

YouthTruth

— STUDENT SURVEY —

A NATIONAL NONPROFIT

Draft



FROM DATA TO ACTION:

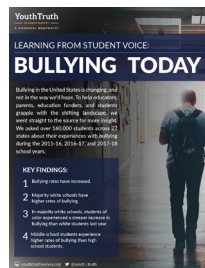
Resources to help educators
strengthen school culture
and address bullying



Since 2016, YouthTruth has examined student perception data about bullying to contribute to anti-bullying conversations and action in honor of October's National Bullying Prevention Month. In our most recent report, we analyzed feedback gathered over three academic years from more than 160,000 students across 27 states about their experiences with bullying. Here's what we learned:

- 1 **Bullying rates have increased.**
- 2 **Majority white schools have higher rates of bullying.**
- 3 **In majority white schools, students of color experienced a steeper increase in bullying than white students in the 2017-18 school year.**
- 4 **Middle school students experience higher rates of bullying than high school students.**

For more information about what students across the country have said through anonymous surveys in their schools – including insights about cyberbullying, and how students feel their race, gender identity, and sexual orientation contribute to why they are bullied – check out these reports:



bit.ly/2OLrHec



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WHAT CAN WE DO?

Through our direct survey work with schools and districts, as well as through our *Learning from Student Voice* series, YouthTruth has analyzed and reported on the unique insights about students' experiences with bullying. As we've articulated local and national findings and shared links to resources, educators have asked, "Based on this sobering data, what is my next action?"



Think of this as your quick guide to move from data to action with some top-notch, 100% free resources.

Teach Kindness

What it is: Teach Kindness is a 30-day challenge that uses research-based lessons to make kindness contagious in any K-8 school. A project of the national nonprofit, [Stand for Children](#), the content on kindness-building comes from leading education organizations including Harvard's Making Caring Common Initiative, InspireED, The Greater Good Science Center, and Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence.



How it works:

- ➔ Accept the Challenge and sign up
- ➔ Complete a short reflection exercise with your team and then teach at least four lessons in four weeks
- ➔ Create a Kindness Ritual to make kindness routine at your school

Why we are fans: The intervention was initially designed for the environment that the data says needs it most: middle school. We know that middle school students are more likely than their older peers to experience bullying (in our [most recent report](#) nearly 40 percent of middle school students versus 27 percent of high school students), so it makes sense to target resources here. The lessons are also all grounded in rigorous research, and the online library of lessons is easy to navigate. If you're an elementary educator who wants to help upstream, there are elementary resource as well.

How to get started: Visit www.weteachkindness.org to register for the next challenge cycle.

Teaching Tolerance

What it is: We know that students of different identities and backgrounds experience bullying differently – revealing how bias can be connected to bullying. [Teaching Tolerance](#) is a project of the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) and helps educators create more civil and inclusive school communities. By emphasizing social justice and anti-bias, Teaching Tolerance helps educators both create change and inspire students to become life-long agents of change.



How it works: Teaching Tolerance has tools for the classroom, whole schools, and entire districts.

- ➔ Classroom resources: lessons, texts, activities, teaching strategies, film kits, and printable posters
- ➔ Whole school resources: professional development tools for self-led workshops, workshop facilitation guides, expert-led trainings, webinars, and podcasts
- ➔ Whole district resources: frameworks with applicable systematic approaches to anti-bias, social justice, and civil rights education to make complex topics easier to understand, scale, and teach

Why we are fans: In our [2017 report](#), we found that when students who were bullied were asked why they thought they were bullied, 44 percent of students said it was because of how they look. The other leading reasons students believe they were bullied include their race or skin color (17 percent) and because other students thought they were gay (15 percent). Teaching Tolerance's flexible collection of DIY resources gets to the heart of anti-bullying: promoting a culture of tolerance, respect, and the appreciation of differences. The tools help educators create structures of interventions and help prevent bullying from happening in the first place.

How to get started: Start exploring resources at www.tolerance.org.

Facing History and Ourselves

What it is: By combining the study of human behavior with historical analysis, *Facing History* helps educators heighten students' understanding of racism, religious intolerance, and prejudice. When students are able to relate history to their own lives, they become better agents in understanding their roles and responsibilities in their school communities and in society.



How it works: Facing History has created and curated a host of resources to help educators inspire their colleagues and students to become more active agents of change.

- ➔ Teaching strategies that integrate history and literature with ethical decision-making
- ➔ Educator resources including multimedia materials, primary sources, streaming videos and full units
- ➔ An on-demand learning center and expert-led events for educator professional development

Why we are fans: Facing History is committed to ending bigotry and hatred globally, and there's a reason they've focused on students, teachers, and schools. In our [2017 report](#), we shared that 33 percent of students had experienced bullying. That's 1 in 3 students, up from 1 in 4 students just a few years prior. There has never been a better time to promote students' historical understanding, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning to help students to make a positive difference in their lives, as well as the lives of their peers.

How to get started: View and download free resources, subscribe to the blog, or find a workshop or seminar near you at www.facinghistory.org.

GLSEN

What it is: GLSEN – pronounced "glisten" – is committed to improving the experiences of LGBTQ students in school so that students can learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment.



How it works: GLSEN resources will help you discuss bullying, gender roles, and family diversity across student ages, include positive representations of LGBTQ people in the curriculum, and inspire students to speak up when they see bullying.

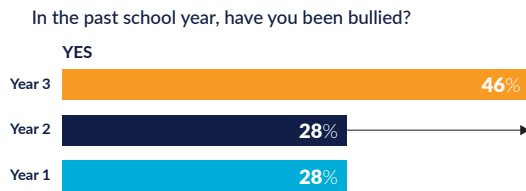
- ➔ Explore LGBTQ-inclusive and bullying, bias and diversity lesson plans
- ➔ Check out a GLSEN toolkit, then watch a related webinar
- ➔ Join GLSEN's Educator Network and receive monthly emails that highlight resources and provide up-to-date information on GLSEN research

Why we are fans: The [YouthTruth data show](#) that when controlling for other student demographic characteristics, students who identify in a way other than male or female are twice as likely to be bullied than their peers. Additionally, of students who are bullied, students who identify as other than male or female are also three times as likely to be bullied physically and 4.6 times as likely to be bullied because other students thought they were gay, whether or not they identified as such. GLSEN provides resources that help educators make schools safe and affirming environments for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

How to get started: Visit www.glsen.org to join their Educator Network.

YouthTruth Partner School Spotlight

What's their story? When the Quincy Junior High team in Washington State reflected on their YouthTruth survey data in year three of surveying, they saw a dramatic increase in bullying. "This was not data that could be ignored," shared Principal Scott Ramsey. The percentage of students who reported being a victim of bullying had jumped from 28 percent in the previous two years, to 46 percent.



The school identified this area as a priority for change and designed targeted interventions. In the next year of survey data, the proportion of students who reported being bullied dropped down to 36 percent.



What they did:

1) Gathered data. Quincy administers YouthTruth surveys annually. The valid, reliable, and anonymous climate surveys include questions about peer belonging and bullying with data tracked over time. The consistent, annual feedback made it possible for staff to measurably observe the increase, and subsequent decrease, in bullying.

2) Reflected on the findings. Each year the team began the data reflection process by unpacking the findings together in staff meetings. The data helped create a common understanding of the problem. In response to year three data, they launched an anti-bullying initiative, including a two-day lesson plan that engaged students and teachers across the whole school.

➔ [Click here to explore the lesson plan \(or use bit.ly/2QvW3mh\)](https://bit.ly/2QvW3mh)

2) Engaged students. The two-day lesson plan engaged students across all classes, and inspired an 8th grade class to create a video that was featured by a local news station. Click [here \(or use bit.ly/2mYVWFI\)](https://bit.ly/2mYVWFI) to watch the three-minute news coverage, or watch the full five-minute video [here \(or use bit.ly/2mXv2O9\)](https://bit.ly/2mXv2O9).

What we like about it: So much can be learned when adults not only ask students about their experiences, but also listen deeply and react promptly to what they've heard. Listening to students is the first step in generating the awareness, discussion, and action necessary to address bullying.

How to get started:

- ➔ If you already have YouthTruth data, check out the two-day lesson plan [here](#).
- ➔ To bring YouthTruth to your community, visit www.youthtruthsurvey.org/get-started.



From Research to Practice



What does the research say?

To help build and share knowledge as school teams collaboratively create interventions, here are a few great pieces of research that are worth the read.

Jacobson, Ronald B. "When It Comes to School Bullying, We May Not Be Asking the Right Question," *Teachers College Record; The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, April 02, 2012, www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=16738

🕒 **~30 min read. Why read it?** Ron Jacobson reminds us that researchers have convincingly demonstrated that school bullying is best understood — and addressed — as a social phenomenon. As Jacobson points out, in most instances the bully's primary motivation for aggression is to gain social status through the affirmation of peer observers. In this way, Jacobsen provides a powerful research-driven reminder to practitioners that the most effective bullying interventions are whole-school efforts that build a common set of expectations that turn bystanders into "upstanders".

American Educational Research Association Task Force. "Prevention of Bullying in Schools, Colleges, and Universities." American Educational Research Association. 2013. Washington, DC; AERA. [Available online at: bit.ly/2mnUUmk]

🕒 **~1 hr read. Why read it?** An expert Task Force on the Prevention of Bullying, representing the nation's largest educational research association, summarized the research on bullying to highlight characteristics of schools with less bullying. In addition to stressing the importance of teaching pro-social behaviors, this group of leading experts detailed the critical role of school culture, highlight in particular the two key ingredients in schools with less bullying: 1) a clear disciplinary structure, and 2) strong adult supports for all groups of students. As the Task Force recommended, a crucial step in building a pro-social culture begins with assessing your school's strengths and needs in a way that is comprehensive, reliable, and valid.

Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (in press). "Proposed policies to reduce weapons in schools: Based on research from an ecological conceptual model!" *Oxford Handbook of Children and the Law Chapters*. 2018. New York: Oxford University Press. [Available online at: bit.ly/2mqzQvC]

🕒 **~20 min read. Why read it?** Ron Avi Astor and Rami Benbenishty are among the foremost researchers on violence prevention in schools. In their chapter in the upcoming Oxford Handbook of Children and the Law, they demonstrate that in addition to a positive school climate, a cohesive school staff that communicates regularly to share critical information can mitigate violence and bullying. As Astor and Benbenishty also point out, educators are wise to explicitly cultivate student voice as an anti-bullying asset so that "upstanders" will trust adults and speak out when they have a concern. Astor and Benbenishty also urge adults to work alongside students to map the physical environment of the school to identify and address dangerous spaces.

Want more? Explore more research at youthtruthsurvey.org/resources/#research.

Sample Discussion Questions

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FOR PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

In what ways have you observed bullying as an issue at our school? How might these or other resources help more students feel welcome, included, and accepted at our school?

Are all adults aware of the anti-bullying initiatives in place on our campus? How effective do you think they are? Have they incorporated student perspectives?

How do the culture-building and anti-bullying initiatives at our school work to include all students? What could our school be doing better?

What is one take-away that you have after reading one of the pieces of research on Page Six?

What is one action step you will take to help decrease bullying at your school? Share your action on Twitter @Youth_Truth using #antibullying.

Closing the Feedback Loop: Sample Discussion Questions

Draft



FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN CONVERSATION WITH STUDENTS

How much of a problem do you think bullying is in our school?

Do you know where students can go to get help if they are being bullied? Do you think students feel comfortable using those resources? Do you have suggestions for how to improve those resources?

What are you doing to combat bullying at our school?

What questions or suggestions do you have for our school's leaders and teachers to help address bullying?

ABOUT YOUTHTRUTH

YouthTruth is a national nonprofit that harnesses student and stakeholder feedback to help educators accelerate improvements. Through validated survey instruments and tailored advisory services, YouthTruth partners with schools, districts, and education funders to enhance learning for all students. To learn more about the research that informs our work, please visit youthtruthsurvey.org/resources/#research.

 youthtruthsurvey.org

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