ways of addressing cyberbullying with their child to help their child cope and stop the bullying but not exacerbate the situation.

Some ways that parents can intervene include: knowledge of parental controls available with Internet and cell phone service providers, knowledge of instant messaging

and text language, and monitor their child's computer and cell phone usage through such means as checking their child's computer and cell phone histories and usage amounts or becoming friends with their children on social networking sites (Bogacz & Gordillo, 2011). This parental power should only be used for safety concerns and not simply to fulfill curiosity. Parents should not only be aware of the usage but of the websites their children are visiting as well as other online communication (Kipper & Ramey, 2013). Ultimately, it is important that parents build relationships with their children that foster respect, trust, and nonviolence as the norms (Dittrick et. al, 2013).

If parents become aware that their child is cyberbullying another person, the first step is to have the child apologize. Secondly, parents should try to change social patterns by encouraging new interests and a new social group. If punishment is implemented, it should be more positive such as removal of privileges or technology rather than physical punishment, so children have an opportunity to earn back trust. Parents should work with school officials to develop a plan to replace negative behavior with positive behavior (Kipper & Ramey, 2013).

**School approaches.** Though cyberbullying tends to occur more frequently outside schools, school personnel must play a role in stopping or preventing it because the effects can carry into the school environment, or incidents, which began in school, may escalate into cyberbullying (Mishna et al., 2012). However, in general, students are less likely to report cyberbullying to teachers or administrators; Sheri Bauman's (2010) research reported only 12% of the middle school students surveyed would report cyberbullying to an educator.

One reason is that the students do not perceive the educators to be knowledgeable

enough or capable of stopping the punishment, which may be true according to research from Wanda Cassidy, Karen Brown, and Margaret Jackson (2012). While 59% of the Canadian secondary teachers surveyed felt concerned about cyberbullying in their schools, only about 1% were able to identify more than one incident of cyberbullying at their schools. This is despite the fact that 36% of students in the schools admitted to cyberbullying and 32% reported being victimized.

Another reason is because when it occurred at school, it was usually through text messages, and it is against school policy to use cell phones during school. Students felt that teachers were not free to handle situations on a case-by-case basis but instead have to follow strict protocols, which often would involve disciplinary actions for the victim and the perpetrator (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014). The law still can be perceived as vague, making it difficult to prosecute perpetrators under the new legislation. For example, in *United States vs. Drew*, Lori Drew's conviction of the unauthorized use of a computer was thrown out of court, even though she created a fake Myspace account, courted the classmate (Megan Meier) of her daughter, and convinced 13-year-old Megan to kill herself. The avoidance of criminal prosecution was due to the courts believing there was not clear evidence of Drew knowing what computer service violations entailed (Stewart & Fritsch, 2011).

Further studies have shown that students are more likely to cyberbully in classrooms where the teacher is likely to intervene in traditional bullying; this may be due to the ability to cyberbully covertly (Christian et al., 2013). It was also reported that if students thought educators would take cyberbullying seriously and punish the offenders, they were less likely to participate in the behavior (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

To combat the problem of cyberbullying, a comprehensive, school-wide program works best. It should include the following characteristics: (a) Do not ban electronics. (b) Teach and model digital citizenship and socially responsible behavior. (c) Clearly communicate the consequences of and effects of cyberbullying. (d) Stay abreast of the ever-changing nature of technology and modify the program to stay on target with such changes. (e) Make focus on combatting cyberbullying a daily part of the educational routine (Couvillon & Llieva, 2011). Many of the interventions used for traditional bullying can also be used:

1. Lessons: Teachers must make cyberbullying a part of character education lessons. Students tend to not have a clear understanding of the definition of cyberbullying, so education is important, so they will not unknowingly engage in harmful behavior. The lessons should include clear, actual examples and actions that should be taken if cyberbullying is occurring to the students or someone they know as well as preventive methods such as privacy settings and responsible posting. To truly be effective, the lessons should be repeated every few months as a constant reminder (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014).

2. Mentorship: A peer mentor program has also proven effective in helping cyberbullying victims. In such a program, an older student is paired with a younger student who has suffered from cyberbullying. The mentor is trained in helping students have an outlet, so they do not have to suffer alone by using such means as sharing stories of other victims, setting up role playing scenarios, and answering questions. The mentor also provides methods for victims to speak up and resolve or deescalate conflict (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011).

3. Non-punitive approaches. Suspending a student or removing him or her from the situation is not always the best method of addressing the bullying behaviors because the student does not have the opportunity to engage in positive interactions or methods of dealing with conflict. Many students' support base is with their peer groups, so removing a bully can make him or her feel further isolation and lead to more negative behaviors (Bauman et al., 2013). Several non-punitive actions can help stop the cyberbullying from continuing or occurring.

One such method is brief solution-focused individual counseling (BSFC). The counselor helps the bully or victim, who has been referred, "focus on times when the problem does not exist, build on client strengths, and envision life without the problem" (Bauman, 2010, p. 112). The bully can learn strategies to deal with the pressure or urge to bully or the reasons behind the bullying, and the victim can learn what to do when facing a bully. The school could also accomplish this goal by forming support groups.

Another method is the method of shared concern. This is meant for situations where there is more than one bully or a main bully and instigators or supporters of the bully, which lead to the continuance of the bullying. The counselor or administrator would gather information through observations and reports without interviewing the victim, so the victim is not labeled as the informant. After the initial investigation, the counselor would speak with each bully or instigator separately and address the concerns the counselor is aware of, express concern about the effect the bullying is having on the victim and guide the bullies and informants into thinking of solutions to make things better. The counselor or administrator then meets with the victim and discusses with the victim any possible things the victim may have done to contribute to the bullying. After

some time, there is a meeting with the bullies and instigators to assess progress, and a meeting with the victim and/or written agreements may or may not be the next step (Bauman, 2010).

Empathy training is another method. The intent of such a method is to stop the bullying by creating a sense of empathy on the part of the bully towards the victim. Mustafa Sahin (2012) reported such training to have a profound effect on the bullying habits and empathy skills of bullies in research conducted with 61 sixth-grade students. The 38 bully students in the experimental group participated in 10 sessions that employed a variety of strategies (i.e. lectures, role-playing, homework, group work, and videos) to help students understand the different types of emotions people can experience, the dominant emotions in their lives, and perception. The 38 students in the experimental group showed a significant decrease in bullying behaviors in comparison to the 23 students identified as bullies in the control group who did not receive empathy training. The results remained the same in the follow-up survey conducted 60 days after the training ended.

4. Adult education: Despite such measures, cyberbullying still occurs, and it becomes the school's responsibility to deal with the victims as well as the bullies. For parents of victims, counselors can conduct parent workshops to teach parents practices to help students recover from the bullying. The school should also respond in an empathetic and concerned manner where the parents feel validated and reassured that the school will address the problem within their scope, whether punitively or non-punitively. In dealing with parents of the bullies, the school must show parents that they understand despite the child's negative actions, the child is not a bad person, and the school should offer ways

they will help the child stop the behavior as well as the consequences of their behavior. The parents of victims and bullies should receive regular follow up reports as well as information for resources outside of school (Bauman, 2010).

The education of adults must also extend to the school faculty and staff. In a survey of 300 educators in Israel, while 70% were concerned about cyberbullying and considered it a major problem, about 60% felt comfortable managing it. Of those surveyed, 68% wanted to learn more tools to manage the problem (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013).

5. Anti-bullying policy: A policy should be clearly written to not only address bullying but also cyberbullying, specifically. The policy should be developed by a committee consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, so all parties will respect the policy. It should also be flexible to lend itself to revision and/or additions as technology evolves. A clause should be included in this policy, so students and parents are aware that the school has the obligation to protect all students and ensure a safe environment. This policy should be discussed with students, so they understand what constitutes cyberbullying and the consequences, and they should sign a form to show understanding and compliance with the policy (Bauman & Pero, 2011).

Constant reminders are necessary, which can come in the form of placing the policy in newsletters, handbooks, and on school computers and websites (Bauman & Pero, 2011). Perpetrators must understand that schools can impose discipline on students for cyberbullying activity. It is very important that a policy not only be in place but be enforced to establish respect as the norm and encourage reporting of incidents (Chang et al., 2013). Teachers should have an anti-bullying policy for their classrooms. Teachers

should monitor students when using technology at school. One way of doing this is to periodically have students print their browsing history (Bauman, 2010).

6. Develop a positive school/classroom climate: Schools should develop an environment of trust, support, and respect, which must also be modeled, by the administrators and teachers, so students and bystanders feel comfortable reporting incidents, and bullies stop negative behavior. School/classroom climate can further be enhanced by helping students create a connection to their school. Schools should encourage peer attachment by providing a variety of means for students to get involved with their school because cyberbully victims and perpetrators are more likely to feel disconnected from their peers (Burton et al., 2012). Involvement in school activities can redirect bullies from bullying behavior, positively foster the need for status that those who bully may yearn for and the victims may need, and help students get to know each other, which enables them to focus on how much they are alike versus their differences. (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014; Fanti & Henrich, 2015).

### **Summary**

Though the incidents of traditional bullying are greater than the reported incidents of cyberbullying, cyberbullying is a growing issue for all ages as the dependency on technology continues to grow. This is evidenced in the research conducted by Fay Mishna et al. (2012) in which 50% of the participants admitted involvement in cyberbullying as the victim, perpetrator, or both. Due to the anonymity, technology provides as well as the inability for victims to see the direct impact of the bullying on their victims, it stands to have even greater negative consequences than traditional bullying. Much of the limited research on cyberbullying either is from outside of the

United States or focuses on students in elementary or middle school. With incidents of cyberbullying also being reported in college and the workplace, it is important to continue to research cyberbullying in high school as well and continue interventions at this level. This argument is further supported by the research conducted by Sigal Eden et al. (2013). They reported that of the 300 educators surveyed in Israel, the teachers of elementary students were more confident in managing bullying than those of older students (Eden et al.). As indicated in the review, the effect of being cyberbullied or cyberbullying can affect all aspects of a person's life.

### **Research Questions**

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying among students at a southeastern high school?
2. To what extent will the incidents of high school students being cyberbullied at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying preventions and interventions?
3. To what extent will the percentage of high school students participating in cyberbullying at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying interventions and preventions?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter addresses the rationale for using a quantitative research study to gather data about the prevalence of cyberbullying incidents and implement interventions to attempt to reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying at a school in the southeastern United States. The instrument that was used to collect data as well as the participants in the study are discussed. Additionally, data collection procedures and how the study was conducted are discussed prior to an analysis of the limitations.

### **Participants**

The target population was high school students in the United States. The sample population was a nonprobability convenience sample. The population was high school students in grades 9-12, and the target population was comprised of students between the ages of 14 and 18 in grades 9-12, from a public high school located in a suburban area of the southeastern United States. The school's population is 3,145 students (653 seniors, 683 juniors, 857 sophomores, and 952 freshmen). Twenty-eight percent of the student population is White, 25% Hispanic, 29% Black, 13% Asian, and 5% Multiracial ("Georgia School Reports", 2018). The sample population included 512 students for the pre-survey and 498 for the post-survey. These students had an advisement class and returned a parent consent form and a student consent form, which constitutes a convenience sample (Crewell, 2012).

### **Instruments**

A pre-survey was administered to determine if students had cyberbullied or been cyberbullied. The survey was developed by Drs. Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja

(2010), and the researcher was given permission to use the survey (Appendix A). The questions asked the students if they had experienced any of nine cyberbullying behaviors or participated in any of five different cyberbullying behaviors. The response set for these questions was never, once or twice, a few times, many times, or every day. The time line for the questions was the last 30 days, during the semester (one month), during the school year (one month for the pre-survey and six month for the post-survey), during their lifetime, or never.

Patchin and Hinduja (2010) tested the survey for reliability by comparing results to a pretest of a similar sample. The reliability coefficient for the cyberbullying victim part of the survey was .736; the cyberbullying behaviors part of the survey had a reliability coefficient of .761. Patchin and Hinduja tested for validity by using factor analysis. The cyberbullying victim and offender items all loaded on one factor. The pre-survey was normed based on previous research of similar populations.

After the implementation of the cyberbullying interventions, the students were administered the same survey as a post-survey to determine if students had cyberbullied or been victimized since the interventions.

## **Procedures**

**Design.** This quantitative research was non-experimental and utilized a trend longitudinal survey design to record data about the students' cyberbullying practices. The researcher collected data about the trend of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of cyberbullying interventions on the trend. A survey was used because according to Creswell (2012), surveys are the best tool to use for determining trends and evaluating the effectiveness of programs. The survey was also best since the researcher was seeking

high response rates from participants. The trend longitudinal survey design was used because the researcher collected data about the same group of students over time (2012).

The interventions were focused on the following areas: awareness, effects, consequences, resources for help, and digital citizenship. The school taught advisement lessons on Tuesdays of each week. The 8-cyberbullying advisement lessons were 20-25 minutes each and were taught twice per month, for a four-month period. The pre-survey was administered in September and the post-survey in February.

The researcher administered a consent form (Appendix C) for parents, which explained the study's purpose and the survey tool that would be used to gather data. Parents were initially given one-week to return the forms, but due to a low number of submissions, the deadline was extended for an additional week. Students whose parents returned a consent form for participation in the study were given a student assent form (Appendix D), which also explained the purpose of the study and how data would be collected. Students were given the option to sign the assent form in the meeting with the researcher; those who wanted more time to consider participation were given until the end of the week to return the form. A question board was posted on the school's eCLASS homepage for students to ask questions. Only those students who returned parent consent forms could access the question board.

Those who returned the assent form began meeting with the researcher the last week in September. The meetings were held during the students' advisement period (There were four advisement periods.) in the theater. At the first meeting, the researcher administered a pre-survey (Appendix B) to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying in the sample population. The survey was developed by Drs. Justin Patchin and Sameer

Hinduja (2010). The questions asked the students if they had experienced any of nine cyberbullying behaviors or participated in any of five different cyberbullying behaviors. The response set for these questions were: never, once or twice, a few times, many times, or every day. The time line for the questions was the last 30 days, during the period of the semester (one month), during the period of the school year (one month), during their lifetime, or never. The students had 20 minutes to complete the survey. The advisement period duration was 25-minutes, but it took five minutes for students to arrive and for the researcher to read the survey directions.

The school's media specialist had several display tables in the media center with books dedicated to specific topics (Appendix E). Beginning the first week in October, the researcher (with the media specialist's permission) created a display table dedicated to cyberbullying. Books on such topics as social media, social media etiquette, bullying, and cyberbullying were included in the display. There were 24 books, with six displayed at a time for a period of one month each.

Additionally, one of the bulletin boards in the cafeteria was dedicated to cyberbullying (Appendix F). It included resources for cyberbully victims, cyberbullying examples, tips for bystanders, a cyberbullying pledge, and information on digital citizenship. The researcher also posted flyers (from [stop.think.connect.org](http://stop.think.connect.org)) in the bathrooms and stairwells. The flyers provided quick tips about how students can be responsible digital citizens. The media center display table, bulletin board in the cafeteria, and flyers were on display from October through January.

The school's scrolling announcements are shown in every advisement class Monday-Thursday. Each week, a word of the day is displayed that includes the word and

definition. From October through January, the word of the day related to cyberbullying (Appendix G).

Students who returned a parental consent form and student assent form were given a pass each time to come to the theater during advisement. Interventions for the sample population began with a lesson during the second week of October. It focused on awareness. The lesson included a PowerPoint, which defined bullying and the types of bullying, including cyberbullying. Additionally, the students learned the difference between cyberbullying and traditional bullying, the modes of cyberbullying, and the types. Each student had a Chromebook to view the presentation. The researcher put the presentation in a Nearpod, so the pace of the slide show could be controlled. Each slide was read and students were able to ask questions. The lesson also included the students completing a self-evaluation to determine if they were cyberbullies. This was done anonymously on paper and not turned in to the researcher. Once the self-evaluation was complete, the researcher displayed the last slide of the presentation which reminded the students of the Golden Rule (Treat others the way you want to be treated.)

The second lesson was the fourth week in October. It also focused on awareness. The lesson was titled “Turn down the Dial on Cyberbullying” (2017). Students watched Ricardo’s story. The researcher then asked the students to identify the factors that contribute to cyberbullying. Next, the students watched Stacey’s story and identified the role that various characters in the story played. The students then completed a handout on which they identify three ways Stacey’s story escalated and how each could have been deescalated. The students were then asked to share their responses. The researcher ended the lesson by displaying the word of the day (cyberbully) and reviewing the definition

and sample sentence. The students were also encouraged to read the books on the cyberbullying display table in the media center.

Due to the short duration of December and final exams, there were three lessons in November and one in December. The second and third months focused on effects and prevention. Lesson 3 was the first Tuesday in November. The lesson was titled “Taking Perspectives on Cyberbullying” (2017). Students watched a scenario from the television show *Friday Night Lights*. The researcher put the video in a tool called edPuzzle. This allowed the students to watch the video at their own pace, but the researcher was able to embed discussion questions throughout the video to help students analyze what they were watching. After the students watched the video and answered the questions, they were randomly divided into groups. Each group was given a different character from the video. They brainstormed different alternatives each character could have made. They recorded their answers on butcher paper and shared with the rest of the group.

The fourth lesson was the second Tuesday in November. It was titled “Silencing Cyberbullies: Advice for Prevention and Intervention of Cyberbullying”. It was from the National Crime Prevention Council. The presentation began with prevention strategies. After going over the slides, the students took a poll using Poll Everywhere. The anonymous poll included each of the prevention strategies mentioned. The students were asked to select the strategies they had had tried. They were then asked to select the ones they would try. The second half of the presentation focused on intervention strategies. The focus was on Stop, Block, and Tell and included a video clip promoting this same message. At the conclusion of the lesson, the students came up with ideas for what they should/could do if someone they know is cyberbullying others or is the victim of

cyberbullying. The students added their answers in a tool called Answer Garden. Their answers formed a word cloud. The researcher printed a copy of the word cloud for each student in the sample. They received the copy at the last November session and were encouraged to tape it to their binders.

The fifth lesson was the fourth Tuesday in November. It was titled The “ABCs of Cyberbullying” (Agatson, 2011). The presentation went from A to Z with strategies for preventing or intervening in cyberbullying. It was put in the student-paced version of Nearpod. The students were given the access code and viewed the presentation on either Chromebooks or their own device. The students were given the handout of the ABCs of Cyberbullying. At the end of the lesson, the researcher displayed the word of the week (impersonation) and reviewed the definition and sample sentence. The students were also encouraged to read the six books on the cyberbullying display table.

The third month focused on consequences. The final lesson for the semester was the first Tuesday in December. Lesson 6 was titled “Private Today, Public Tomorrow” (2016). At the beginning of the lesson, the students anonymously responded to the following question on a Padlet: How can people’s reputations be affected by what is posted about them online? What impact could this have on their futures? The teacher shared some of the answers. Next, the students were shown a picture of a girl holding a cup. They were then asked to come up with captions for the picture. The teacher then asked what their reaction would be if the caption said “Always Drunk.” They were then asked what their reaction would be if the caption was “Happy Halloween” or “Always Smiling”. Finally, the students then read an article about Stacy Synder and discussed the effects of her photos being taken out of context. At the end of the lesson, the students

were given a handout of ways to react to cyberbullying. The students were asked to share some of the suggestions that stood out to them.

During the second Friday in December, the school scheduled an assembly with the district attorney's office. Due to the size of the theater, only freshman and sophomores attended the assembly during their advisement period. Juniors and seniors watched it via closed-circuit television. The students were made aware of cases of cyberbullying the attorneys had faced in the county and the outcomes of the cases. They also discussed other legal ramifications of cyberbullying for students and their parents. The assembly concluded with a time for students to ask questions. The students received a handout entitled "Cyberbullying Tips for Teens" (2017).

The fourth month (January) focused on resources and digital citizenship. An electronic brochure for students (Appendix H) was made available on the school's homepage of the district learning management system (eCLASS). An electronic brochure for parents (Appendix I) was made available on the school's webpage. It was also promoted at the monthly Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. The seventh lesson entitled "College Bound" (2016) focused on the possible future consequences that social media posts can have. It was the second Tuesday in January. The students learned about their digital footprint and then watched a video about Abba's story, which explains how to create a positive social media presence. The students then got into small groups (4-5) and were given two admissions packets. Based on the information, the students selected one student to admit and shared why. At the conclusion of the lesson, they created a list of adjectives they would like someone to perceive from their online presence.

The eighth and final lesson was the third and fourth Tuesday in January. Due to the duration of the lesson (40 minutes), it was done over two advisement sessions. It was titled Digital Citizenship. For day one of the lesson, the students were divided into groups of 8-10. They were given four scenarios. For each scenario, the students discussed the following questions: Is this an example of being a good digital citizen? Why or why not? What are the rights and/or responsibilities being demonstrated (or not) in each scenario? What possible consequences (good and bad) may occur because of the actions in each scenario? What would you do differently (if anything) to make this scenario an example of being a good digital citizen? At the conclusion of the lesson, the researcher reviewed the word of the week's (digital citizenship) definition and sample sentence. The students were also encouraged to read the six books on the media center cyberbullying display.

For the second session, the students chose one of the remaining eight scenarios. The researcher had already made the scenarios poster-sized. The students answered the same questions as last time for their scenario. They used sticky notes to post their answers to the questions. The students then did a gallery walk to read the group's responses to the other scenarios. At the conclusion of the lesson, the students shared three things they learned and/or would implement from the lessons. They anonymously shared their answers on a Padlet.

The second Tuesday in February, a post-survey was administered to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying in the sample population. It was the same as the pre-survey. The difference between the pre and post responses was used to determine effectiveness of the interventions.

**Data analysis.** Using Zipgrade (a statistical software application), a descriptive statistical analysis was used to interpret the results of the pre- and post- surveys to obtain an understanding of the prevalence of cyberbullying amongst the sample. The difference between the pre and post results was also calculated.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to identify the prevalence of cyberbullying in a high school. After identifying the prevalence, the researcher implemented several interventions with a sample population to identify if said interventions would be effective in decreasing the incidents of those cyberbullying and those victimized. Initially, 269 parents returned consent forms. However, after the one-week extension to submit forms, 537 total consent forms were submitted. During the meeting with the students who had consent forms, 502 assent forms were returned. By the end of the week, the researcher had 515 student assent forms for participation in the study (16% of the total target population). There were four advisement sessions with 75 participants in A Advisement, 118 in B Advisement, 243 in C Advisement, and 79 in D Advisement.

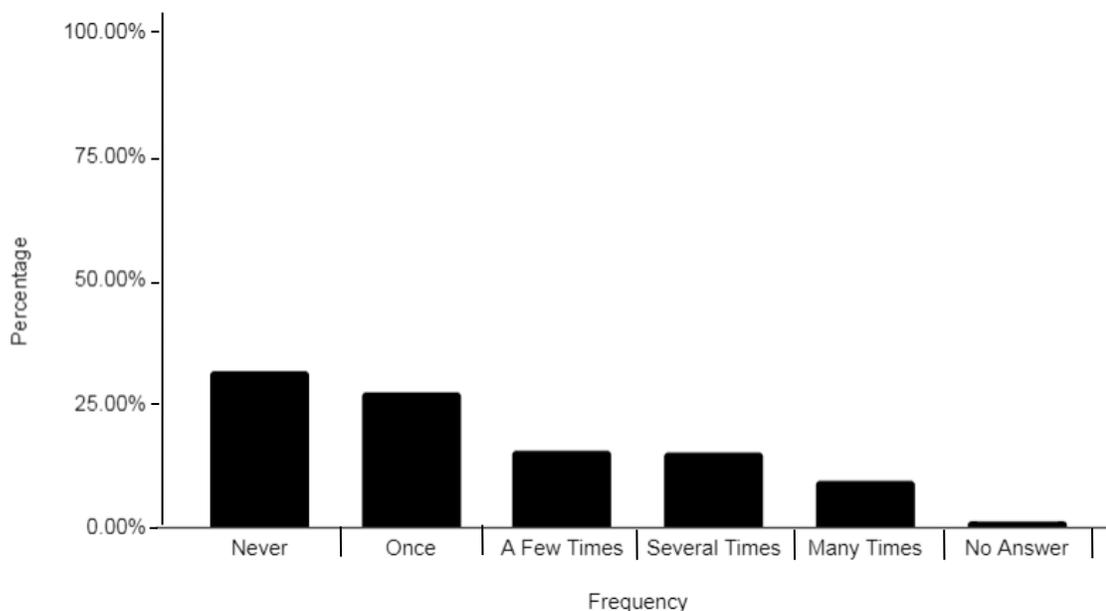
A pre and post-survey were the instruments used to collect data. It was divided four subcategories (demographics, cyberbullying victims, cyberbullies, bystanders) based on a time span. Research Question 1 pertained to the prevalence of cyberbullying (victims and perpetrators) in the school. There were significantly more respondents who had witnessed cyberbullying than those who had cyberbullied or been victimized. Research Questions 2 and 3 pertained to the extent to which the prevalence of cyberbullying was affected due to the implementation of interventions.

### **Pre-Survey Demographic Characteristics**

On the surveys, there were two questions related to the demographics of the students (gender and grade level). Five-hundred and twelve eligible participants took the

pre-survey. Of those who took the pre-survey, 49.7% ( $n = 254$ ) were female and 47.9% ( $n = 245$ ) were male. The remaining 2.4% ( $n = 13$ ) did not choose male or female. Grade level was the second question asked. Thirty and four-tenths percent ( $n = 156$ ) were sophomores, 28.4% ( $n = 145$ ) freshman, 23.1% juniors ( $n = 118$ ), and 15.9% seniors ( $n = 81$ ). Two and two-tenths percent ( $n = 12$ ) did not respond to this question or did not choose one of the four answers related to grade level.

**Research Question 1. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying among students at a southeastern high school?** The students were asked about three roles related to cyberbullying: bystanders, victims, and perpetrators. The students were first asked about their role as bystanders (Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Pre-survey: Bystander Experience. This figure illustrates the prevalence of the respondents seeing others cyberbullied.

Based on the pre-survey responses, more students had seen someone be cyberbullied than not. Thirty-one and six-tenths of the respondents ( $n = 162$ ) had never seen someone be cyberbullied and 1.10% ( $n = 6$ ) did not answer the question. On the

other hand, 67.3% ( $n = 345$ ) had seen someone being cyberbullied. Of that number, 27.30% ( $n = 140$ ) experienced the cyberbullying of another once, 15.60% ( $n = 80$ ) a few times, 15.10% ( $n = 77$ ) several times, and 9.30% ( $n = 48$ ) many times.

For the next subcategory of questions, the students were asked the prevalence of them participating in cyberbullying or being victimized (Figure 2.).

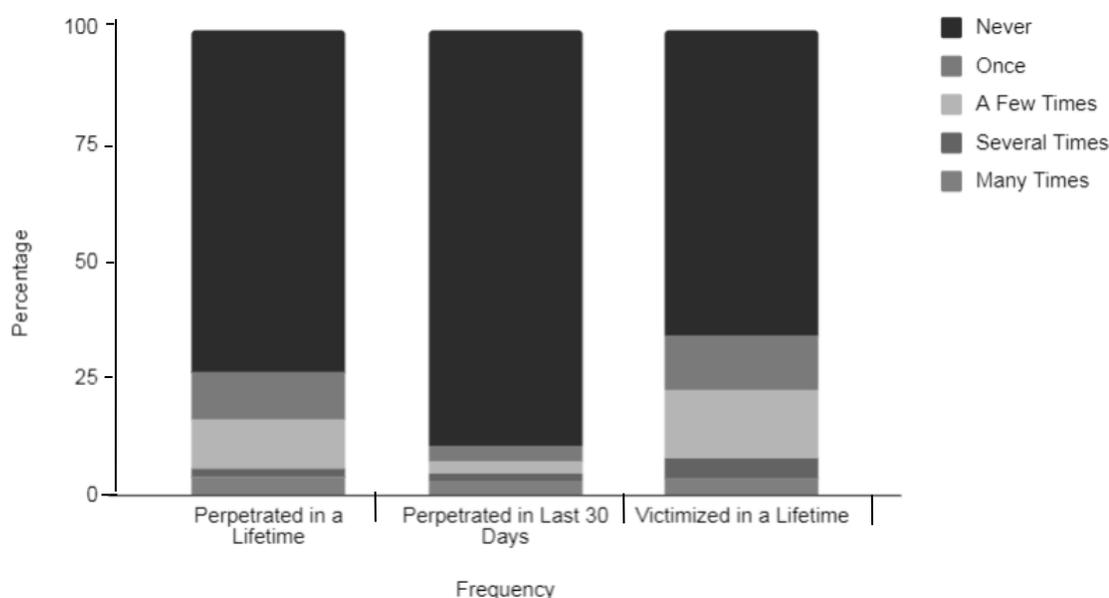


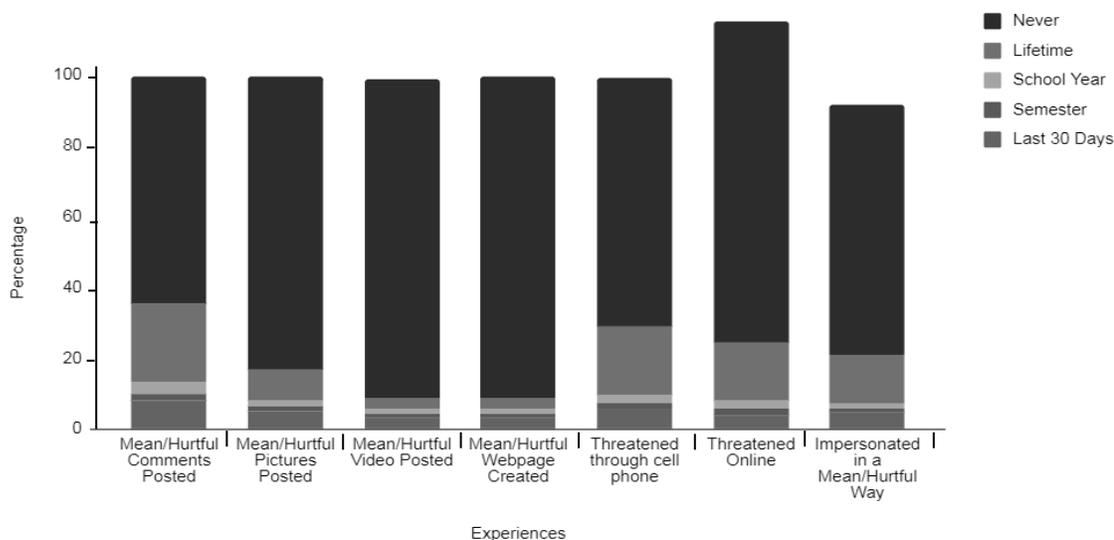
Figure 2. Pre-survey: Perpetrator or Victim Experience. This figure illustrates the respondents' experiences and frequency as a perpetrator or victim of cyberbullying.

As perpetrator and victim, the respondents had a higher frequency of not cyberbullying or being cyberbullied. Of the 512 students who took the pre-survey, 73.10% ( $n = 374$ ) never cyberbullied, 88.60% ( $n = 454$ ) had not cyberbullied in the last 30 days, and 65.10% ( $n = 333$ ) had never been cyberbullied. Additionally, 0.6% ( $n = 3$ ) did not answer if they had perpetrated in their lifetime or the last 30 days, while 0.52% ( $n = 3$ ) did not answer if they had been victimized in their lifetime. In contrast, 26.3% ( $n = 135$ ) had perpetrated in their lifetime and 10.8% ( $n = 55$ ) in the last 30 days, while 34.38% ( $n = 176$ ) had been

victimized in their lifetime.

There were several subcategories related to the frequency of perpetration and victimization. These categories included: once, a few times, several times, and many times. Of the 135 students who had perpetrated in their lifetime, 10.20% ( $n = 52$ ) had done so once, 10.30% ( $n = 53$ ) a few times, 1.9% ( $n = 10$ ) several times, and 3.9% ( $n = 20$ ) many times. Fifty-five responded that they had perpetrated in the last 30 days, with 3.6% ( $n = 18$ ) once, 2.4% ( $n = 12$ ) a few times, 1.6% ( $n = 8$ ) several times, and 3.2% ( $n = 16$ ) many times. One-hundred and seventy-six respondents had been victimized in their lifetime. Of that number, 11.8% ( $n = 60$ ) experienced it once, 14.5% ( $n = 74$ ) a few times, 4.3% ( $n = 22$ ) several times, and 3.70% ( $n = 19$ ) many times.

The third section of questions targeted the frequency of experiencing specific cyberbullying behaviors. The frequencies included: the last 30 days, during the semester, during the school year, in their lifetime, or never (Figure 3.).



*Figure 3.* Pre-survey: Frequency of Experiences as a Victim of Cyberbullying. This figure illustrates the respondents' frequency of being cyberbullied in specific ways.

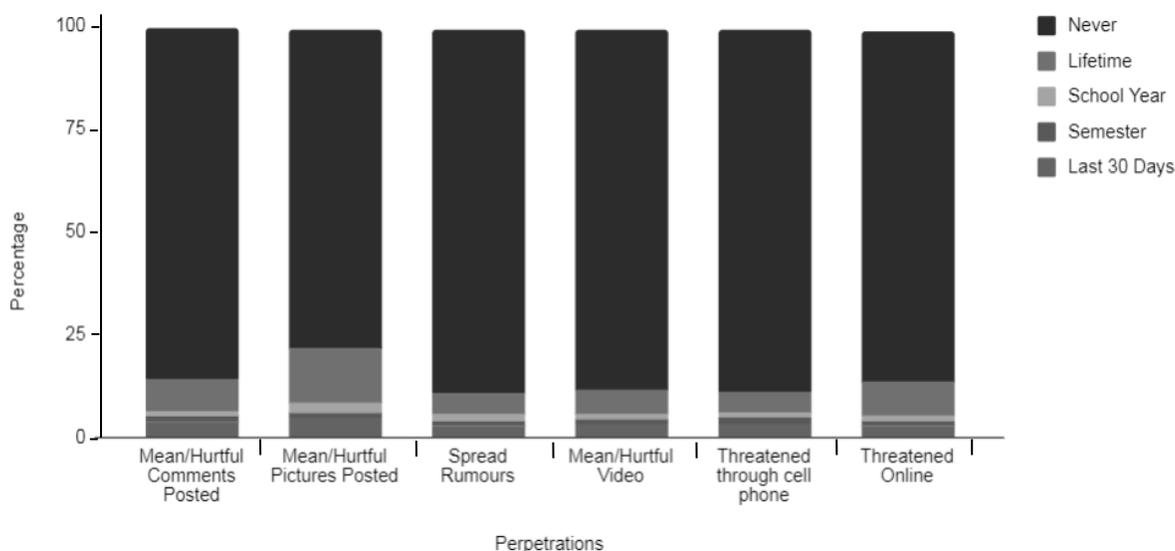
For each type of cyberbullying experience, the frequency of those who did not experience the behavior was higher than the frequency of those who experienced each behavior. The behavior most experienced was having mean/hurtful comments posted. Sixty-four and one-tenth percent ( $n = 328$ ) never experienced this victimization. However, 8.2% ( $n = 42$ ) experienced this victimization in the last 30 days, 1.9% ( $n = 10$ ) during the semester, 3.1% ( $n = 16$ ) during the school year, and 22% ( $n = 113$ ) in their lifetime.

The next behavior was having mean/hurtful pictures posted. Eighty-two and eight-tenths percent of the respondents ( $n = 424$ ) never experienced this behavior. Four and eight-tenths percent ( $n = 25$ ) experienced it in the last thirty days, 1.8% ( $n = 9$ ) during the semester, 1.5% ( $n = 7$ ) during the school year, and 8.5% ( $n = 44$ ) in their lifetime. Ninety percent of the respondents ( $n = 461$ ) never experienced having a mean/hurtful video posted, while 3.2% ( $n = 16$ ) experienced it the last 30 days, 1% ( $n = 5$ ) during the semester, 1.6% ( $n = 8$ ) during the school year, and 2.8% ( $n = 14$ ) in their lifetime. Ninety and eight-tenths percent ( $n = 465$ ) never experienced having a mean/hurtful webpage created. Three percent ( $n = 15$ ) experienced it in the last 30 days, 1.4% ( $n = 7$ ) during the semester, 1.3% ( $n = 7$ ) during the school year, and 2.9% ( $n = 15$ ) in their lifetime.

Being threatened was the next set of behaviors addressed. Seventy and four-tenths percent ( $n = 383$ ) had never been threatened via a cell phone and 75.1% ( $n = 385$ ) had never been threatened online. Being threatened via a cell phone was experienced by 5.8% of respondents ( $n = 30$ ) in the last 30 days, 1.4% ( $n = 7$ ) during the semester, 2.5% ( $n = 13$ ) during the school year, and 19% ( $n = 97$ ) in their lifetime. Of the 512 respondents, 3.7% ( $n = 19$ ) had been threatened online in the last 30 days, 2.1% ( $n = 11$ ) during the

semester, 2.3% ( $n = 12$ ) during the school year, and 16.1% ( $n = 82$ ) in their lifetime. The final experience addressed being impersonated in a mean/hurtful way. Seventy-eight and four-tenths percent ( $n = 401$ ) had never experienced this behavior, but 4.5% ( $n = 23$ ) experienced it in the last 30 days, 1.1% ( $n = 6$ ) during the semester, 1.8% ( $n = 9$ ) during the school year, and 13.5% ( $n = 69$ ) in their lifetime.

The last set of questions pertained to the frequency of cyberbullying perpetration behaviors. The frequencies included: never, the last 30 days, during the semester, during the school year, and during their lifetime (Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Pre-survey: Cyberbullying Perpetrations. This figure illustrates the frequency of cyberbullying behaviors by the bullies.

Posting mean/hurtful pictures was the behavior most perpetrated. Four and eight-tenths ( $n = 25$ ) percent of respondents participated in this behavior in the last 30 days, 1.3% ( $n = 7$ ) during the semester, 2.1% ( $n = 11$ ) during the school year, and 13.6% ( $n = 70$ ) in their lifetime. Seventy-seven and one-tenth percent ( $n = 395$ ) never perpetrated this behavior. Related to posting mean/hurtful pictures was posting mean/hurtful comments.

Three and six-tenths percent of respondents ( $n = 18$ ) had done this in the last 30 days, 1.6% ( $n = 8$ ) during the semester, 1.4% ( $n = 7$ ) during the school year, 7.8% ( $n = 40$ ) in their lifetime, and 84.9% ( $n = 435$ ) never. Posting mean/hurtful videos was also addressed. Eighty-seven and four-tenths ( $n = 447$ ) of respondents had never perpetrated this behavior, but 3.2% ( $n = 16$ ) had done so in the last 30 days, 1.3% ( $n = 7$ ) during the semester, 1% ( $n = 5$ ) during the school year, and 6.1% ( $n = 31$ ) in their lifetime.

Another behavior on the survey was spreading rumors. While 88.2% of respondents ( $n = 452$ ) had never participated in this behavior, 2.8% ( $n = 14$ ) had done so in the last 30 days, 1.2% ( $n = 6$ ) during the semester, 1.6% ( $n = 8$ ) during the school year, and 5.1% ( $n = 26$ ) in their lifetime. Threatening was the final type of cyberbullying behavior on the survey. Eighty-seven and eight-tenths of respondents ( $n = 450$ ) had never threatened someone via cell phone and 85.2% ( $n = 436$ ) had never done so online. However, 3.3% ( $n = 17$ ) had used a cell phone to threaten someone in the last 30 day days, 1.6% ( $n = 8$ ) during the semester, 1.3% ( $n = 7$ ) during the school year, and 5.1% ( $n = 26$ ) in their lifetime. Three and one-tenth percent ( $n = 16$ ) had threatened someone online in the last 30 days, 1.1% ( $n = 6$ ) during the semester, 0.9% ( $n = 5$ ) during the school year, and 8.5% ( $n = 44$ ) in their lifetime.

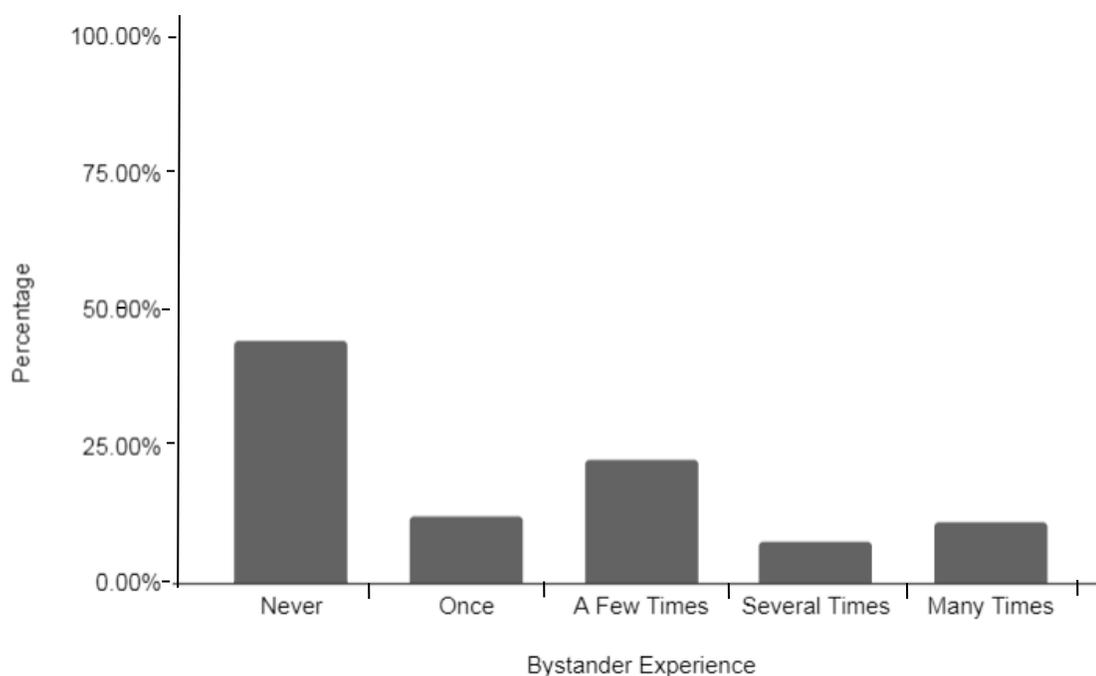
### **Post-Survey Demographic Characteristics**

The same survey was administered after the period of interventions. On the survey, there were two questions related to the demographics of the students (gender and grade level). Four hundred and ninety-eight eligible participants took the post-survey (14 less than the number of students who took the pre-survey). Of those who took the post-survey, 46.3% ( $n = 231$ ) were female and 52% ( $n = 259$ ) were male. The remaining 1.7%

( $n = 8$ ) did not choose male or female. Grade level was the second question asked.

Twenty-eight and five-tenths percent ( $n = 142$ ) were freshman, 30.7% sophomores ( $n = 153$ ), 22.4% juniors ( $n = 112$ ), and 15.5% seniors ( $n = 77$ ). Two and eight-tenths percent ( $n = 14$ ) did not respond to this question or did not choose one of the four answers related to grade level.

**Research Question 2. To what extent will the incidents of high school students being cyberbullied at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying preventions and interventions?** The students were asked about three roles related to cyberbullying: bystanders, victims, and perpetrators. The students were first asked about their role as bystanders (Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Post-survey: Bystander Experience. This figure illustrates the prevalence of the respondents seeing others cyberbullied.

Based on the post-survey responses, more students had seen someone be

cyberbullied than not. Forty-four and five-tenths of the respondents ( $n = 221$ ) had never seen someone be cyberbullied and 1.5% ( $n = 7$ ) did not answer the question. On the other hand, 54% ( $n = 269$ ) had seen someone being cyberbullied. Of that number, 12.30% ( $n = 61$ ) experienced the cyberbullying of another once, 22.80% ( $n = 114$ ) a few times, 7.8% ( $n = 39$ ) several times, and 11.10% ( $n = 55$ ) many times.

For the next subcategory of questions, the students were asked the prevalence of them participating in cyberbullying or being victimized (Figure 6).

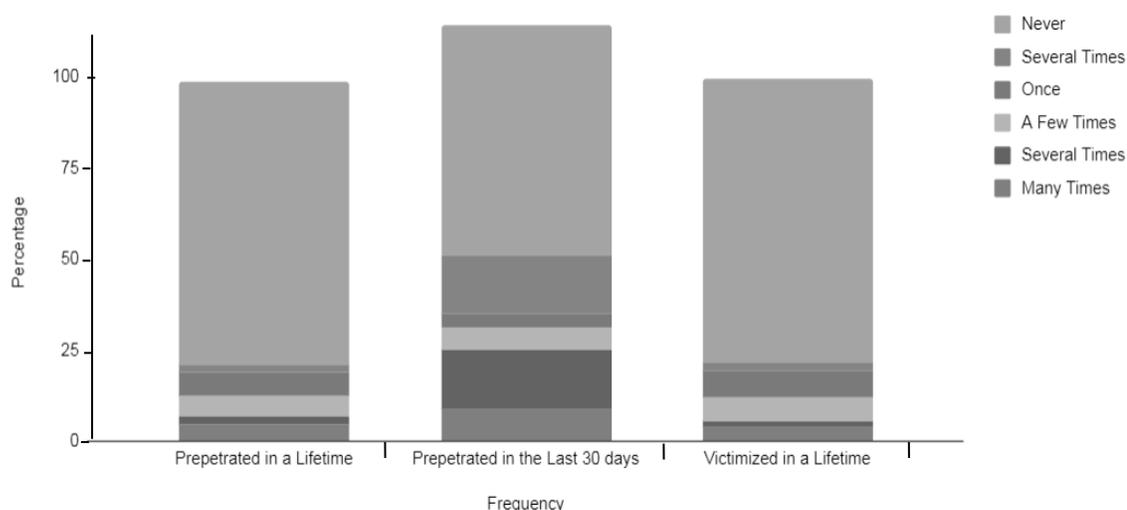


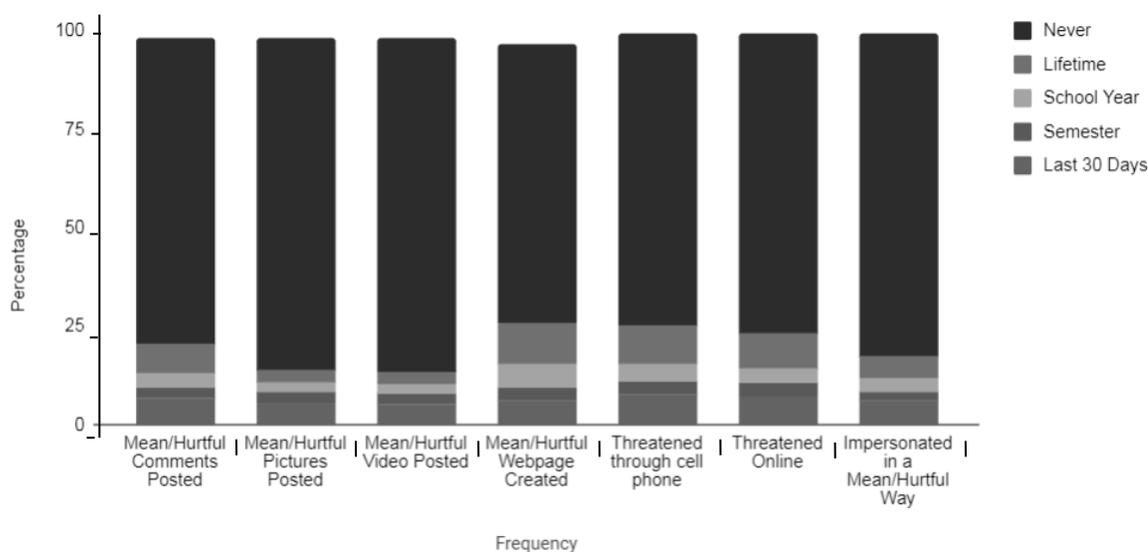
Figure 6. Post-survey: Perpetrator or Victim Experience. This figure illustrates the respondents' experiences and frequency as a perpetrator or victim of cyberbullying.

As perpetrator and victim, the respondents had a higher frequency of not cyberbullying or being cyberbullied. Of the 498 students who took the post-survey, 77.70% ( $n = 387$ ) never cyberbullied, 63.50% ( $n = 316$ ) have not cyberbullied in the last 30 days, and 77.90% ( $n = 388$ ) have never been cyberbullied. Additionally, 3.4% ( $n = 17$ ) did not answer if they had perpetrated in their lifetime, and 1.7% ( $n = 8$ ) did not answer about the last 30 days, while 2.5% ( $n = 12$ ) did not answer if they had been victimized in their lifetime. In contrast, 18.9% ( $n = 94$ ) have perpetrated in their lifetime and 34.8% ( $n =$

173) in the last 30 days, while 19.6% ( $n = 98$ ) have been victimized in their lifetime.

There were several subcategories related to the frequency of perpetration and victimization. These categories included: once, a few times, several times, and many times. Of the 94 students who had perpetrated in their lifetime, 6.4% ( $n = 32$ ) had done so once, 5.8% ( $n = 29$ ) a few times, 2% ( $n = 10$ ) several times, and 4.70% ( $n = 23$ ) many times. One-hundred and seventy-three responded that they had perpetrated in the last 30 days, with 3.6% ( $n = 18$ ) once, 6.10% ( $n = 30$ ) a few times, 16.20% ( $n = 81$ ) several times, and 8.90% ( $n = 44$ ) many times. Ninety-eight respondents had been victimized in their lifetime. Of that number, 7.4% ( $n = 37$ ) experienced it once, 6.5% ( $n = 32$ ) a few times, 2.0% ( $n = 10$ ) several times, and 3.70% ( $n = 19$ ) many times.

The third section of questions targeted the frequency of experiencing specific cyberbullying behaviors. The frequencies included: the last 30 days, during the semester, during the school year, in their lifetime, or never (Figure 7.).



*Figure 7.* Post-survey: Frequency of Experiences as a Victim of Cyberbullying. This figure illustrates the respondents' frequency of being cyberbullied in specific ways.

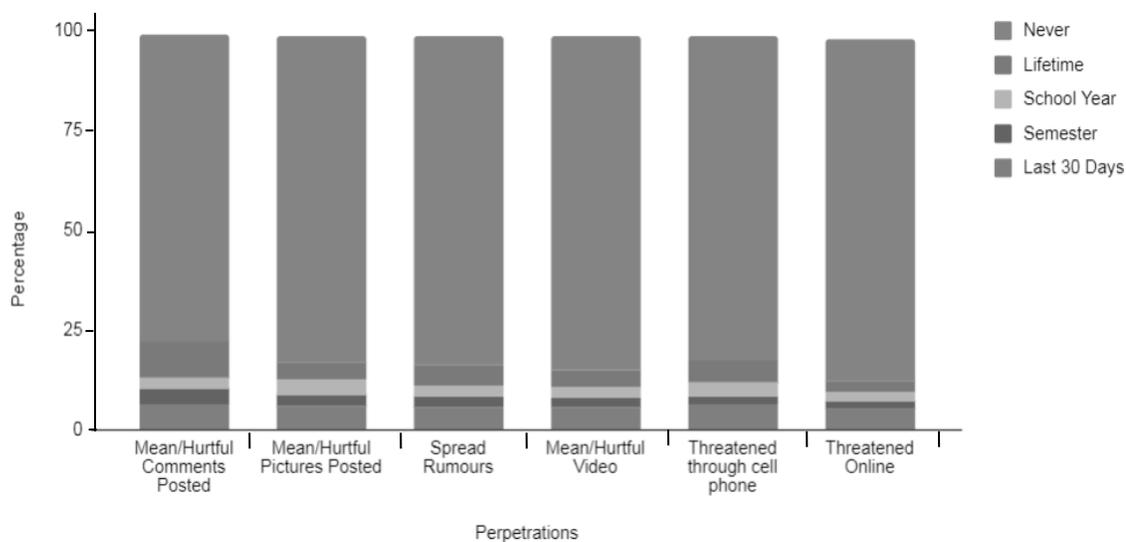
For each type of cyberbullying experience, the frequency of those who did not experience the behavior was higher than the frequency of those who experienced each behavior. The behavior most experienced was having a mean/hurtful webpage created. Seventy-one percent ( $n = 354$ ) never experienced this victimization. However, 6.2% ( $n = 31$ ) experienced this victimization in the last 30 days, 3.4% ( $n = 17$ ) during the semester, 5.8% ( $n = 29$ ) during the school year, and 10.4% ( $n = 52$ ) in their lifetime.

The next behavior was having mean/hurtful pictures posted. Eighty-four percent of the respondents ( $n = 418$ ) never experienced this behavior. Five and nine-tenths percent ( $n = 29$ ) experienced it in the last thirty days, 2.4% ( $n = 12$ ) during the semester, 2.5% ( $n = 12$ ) during the school year, and 3.2% ( $n = 16$ ) in their lifetime. Eighty-four and six-tenths percent of the respondents ( $n = 431$ ) never experienced having a mean/hurtful video posted, while 5.5% ( $n = 27$ ) experienced it the last 30 days, 2.4% ( $n = 12$ ) during the semester, 2.4% ( $n = 12$ ) during the school year, and 3.2% ( $n = 16$ ) in their lifetime. Seventy-seven and nine-tenths percent ( $n = 388$ ) never experienced having a mean/hurtful comment posted. Six and nine-tenths percent ( $n = 34$ ) experienced it in the last 30 days, 2.6% ( $n = 13$ ) during the semester, 3.7% ( $n = 18$ ) during the school year, and 7.1% ( $n = 35$ ) in their lifetime.

Being threatened was the next set of behaviors addressed. Seventy percent ( $n = 369$ ) had never been threatened via a cell phone and 76.3% ( $n = 380$ ) had never been threatened online. Being threatened via a cell phone was experienced by 7.8% of respondents ( $n = 39$ ) in the last 30 days, 3.4% ( $n = 17$ ) during the semester, 4.1% ( $n = 20$ ) during the school year, and 9.9% ( $n = 49$ ) in their lifetime. Of the 498 respondents, 7.2% ( $n = 36$ ) had been threatened online in the last 30 days, 3.5% ( $n = 17$ )

during the semester, 3.7% ( $n = 18$ ) during the school year, and 8.6% ( $n = 43$ ) in their lifetime. The final experience addressed being impersonated in a mean/hurtful way. Eighty-two percent ( $n = 408$ ) had never experienced this behavior, but 6.2% ( $n = 31$ ) experienced it in the last 30 days, 2.4% ( $n = 12$ ) during the semester, 3.5% ( $n = 17$ ) during the school year, and 5.1% ( $n = 25$ ) in their lifetime.

**Research Question 3. To what extent will the percentage of high school students participating in cyberbullying at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying interventions and preventions?** The last set of questions pertained to the frequency of cyberbullying perpetration behaviors. The frequencies included: never, the last 30 days, during the semester, during the school year, and during their lifetime (Figure 8)



*Figure 8.* Post-survey: Cyberbullying Perpetrations. This figure illustrates the frequency of cyberbullying behaviors by the bullies.

Posting mean/hurtful comments was the behavior most perpetrated. Six and six-tenths ( $n = 33$ ) percent of respondents participated in this behavior in the last 30 days, 3.7%

( $n = 18$ ) during the semester, 2.7% ( $n = 13$ ) during the school year, and 9.1% ( $n = 45$ ) in their lifetime. Seventy-seven and one-tenth percent ( $n = 383$ ) never perpetrated this behavior. Related to posting mean/hurtful comments was posting mean/hurtful pictures. Six percent of respondents ( $n = 30$ ) had done this in the last 30 days, 2.6% ( $n = 13$ ) during the semester, 3.9% ( $n = 19$ ) during the school year, 4.6% ( $n = 23$ ) in their lifetime, and 81.7% ( $n = 407$ ) never. Posting mean/hurtful videos was also addressed. Eighty-three and five-tenths ( $n = 416$ ) of respondents had never perpetrated this behavior, but 5.8% ( $n = 29$ ) had done so in the last 30 days, 2.0% ( $n = 10$ ) during the semester, 3.1% ( $n = 15$ ) during the school year, and 4.3% ( $n = 21$ ) in their lifetime.

Another behavior on the survey was spreading rumors. While 82.6% of respondents ( $n = 411$ ) had never participated in this behavior, 5.8% ( $n = 29$ ) had done so in the last 30 days, 2.6% ( $n = 13$ ) during the semester, 2.8% ( $n = 14$ ) during the school year, and 4.9% ( $n = 24$ ) in their lifetime. Threatening was the final type of cyberbullying behavior on the survey. Eighty-one and three-tenths of respondents ( $n = 405$ ) had never threatened someone via cell phone and 85.5% ( $n = 426$ ) had never done so online. However, 6.3% ( $n = 31$ ) had used a cell phone to threaten someone in the last 30 day days, 2.2% ( $n = 11$ ) during the semester, 3.3% ( $n = 16$ ) during the school year, and 5.6% ( $n = 28$ ) in their lifetime. Five and four-tenths percent ( $n = 27$ ) had threatened someone online in the last 30 days, 1.9% ( $n = 9$ ) during the semester, 2.4% ( $n = 12$ ) during the school year, and 2.5% ( $n = 12$ ) in their lifetime.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to decrease the percentage of incidents (students participating and students victimized) of cyberbullying at a high school in a large school district in the southeastern region of the United States. This was to be accomplished by implementing various interventions. This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying among students at a southeastern high school?
2. To what extent will the incidents of high school students being cyberbullied at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying preventions and interventions?
3. To what extent will the percentage of high school students participating in cyberbullying at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying interventions and preventions?

The effectiveness of the study was judged based on the results of a pre-survey and post-survey. The survey, developed by Dr. Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin, asked students about several cyberbullying behaviors experienced by victims and those engaged in by perpetrators. During a five-month period, the sample population engaged in lessons about various aspects of cyberbullying. The lessons included information about the definition, effects, and consequences of cyberbullying as well as resources available for those who were victimized, victimizers, or bystanders.

The target population was a southeastern high school of 3,145 students in grades

9-12. The sample population consisted of 512 students for the pre-survey and 498 for the post-survey.

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings of the pre-survey were that more respondents than not (67%) had been in the role of bystander. Though a large percentage had been a bystander, less than half responded that they had cyberbullied anyone (27%) or been cyberbullied (34%). These numbers decreased on the post-surveys, with 55% responding they had been a seen someone being cyberbullied, 23% had perpetrated, and 20% had been victimized.

The next two sections of the surveys honed in on specific behaviors. On the pre-survey, the most reported victimization experience was having a mean/hurtful comment posted (36%); however, on the post-survey it was having a mean/hurtful webpage posted (29%) that was most experienced by victims. The least experienced behaviors on the pre-survey were being threatened online and having a mean/hurtful webpage created (9%). In contrast, on the post-survey, having a mean/hurtful video posted (15%) was the least experienced behavior.

The last section on the surveys was about the behaviors of cyberbullies. On the pre-survey, the most identified behavior was posting a mean/hurtful picture (4.8%), but on the post-survey, it was posting mean/hurtful comments (23%). On the pre-survey, the behavior that was least identified by respondents was spreading rumors (12%), and on the post-survey, it was threatening someone online (14%).

## Interpretation of Findings

**Research Question 1.** 1. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying among students at a southeastern high school? The pre-survey results were that 34% of the respondents had been cyberbullied in their lifetime, and 27% had cyberbullied. These pre-survey results were higher than expected in comparison to the 2013-2014 report of discipline incidents within the target school, which only indicated five reported cases of bullying (Gwinnet County Public Schools, 2014). One of the strongest predictors of cyberbullying potential perpetration or victimization is if the student is a traditional bully or victim (Guo, 2016). These statistics were also high in comparison with similar studies. In one study of 1,285 middle school students, they were also given a survey. The results were that 6.6% reported being a cyberbully victim and 5.0% were self-reported perpetrators (Rice, Petering, Rhoades, Winetrobe, Goldbach, Plant, Montoya, and Kordic, 2017). In another study, 2,677 students in grades 9-12 were administered a survey. The results were that 1.8% reported being a victim of cyberbullying and 1.2% participated as bullies (Romero, Bauman, Ritter, and Anand, 2016)

On the other hand, the results were not surprising due to the often-anonymous nature of cyberbullying. The anonymity makes it even more difficult for victims and bystanders to report the victimization. Furthermore, cyberbullying tends to more frequently occur outside of school. In the study, there was a large gap between the percentage of students who knew someone who had been cyberbullied (67%) and the number of students who reported being cyberbullies or victimized. However, this was not unexpected. In general, students are less likely to report cyberbullying to teachers or administrators; Sheri Bauman's (2010) research reported only 12% of the middle school

students surveyed would report cyberbullying to an educator. Though the survey was anonymous, the students were still reporting their behavior to the researcher, who was an educator in the school.

The results of the most common types of cyberbullying experienced (mean/hurtful comments posted) or perpetrated (mean/hurtful pictures posted) were also not unexpected. These types of behaviors are under the category of denigration. Denigration means to demean or disrespect in a variety of formats. This is the most common type of cyberbullying (Chang et al., 2013). Since threatening online is not a form of denigration, it was not surprising that it was one of the least experienced types of victimizations. The same is true for the fact that spreading rumors was the least perpetrated behavior. However, having a mean/hurtful website created is a type of denigration, so it was surprising that it was also one of the least experienced behaviors.

**Research Question 2.** To what extent will the incidents of high school students being cyberbullied at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying preventions and interventions? From the pre-survey to the post survey, there was a 24% decrease in reports of being a bystander. However, there was a 9% increase in reports of experiencing cyberbullying. Therefore, there is a disparity between those who report witnessing cyberbullying and those admitting to experiencing cyberbullying. These results were surprising because the effects of cyberbullying can include fear, embarrassment, and hopelessness. Therefore, it would have been expected to be a higher reporting of experience as a bystander than as a victim.

To gauge the effectiveness of the interventions implemented, the researcher focused on the area of the pre-survey that asked about the last 30 days, during the

semester, and during the school year versus the post survey's frequencies of the last 30 days and during the semester. These frequencies included the time at the beginning of the school year before the interventions (pre-survey) and the period immediately after the interventions (post-survey). The researcher expected that there would be a decrease in cyberbullying experiences; however, there was a 1-3% increase in every specific cyberbullying experience. Though the increase in specific experiences was unexpected, the results align with the question that asked respondents about their experience as a victim since there was also an increase from the pre to the post survey.

**Research Question 3.** To what extent will the percentage of high school students participating in cyberbullying at a southeastern high school be decreased with the implementation of cyberbullying interventions and preventions? From the pre-survey to the post survey, there was a 7.4% decrease in reports of being a perpetrator, which was expected by the researcher after the implementation of interventions.

To gauge the effectiveness of the interventions implemented, the researcher focused on the area of the pre-survey that asked about the last 30 days, during the semester, and during the school year versus the post survey's frequencies of the last 30 days and during the semester. These frequencies included the time at the beginning of the school year before the interventions (pre-survey) and the period immediately after the interventions (post-survey). The researcher expected that there would be a decrease in specific cyberbullying perpetrations since there had been a decrease of reports of cyberbullying participation. However, there was a 1-2% increase in every cyberbullying behavior. This could be due to several factors. The respondents could have been made more aware of what constitutes cyberbullying and could have been made to realize that

they were participating in such behavior. Additionally, after having participated in five months of lessons with the researcher, more trust could have been built, which could have enabled the respondents to feel more comfortable in honestly answering the post-survey.

### **Implications of Findings**

The results of this study suggest that whole-school interventions could be more effective than small groups; however, to replicate this study, a larger sample size is needed. Though small (1-3%), there was an increase in victimization and perpetration, as reported in the post-survey. The small percentage may have been because several of the interventions (media center display table, electronic brochures, district attorney assembly, and the informational bulletin board) were available to the entire school. However, only those in the sample population participated in the lessons. The lessons could be incorporated into the school's advisement program. "It is important for all students to receive these interventions, not just those who are identified as bullies or victims or at elevated risk of cyberbullying" (Rice, et.al, 2015, p.71). With the expansion of the targeted population, data that identify the effects of cyberbullying is needed as well as student perceptions of the effects of the interventions. This would give those involved in the creation and implementation of the interventions more information to increase the effectiveness.

In addition, the interventions need to be expanded to not only include all students but also the teachers and parents. Parents need to be included more since most cyberbullying occurs outside of school, and high school students identified their parents as the adults to whom they would be more likely to report incidents of cyberbullying victimization (Weber & Pelfrey, 2014). In this study, the only parent education was the

electronic brochure (if the parents visited the school's website) and the bulletin board (if the parents visited the school). If parents are educated, this may make them more inclined to allow their student to participate in data collection involving the effectiveness of the interventions.

Teachers need to be included because they are often the adult with whom a child spends the most time. It was also reported that if students thought educators would take cyberbullying seriously and punish the offenders, they were less likely to participate in the behavior (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013). With the data indicating that cyberbullying is still an issue within the school, there is a need for a more comprehensive program that includes "peer support programs and some form of intervention concerned with positive school climate" (Guo, 2016).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study had several limitations which affected the validity and reliability of the results. The study was limited to the research site and the students who completed the survey. It was not possible for the researcher to survey all students in the school because not all parents consented to their student participating in the study. One possible reason for this is the researcher only provided consent forms in English. Additionally, some of the students who returned a parental consent form did not choose to participate.

Not all students in the sample had the opportunity to participate in each day of the cyberbullying lessons due to absences, not wanting to attend the lesson, or having other obligations during advisement. Therefore, it was not possible to assess the full impact of the interventions and preventions. The full impact was also unknown due to the data disaggregation methods. There was not an indicator of the effects of the interventions on

students by specific grade levels, genders, or ethnicities.

An additional limitation is the fact that the only method of data collection was a survey. “The sole use of a self-report method involves the risk of underestimating the frequency and magnitude of these behaviors” (Guo, 2016). There was no attempt made to verify the validity of what the students reported in the survey. Furthermore, some students in the sample answered the survey without reading the questions or answered in a socially desirable manner, so the validity of the results is questionable.

Another limitation was that a lower number of students participated in the post-survey than did the pre-survey, so the results cannot be deemed completely reliable due to differences in sample sizes. Also pertaining to the survey was the difference in behaviors highlighted for the victims versus the bullies. A question asked the respondents if they had cyberbullied others in the last 30 days, but not a question that asked if they had been cyberbullied in the last 30 days. In regard to specific behaviors, mean/hurtful webpages and impersonation were addressed for the victims but not for the bullies. On the other hand, spreading rumors was only addressed for the bullies. These differences in addressed behaviors affect the validity of the results obtained.

An additional point to consider was that the sample consisted of students in a large high school in a suburban area. The results may not be applicable to students in rural areas or with smaller school populations.

### **Future Research Directions**

Due to the limitations of this study and available research, more research on cyberbullying is needed that targets high school students, particularly the effects of interventions. Further studies should more deeply examine the correlation between

cyberbullying roles and variables such as grade level, gender, and ethnicity. This would better serve stakeholders (parents, administrators, and teachers) in creating ongoing, targeted interventions. Additionally, evaluation of the effects of different types of programs is needed, such as ones that target whole-school populations, at-risk students, and students in various roles related to cyberbullying (victim, perpetrator, bystander, non-affected, and victim-perpetrator). Conducting this type of research with a sample population would provide feedback in implementing effective whole-school programs.

### **Conclusion**

Technology is an entity that is continuing to evolve in scope and complexity. With the decrease in digital immigrants (born prior to the widespread infusion of technology) and the rise of digital natives (born after the widespread infusion of technology), it is becoming of even more importance to understand the types of technology that students are using and how they are using it (positively and negatively). As technology evolves, so do some of the negative side effects like cyberbullying. Research has shown that bullying has many negative effects on the bully, victims, and bystanders. However, cyberbullying has caused an evolution in the nature and scope of bullying. Therefore, to begin to tackle this issue, more programs must be implemented to educate stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, etc.), deter perpetrators, and assist bystanders, victims, and perpetrators.

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Appendix A  
Researcher Survey Release

RE: cyberbullying research survey



1 attachment (257.2 KB)

Outlook.com Active View ^



[Download as zip](#) [Save to OneDrive](#)

Hello Erica,

You have our permission to use our survey instrument, provided you include proper attribution. I've attached the most recent version, along with preliminary psychometric properties. All the best with your work and let us know if you have any questions.

Justin Patchin

Appendix B  
Student Survey

## Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Survey Instrument

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.  
Cyberbullying Research Center ([www.cyberbullying.us](http://www.cyberbullying.us))

### I. Demographics

1) Gender: a) Male b) Female

2) Grade: a) 9 b) 10 c) 11 d) 12

**Cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic devices.**

For each question, choose one answer. All answers are anonymous, so answer honestly.

3) I have seen other people being cyberbullied.

a) Never b) Once c) A few times d) Several times e) Many times

4) In my lifetime, I have been cyberbullied

a) Never b) Once c) A few times d) Several times e) Many times

5) In my lifetime, I have cyberbullied others.

a) Never b) Once c) A few times d) Several times e) Many times

6) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied others.

a) Never b) Once c) A few times d) Several times e) Many times

I have been cyberbullied in these ways...

7) Someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me online

a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

8) Someone posted a mean or hurtful picture online of me

a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

9) Someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
10) Someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
11) Someone spread rumors about me online  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
12) Someone threatened to hurt me through a cell phone text message  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
13) Someone threatened to hurt me online  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
14) Someone pretended to be me online and acted in a way that was mean or hurtful to me  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
I have cyberbullied others in these ways...

15) I posted mean or hurtful comments about someone online  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.  
16) I posted a mean or hurtful picture online of someone  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

17) I spread rumors about someone online  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.

18) I threatened to hurt someone online  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.

19) I threatened to hurt someone through a cell phone text message  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.

20) I posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone  
a) within the last 30 days b) within this semester c) within this school year  
d) in my lifetime e) never

.

## Appendix C

### Parent Consent Form

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled  
Decreasing Incidents of High School Cyberbullying

Funding Source: None

IRB protocol #:

Principal investigator:

Co-Investigator:

For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:  
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)  
Nova Southeastern University  
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790  
[IRB@nova.edu](mailto:IRB@nova.edu)

Site Information:

**What is the research about?**

You are being asked to let your child participate in a research study. This study is to find out if implemented interventions can reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying. There will be approximately 400 children in the study.

**What will my child be doing?**

If your consent is given, your child will attend a meeting in the theater during advisement to explain the study and answer any questions. Your student will also be given one week to return an assent form which they agree to participate in the study or choose not to participate in the study. Your child will have one week to return the form. If your child agrees to participate in the study, he or she will be given a pass to come to the researcher's room during advisement to complete a survey. The survey will ask questions about your child's experience with or participation in cyberbullying. The survey will be administered again after a four-month period and will take up to 25 minutes to complete.

**What dangers are there for my child?**

There are some risks with taking part in this study. Your child may experience some emotional discomfort with identifying as a cyberbully or participating in cyberbullying. Emotional discomfort or fear may be experienced upon learning the effects and consequences of cyberbullying. However, these risks are considered minimal because the surveys are voluntary and anonymous. Additional, students may go see a counselor, go to the media center, or stop

taking the surveys at any time. Please be aware, though, the procedures or activities in this study may have additional unknown or unforeseeable risks.

If you have any questions about the research or your research, please contact the researcher. You may also contact IRB at the numbers indicated above with questions as to your research rights.

### **What good things might come about for my child?**

There are no direct benefits for your child. However, students and educators may learn about the types of cyberbullying, prevalence of cyberbullying incidents, outcomes of previous incidents, and methods of reporting, a safer school environment may be created; victims and their peers may feel more comfortable reporting incidents, and cyberbullies may be convinced to stop and may encourage others to stop.

### **Do I have to pay for anything?**

There are no costs for your child's participation in this study.

### **Will my child or I be paid?**

There are no payments made for participating in this study.

### **How will my child's information be kept private and confidential?**

Your child's responses to the survey will be anonymous. No identifiable information will be collected. The completed surveys will be turned in to an envelope, so the researcher will not be able to associate surveys with the students who completed them. All consent forms, assent forms, and surveys will be kept in a locked cabinet in Erica Dawson's office for 36 months from the end of the study. Everything will be shredded after that time.

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies, and the dissertation chair/thesis adviser may review research records. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB and government agencies may look at research records. Also, the researcher's dissertation chair and thesis adviser may review research records.

**What if I do not want my child to be in the study or my child doesn't want to be in the study?**

You have the right to refuse for your child to participate or withdraw your child at any time. Your child may also refuse to participate or withdraw. If you do withdraw your child, or your child decides not to participate, neither you nor your child will experience any penalty or loss of services that you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw your child, or he/she decides to leave, any information collected about your child **before** the date of withdrawal will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

**Other Considerations:**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to your willingness to have your child continue to participate, this information will be provided to you by the researcher.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researcher any study related questions in the future or contact her.
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree for your child to participate in the study entitled "Decreasing Incidents of High School Cyberbullying".

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix D  
Student Assent Form

Assent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled  
Decreasing Incidents of High School Cyberbullying

Principal investigator:

Co-Investigator:

Institutional Review Board:  
Nova Southeastern University  
Office of Grants and Contracts  
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790  
[IRB@nova.edu](mailto:IRB@nova.edu)

Site Information:

**What is a research study?**

We are inviting you to participate in a research study to help us discover new information. Research is voluntary: only those who want to participate will be included in the study. This assent form describes the study. We encourage you to discuss your decision with your parents/guardians. They also have to provide their permission for you to enter this research study.

**Why is this study being done?**

This study is to find out if implementing certain actions such as teaching advisement lessons, providing guest speakers, and sharing information through brochures and flyers, bulletin boards, the scrolling announcements, and the media center can reduce the amount of students who cyberbully and those who are cyberbullied.

**What will happen to me?**

If you decide to participate, you will be given a pass to come to Ms. Dawson's room during advisement. You will take a survey. The survey will ask questions about your experience with or participation in cyberbullying. You will have 25-minutes to take the survey. You will take the survey again after four months. The surveys will not ask for any information that can identify you. You will not be asked for your name or student number.

**What are the good things about being in the study?**

There are none.

**Will being in the study hurt me?**

I do not think you will be hurt by helping with this study.

**How long will I be in the study?**

You will take two 25-minute surveys during your advisement period. The first survey will be at the beginning of the semester and the second four months later.

**Do I have other choices?**

You can decide not to be in the study at any time and stop taking the surveys. You will be allowed to return to your advisement class or the media center.

**Will people know that I am in the study?**

Your advisement teacher will know you are in the study but will not discuss your participation with anyone else. If the researcher presents the study results or writes up the results, your name will not be used.

**Whom should I ask if I have questions?**

If you have any questions, you can ask Ms. Dawson. Remember, you should also discuss your participation with your parents or your guardian.

**Is it OK if I say, “No, I don’t want to be in the study”?**

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. No one will be mad or upset. If you change your mind once you start the study, you can decide to stop participating. be mad or upset. If you change your mind, you can decide during the study to stop being in the study.”

**Other Information**

If we learn important new information about this study, we will tell you and let you decide if you want to stop being a part of the study.

***Do you understand and do you want to be in the study?***

I understand. All my questions were answered.

- I want to be in the study.
- I do not want to be in the study.

---

Your name

---

Your signature

---

Date

---

Signature of person explaining the study

---

Date

Appendix E  
Book Display Titles

*Dear Bully* edited by Megan Kelley Hall and Carrie Jones

*Rebel, bully, geek, pariah* by Erin Jade Lange

*The bully* by Paul Langan

*Leverage* by Joshua Cohen

*Cyberbullying* by Lauri S. Friedman

*Students in Danger* by Rae Simons

*It Gets Better* edited by Dan Savage and Terry Miller

*Winger* by Andrew Smith (Andrew Anselmo)

*Fishtailing* by Wendy Phillips

*Letters to a Bullied Girl* by Olivia Gardner

*Dead Ends* by Erin Jade Lange

*Send* by Patty Blount

*The Unwanted* by Jeffrey Ricker

*Girls like me* by Lola StVil

*Tease* by Amanda Maciel

*The fall* by James Preller

*Endgame* by Nancy Gardner

*Boy on the edge* by Erlingsson Fridrik

*Twisted* by Laurie Halse Anderson

*Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson

*Crossing Lines* by Paul Volponi

*Burn* by Suzanne Phillips

*Pretty Ugly* by Karyn Folan

*13 Reasons why* by Jay Asher

Appendix F  
Bulletin Board Design



Appendix G

Scrolling Announcements Word of the Day List

### Scrolling Announcements: Word of the Day

1. Bully (noun): a person who uses strength or power to harm or intimidate those who are weaker.
2. Cyberbully (noun): one who use electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.
3. Flaming (gerund): Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.
4. Harassment (noun): Repeatedly sending offensive, rude and insulting messages.
5. Cyberstalking (gerund): Repeatedly sending message that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating; engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety
6. Denigration (noun): Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.
7. Impersonation (noun): Breaking into someone's account, posing as that person and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person's reputation or friendships.
8. Exclusion (noun): Intentionally excluding someone from an online group, like a "buddy list" or a game.

9. *Bystander (noun): those who witness bullying and cyberbullying in action, who stand by and watch, who videotape it and make it viral, and who do and say nothing*
10. Outing (gerund) and Trickery (noun): Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information online. Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online.
11. Stereotype (noun): a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
12. Social media (noun): websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
13. social justice (noun): justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
14. digital citizenship (noun): the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use
15. digital footprint (noun): the information about a particular person that exists on the Internet as a result of their online activity.
16. Trolling (verb): Intentionally posting provocative messages about sensitive subjects to create conflict, upset people, and bait them into "flaming" or fighting.

Appendix H  
Student Brochure

### What to do if you are cyberbullied

- Never respond to harassing or rude comments.
- Save or print the evidence.
- Talk to your parents or guardian.
- Report the problem to your school or local law enforcement if you feel threatened.
- Respect others online.
- Only share your password with your parent or guardian.
- Change your passwords often.
- Password protect your cell phone.
- Use privacy settings to block unwanted messages.
- Think before posting or sending photos; they could be used to hurt you.
- Contact the site administrator if someone creates a social networking page in your name.

### How to protect yourself on the Internet

- Keep personal information private.
- Only add friends you know personally to your blog or page.
- Use nicknames that don't identify your location, gender, or age.
- Never meet with anyone in person that you first met online.
- Alter pictures before you post them to remove identifying information.
- Profile and photo share only with people on your friends list.
- Don't post your plans or whereabouts.



*Special thanks to the Laney High School Students Against Violence Everywhere group and Advisor Beth Keller for creating this brochure!*



National Association of  
Students Against Violence Everywhere  
322 Chapanoke Road, Suite 110  
Raleigh, NC  
Toll Free: 866-343-SAVE (7283)  
FAX: 919-661-7777  
[www.nationalsave.org](http://www.nationalsave.org)

**Youth Voices...  
Grown-Up Choices!**



**Cyberbullying:  
Information &  
Prevention**



Appendix I  
Parent Brochure

# What Parents Need to Know About CYBERBULLYING



**Networks of Centres  
of Excellence**  
**Réseaux de centres  
d'excellence**