An evaluation of the implementation fidelity and outcomes of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in three elementary schools in Virginia

Barbara F. Wood
College of William & Mary - School of Education

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AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY AND OUTCOMES
OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM
IN THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Barbara F. Wood

December 17, 2012
AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY AND OUTCOMES
OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM
IN THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

By
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Approved December 17, 2012 by

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DEDICATION

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

This research study is dedicated to my two daughters, Lindsey and Stacy, who helped me understand why the Golden Rule is the best rule.
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AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY AND OUTCOMES
OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM
IN THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

ABSTRACT

Bullying continues to be a major concern in schools today. Many schools have implemented some type of bullying prevention program. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is one of these programs. Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is typically done through the administration of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire to students and produces numerical data for its report. Results have been mixed, but often show some type of decrease in bullying activity.

This study evaluated the implementation fidelity and outcomes of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in three elementary schools in Virginia. These schools were recommended as having a successful Olweus Bullying Program by Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett, (2011). The evaluation was conducted using a form of theory-driven program evaluation known as the Center for Disease Control’s Six-step Evaluation Framework.

Stakeholders represented by administrators, teachers and guidance counselors were interviewed with questions developed from the Four Levels of General Requirements of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Available extant data from the Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence and the three interviewed schools’
Olweus Bullying Questionnaire survey results were also examined to look for possible evidence to support these three schools’ successful programs.
AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY AND OUTCOMES
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Chapter 1
The Problem

On October 25, 2010, Josephson Institute of Ethics, located in southern California, released the staggering results of the largest study ever undertaken on the attitudes of 43,321 high school students in the United States. In the results, 50% of the high school students admitted they had bullied someone in the last year, and 47% said they were bullied, teased, or taunted in a way that upset them in the past year. In a time when bullying has been a topic of major concern throughout the nation, the number of students affected by bullying remains at a level of critical concern. In August of 2010, Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education, spoke at the first federal National Summit on Bullying stating,

As educators, as state and local officials, and at the federal level, we simply have not taken the problem of bullying seriously enough. It is an absolute travesty of our educational system when students fear for their safety at school, worry about being bullied or suffer discrimination and taunts because of their ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or a host of other reasons. The fact is that no school can be a great school until it is a safe school first (Josephson Institute, 2010).

Much of our knowledge about bullying has been drawn from descriptive research conducted over the past several decades in Europe, Australia, and Canada (Swearer &
Dan Olweus of Norway is considered by many as a pioneer and founding father of research on bullying (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, 2007). He has spent several decades researching the topic of bullying and is best known for the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, the most widely adopted bullying prevention program in the world (Olweus & Limber, 2007). In 1971, Olweus conducted the first systematic study of bullying in the world resulting in the publishing of the book *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys* in 1973 in Scandinavia and in 1978 in the United States (Olweus & Limber, 2007). By 1981, Olweus had proposed enacting a law against bullying in schools in Norway. In 1983, three adolescent boys in northern Norway died by suicide as a consequence of severe bullying and because of this Norway's Ministry of Education initiated a national campaign against bullying in schools and the first Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was developed (Olweus & Limber, 2007). Many descriptive studies have examined the nature of the bully, victim, bully victim, bully bystander, and other variables that might play into the act of bullying (Olweus, 1987, Rigby & Slee, 1991, Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991), but Olweus' definition is the most commonly used. His definition states, "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself" (Olweus, 2007, p.11). The three elements that differentiate bullying from other forms of conflict and aggression are that bullying intentionally inflicts physical or verbal harm to the victim,
the actions against the victim are repeated – they are not one-time occurrences, and there is an imbalance of power between the victim and the bully (Bauman & Hurley, 2005).

A 2010 study by the Josephson Institute study found that 33% of all high school students said that violence is a big problem at their school and 24% said they do not feel safe at school. “Every child is entitled to feel safe in the classroom” (Josephson Institute, 2010). School violence is a continuum of anti-social behaviors and bullying is a part of this continuum (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Allowing bullying behaviors negatively impacts the academic learning environment that is essential for academic success (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Today there is more known about bullying, but the irony is that even with more knowledge and more information about prevention and intervention available, gross and horrific accounts of bullying continue to flood the media and impact the lives of many students (Josephson Institute, 2010). As bullying problems have increased, school officials have had to focus on the handling and prevention of these problems (Olweus, 2004). Prevention of bullying often begins with an anti-bullying policy, which may have guidelines, procedures, and actions for prevention and intervention of the problem (Smith, P., 2004). While bullying prevention programs vary in content, “they recognize that there is a need for school community and especially the teaching staff to be aware of the prevalence and seriousness of bullying in schools” (p.2). Espelage and Swearer (2004) state, “In order to develop and implement effective bullying prevention and intervention programs, we must understand the ecology that establishes and maintains bullying and victimization behaviors” (p.1). This leads us to understand
that attention to bullying behaviors alone is not enough. To fully study bullying, and any interventions designed to prevent it, we must examine the social environment in which these behaviors occur. Earlier research by Urie Bronfenbrenner (2004) provides a suitable construct for such studies.

**Conceptual Framework**

In 1979, Urie Bronfenbrenner’s proposed a theory of ecological-systems to understand human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system is composed of five socially organized subsystems that guide human growth and development. According to Bronfenbrenner’s theory, there are four interrelated systems which are inseparable from the child: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The four systems describe progressively more complex relationships impacting childhood development. The microsystem is the interpersonal relationship or interaction the child has with the immediate environment such as the home, school, or peer group. The mesosystem is the combination of more than one environment and how that affects the child’s development, such as the relationship between home and school. The exosystem is even more complex as it involves two or more environments such as the home and school and then also one environment which is not directly a part of the individual’s life, but indirectly influences the immediate setting of the individual such as the relation between the home and the parent’s workplace. The macrosystem, the most complex of the four systems, is like a societal blueprint for the individuals’ culture and
subculture consisting of the overarching pattern of the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem characteristics. A final system, the chronosystem, encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person, but also of the environment in which that person lives (see Figure 1).
Macrosystem
Attitudes and ideologies of the culture

Exosystem
Neighbours
Social services

Mesosystem
Family
Church
School
Health services
Peers

Microsystem
Mass media
Local politics

Individual
(sex, age, health, etc)

Chronosystem

(1) School
(2) Family
(3) Church
(4) Peers
(5) Mass media
(6) Local politics
Figure 1. Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system is composed of five socially organized subsystems that guide human growth and development: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. (mydegreediary.blogspot.com)

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems research allowed bullying researchers to examine behaviors from the system perspective. Swearer and Doll (2001) took Bronfenbrenner’s theory and suggested that it best conceptualized bullying and victimization as ecological phenomena that are established and developed over time by the “inter- and intra-individual” relationships between the individual and his peer group, school, family, and community. The social-ecological systems’ perspective on bullying and victimization as presented by Swearer and Doll (2004) offers a perspective of the reciprocal interplay between Bronfenbrenner’s subsystems of the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and the culture of an individual, and how they relate to bullying (see Figure 2). Bullying does not occur in isolation and is encouraged or discouraged by the results of complex interactions in the individuals’ social ecology (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). The social ecology of the daily life of youth involves all of the interactions that happen daily and dictates whether there is engagement and/or non-engagement in bullying and/or victimization behaviors. Because the social ecology of youth involves different environments such as home and school; an intervention or prevention program must also target these environments. Bullying prevention programs such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program begin by helping the individual student
to understand that bullying is wrong, unite a school in this understanding and belief, and then extend this belief to the families and community that surrounds the school.

Figure 2. A social-ecological framework of bullying among youth (Swearer & Espelage, 2004)
The School-Wide Bullying Prevention Program

One type of bullying prevention program, such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, is the school-wide program. School-wide bullying prevention programs are systemic; including all students, staff, and sometimes parents; and are viewed as a social-problem for the entire student-body (Juvonen & Graham, 2004). One of the key assumptions of school-wide bullying prevention programs is the belief that to decrease bullying, the culture of a school must change, and therefore there is an increased awareness of bullying on the part of school staff. The school-wide bullying prevention program aims to restructure the social environment so that there are fewer opportunities and rewards for the bullying behavior.

The multiple causes of bullying suggest multiple avenues for possible intervention. One avenue of intervention is designated as whole-school. The whole-school approach is based on the assumption that bullying is a systemic problem, and by implication, an intervention must be directed at the entire school context rather than just at individual bullies and victims. (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004, p. 548)

It is essential that school personnel, understand the complex ecological systems in which bullying occurs (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). School staff can also be known as stakeholders in a school's bullying prevention program because of their investment in the
program, such as time and resources. Gross and Godwin (2005) state that in an educational institution, such as school, stakeholders will either gain or lose from the implementation of a new program. School staff, who are stakeholders in a bullying prevention program, may include school administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff. Stakeholder theory suggests that attention needs to be focused on stakeholders who affect and are affected by a system or organization. Once a bullying prevention program is in place, it is important to conduct an evaluation of the program examining the implementation process of the program and progress achieved towards desired goals (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). In conducting a program evaluation of a bullying prevention program, the stakeholders may be included in the evaluation to share their insights of the program.

There are over 300 published violence prevention school-based programs, but less than one-third of these programs have been empirically validated (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). The magnitude of available interventions makes selecting a bullying prevention program a challenge for schools. Even after a program has been selected, it is important to find out if the program is effective at preventing and/or reducing bullying behaviors. In order to create an effective bullying prevention programs in schools, “educators must understand the social ecology that establishes and maintains bully and victimization behaviors” (Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p.1). The evaluation of bullying intervention programs is, in itself, another complex issue.
Program Evaluation

Finding ways to end bullying has led schools to look at bullying prevention programs. Urbanski and Permuth (2009) state, “Merely ignoring a bullying problem will not make it go away, while addressing it can make a difference” (p. 159). “It is widely accepted that countering bullying requires a ‘whole school approach’ in which the elements and initiatives in a program are carefully coordinated” (Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004). After the suicide of the three boys in Norway, Olweus developed what is known to be the first major anti-bullying intervention program by schools at a national level (Rigby et al.). Today there are many innovative bullying prevention programs throughout the United States and worldwide such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Expect Respect, and Bully Busters (Leff, Power & Goldstein, 2004). But there is little data to support accurate data collection procedures, well validated outcome measures, and procedures to ensure consistent program implementation (Leff, Power, Manz, Costigan, & Nabors, 2001). There have been attempts to show that anti-bullying prevention programs result in a decrease in bullying, but the results have been varied, often showing minimal success, or no success to show significant improvement (Rigby et al.). Researchers have often used anonymous questionnaires, teacher/parent rating scales, and/or observations to measure changes in bullying behaviors, thus a model for program evaluation of bullying programs, has yet to be clearly identified in the literature (Rigby et al.)
Program evaluation emerged in the 1960s as federal funds were made available to develop large scale curriculum projects and initiate programs to equalize and upgrade health, educational and social services for all citizens. Over the next three decades the emphasis on program evaluation continued as educational and social organizations were held accountable for careful use of resources and achievement of objectives in the 1970s, the stress on excellence and international competition in the 1980s, and in the 1990s with organizations inside and outside the United States using evaluation to assure quality of services delivered. Stufflebeam (1999) defines evaluation as a "study designed and conducted to assist some audience to assess an object's merit and worth" and program evaluation as a study designed to evaluate "any coordinated set of activities directed at achieving goals" (p. 2). A variety of program evaluation models or approaches are vital for the professionalization of program evaluation and its scientific operation and style. Given that there is a diverse variety of program evaluations employed, evaluation researchers need to determine when and how evaluation approaches are best applied under what circumstances.

Stufflebeam (1999) classifies program evaluation into four categories. The first, pseudoevaluations, promote a positive or negative view of a program's actual merit or worth and Stufflebeam cautions that these types of evaluations are inappropriate studies and consist of no valid evaluation practices. The second approach, questions/methods-oriented approaches include studies that "employ as their starting points operational objectives, standardized measurement devices, cost analysis procedures, expert judgment,
a theory or model of a program, case study procedures, management information systems, designs for controlled experiments, and/or a commitment to using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods” (p.4). Improvement/accountability – oriented evaluations, the third approach, are expansive examinations that are comprehensive in considering a wide range of questions and criteria to assess a program’s value to assess or improve a program’s merit and worth. The fourth approach, social agenda/directed (advocacy) models, typically favor a constructivist approach and use qualitative methods to employ the perspectives of stakeholders as well as experts in judging the program and often serve the interests of underprivileged groups or a social mission. Stufflebeam’s second approach, the questions/methods approach, supports this program evaluation of bullying programs, with analysis of quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from interviews. One type of questions/methods approach is the mixed methods study (Stufflebeam, 1999). The mixed methods study employs formative evaluations to examine program development and implementation and summative evaluations look at whether objectives have been met. Use of both qualitative and quantitative methods allow for depth, scope and dependability of the findings. Mixed methods studies are most effective for examining a program as it is developing and to check for effectiveness when it has been in place long enough to have produced some results. The sources of the evaluation questions are the program’s goals, plans and stakeholders.

The Program Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation under the direction of Stufflebeam were developed
as criteria for judging the soundness of evaluation design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). There are 30 standards which are divided into four categories; utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. Utility standards guide evaluations making sure the evaluation is informative, timely and useful. Feasibility standards ensure the evaluation is appropriate to the study and be cost effective and require practical amounts of time and personnel for those involved. Propriety standards reflect that the evaluation is conducted legally and ethically, assuring the human subjects taking part in an evaluation are informed, protected, and treated fairly. Accuracy standards support that the evaluation produces valid, reliable, and comprehensive judgments about the program's worth. (See Appendix A).

Program evaluations of bullying prevention programs have produced data gathered from a variety of sources such as questionnaires administered to students and staff, teacher and/or parent ratings of individual students, direct inquiry with students as to who are the students doing the bullying and who are the students who are victims, pre-test/post-test designs, and observational methods (Rigby, Smith, & Pepler, 2004). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) has its own evaluation questionnaire, the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ), which has been adapted and used to evaluate other bullying prevention programs also. Less common have been the face-to-face interviews with stakeholders. Espelage and Swearer (2004), in developing their Sociological Framework of Bullying among Youth, state that the school is part of the
social ecology of an individual, making the school personnel stakeholders who may offer information that is directly related to program success.

Stakeholders, who have invested time and resources into a program which they believe to be important and will further the productivity of their cause, use program evaluation as a process by which to do this. Evaluations of bullying intervention and prevention programs have usually been conducted by the stakeholders of the program, such as a principal of a school evaluating the success of his or her own bullying prevention program. Program evaluations that have been conducted by the stakeholders of the program, allows for the possibility of experimenter bias, which diminishes the credibility of the findings (Pepler, Smith, & Rigby, 2004).

While program evaluations can vary, program evaluators may use a tool such as the logic model to guide their evaluation. "The logic model process is a tool that has been used by program managers and evaluators to describe the effectiveness of their programs" (McCawley, 1997, p. 1). Logic models link the problem (situation) to the intervention (inputs and outputs), and the impact (outcomes). Logic models can also be used as a planning tool “allowing for the precise communication about the purposes of a project, the components of a project, and the sequence of activities and accomplishments” (p. 1). The logic model may be used for program planning as well as program evaluation. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program provides a sample of a logic model for the implementation and evaluation of the program (Hazelden Foundation, 2008). (See Figure
3). Using this logic model for program evaluation provides a tool that acts as a rubric to check for effective program implementation and outcomes.

While there is no one way to evaluate bullying prevention programs, program evaluation methods that involve mixed methods of collecting data such as surveys and interviews with stakeholders; and using a logic model as a tool for planning and guiding the process of the program evaluation, work together to support a questions/methods approach to program evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short &amp; Long Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Evaluation Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to accomplish our set of activities, we will need the following:</td>
<td>In order to achieve our outcomes, we will accomplish the following activities:</td>
<td>We expect that once accomplished, these activities will produce the following evidence or service delivery:</td>
<td>We expect that if accomplished, these activities will lead to the following changes:</td>
<td>We expect that if accomplished, these activities will lead to the following changes in 7-10 years.</td>
<td>We will use the following methods to measure our short- and long-term outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsement from school administrators at the school</td>
<td>12 members from the coordinating committee will participate in a 2-day training the first year and a 1-day training the second year and govern the program</td>
<td>Teachers of all grades will conduct 20-40 minute classroom meetings with students</td>
<td>The number of students who report being bullied will be reduced.</td>
<td>The number of incidents regarding bullying and other violent behavior will be reduced in and out of school.</td>
<td>School staff members will be given pre-program and post-program questionnaires to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification and involvement of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee at the school</td>
<td>throughout the projects.</td>
<td>bullying prevention and response.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff members will be trained in the Olweus program and will be given materials to support their efforts.</td>
<td>Other school staff will appropriately respond to incidents regarding bullying and will promote anti-bullying behavior.</td>
<td>The number of students who bully will be reduced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will report feeling safe coming to school.</td>
<td>The anonymous student survey (OBQ) will be administered in early fall and at the close of the next school year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training and technical assistance from Olweus-Certified Trainers</th>
<th>The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire will be distributed to students in grades 3-5.</th>
<th>School performance will increase as a result of students feeling safe in their schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers will provide information to parents about bullying during parent meetings.</td>
<td>Reports of general antisocial behavior (e.g., vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy) among students will be reduced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials and data collection tools from Professional and Educational Services at the Hazelden Foundation</th>
<th>Rules and policies will be gathered and reviewed.</th>
<th>Other schools in this school district will adopt the Olweus program as a result of the successful outcomes of this school’s program.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff members will hold individual meetings with children who bully, with children who are targets of bullying and with parents.</td>
<td>Youth attitudes toward school work and school will improve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible funding from an identified source</th>
<th>All parents will be given information about the bullying prevention</th>
<th>Peer relations at school will improve.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School wide rules against bullying will be adopted and disseminated.</td>
<td>Youth attitudes toward school work and school will improve.</td>
<td>Other schools in this school district will adopt the Olweus program as a result of the successful outcomes of this school’s program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commitment from school staff members to implement the program with students. | Current practices for unstructured times will be reviewed. | A coordinated method of supervision during unstructured times and on the bus will be adopted. | The number of students who report being comfortable talking to a teacher and/or a parent about bullying will increase.

*Figure 3.* Logic Model for Implementation and Program Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Evaluation (Hazelden Foundation, 2008).

**Program Evaluation of Bullying Prevention Programs in Virginia Public Schools**

The quantitative review of data on bullying can also shed light on a program’s effectiveness. In 2005, the Virginia General Assembly enacted legislation to include bullying prevention as a mandatory component of character education. This program also addresses the inappropriateness of bullying, as defined in the Student Conduct Policy Guidelines adopted by the Board of Education pursuant to *Code of Virginia* (22.1-279.6). Many schools have implemented bullying prevention programs. While the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has no form of evaluation in place to monitor these programs and does not officially record which schools have bullying prevention programs, there is quantitative information available regarding bullying incidents and responses in Virginia’s public schools. In the Commonwealth of Virginia there are two annual reports that address the number of bullying offenses reported in K-12 public
schools. The *Code of Virginia* (22.1-279.3:1) requires schools in Virginia to report data on incidents of discipline, crime, and violence (DCV). The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence is a report published yearly since 1991 in which Virginia uses reporting consistent with the federal standards and reports on 130 offense codes and data elements that are consistent with those recommended by the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Forum on Education Statistics (Virginia Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence, 2009-2010). Data are collected from individual school divisions and are reported by division and region. The report compares data with reported incidents from the previous year, but caution must be used when comparing data from year to year due to changes in reporting requirements over time, variations in methods used by divisions to collect and manage data, and differences in division conduct policies and programming (DCV, 2009-2010). For example the code “harassment” was reported as “bullying” in 2006-2007 (DCV, 2007-2008).

The second report is The Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results, which addresses each school’s safety policies, practices and conditions for the past school year (The Virginia School Safety Audit Report Results, 2009-2010). Legislation enacted in 2005 designated the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS) of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice (DCJS) to administer its first safety audit which allowed schools and school divisions to meet their Code mandate to report safety data annually to the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS, 2010). This is an online survey completed
by individual schools and also by the school division. The most recent report showed 100% participation of schools and school districts.

The most current data show that bullying has decreased 10.19% over the past five school years, declining from 7,031 offenses in 2006-2007 to 6,314 in 2010-2011 in Virginia public schools. According to the 2010 Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results, more than one-third of schools, 37%, reported administering an anonymous school safety survey to students and among these schools, bullying was the top safety concern for elementary, middle, and high school students. Bullying has also been identified as the top concern among students for the past three years (Virginia School Safety Survey, 2010). When asked to indicate whether a formal school safety/prevention program was currently in place at their school, the majority of schools, 76%, reported bullying prevention programs. When asked to respond to an open-ended question asking for the respondent to describe their school’s primary safety-related issue or emerging trend during the 2009-2010 school year, the largest percentage 15.4% listed bullying and 4.9% listed cyber-bullying, for a total of 20.3% responses related to bullying. This can be compared to the next emerging concern of fighting/conduct problems at 6.3%. Clearly, bullying is a significant concern for schools.

**Evaluation Questions**

Data from The Virginia School Safety Audit Results (2010) shows that 75.9% schools in Virginia reported having a bullying prevention program. Despite the large
number of programs implemented, the number of bullying offenses reported has only decreased 10.2% over the last five school years in Virginia. Evaluation of schools with bullying prevention programs may assist school administrators in understanding why these differences exist. This research study will strive to evaluate the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programs of three elementary schools in Virginia that were recommended as schools with successful bullying prevention programs as a result of the research by Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett, (2011).

The evaluation questions for this program evaluation are:

1. To what extent are there confirmatory outcomes of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program between the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence?

2. To what extent has the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program been implemented with fidelity to the *Four Levels of General Requirements* of the program?

3. What are the facilitating conditions and constraints to the fidelity of implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program?
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Research History

The first systematic examination of the nature and prevalence concerning school bullying began in the 1970s in Scandinavia with the book *Aggression in the Schools – Bullies and Whipping Boys*, by Dr. Dan Olweus (Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004). His research became more widely consulted when three adolescent boys, from Norway, committed suicide within a short time of each other (Olweus, 1993). To further his research, Olweus (1987) obtained data from 140,000 students from 715 schools finding that 15%, or one out of seven children in Norwegian schools, were involved in bullying to some degree. About 94% of the students were classified as victims, while 6% were classified as bullies (Olweus, 1991). In 1989, Olweus developed two versions of the Bully/Victim Questionnaire for grades one to four and for grades five to nine (Olweus & Limber, 2001).

Following Olweus’ seminal study, other researchers in Europe emerged with similar findings. Stephenson and Smith (1987) and Whitney and Smith (1993) of England, Rigby and Slee (1991) and Slee (1995) of Australia, and Hillery (1989) of Ireland all found a prevalence of bullying among students. Stephenson and Smith (1987) found that 7% of their sample was bullied. Whitney and Smith (1993) of England found that 7% of their sample identified as victims of bullying, 10% were bullies, and 6% were
both victims and bullies. Whitney and Smith (1993) reported that 10% were bullied at least once a week and, in a previous study by Smith in 1991, it was found that 8% of primary students and 10% of secondary students admitted bullying other students once a week. In Australia, Rigby and Slee (1991) reported that 10% of the girls and 11% of the boys were "picked on a lot". In another study, Slee (1995) noted that 26% of students sampled were bullied once a week or more often. In Ireland, Hillery (1989) reported that 43% of the participants admitted to bullying another student occasionally and 3% to once a week or more.

American researchers have generally disliked using the word bullying – although the American media has been uses it in discussions of school violence (Rigby, 2002). In April of 1999, the focus on school aggression in the United States took a dramatic turn after two students at Columbine High School shot 12 students and one teacher, injured 24 others, and then committed suicide (Larkin, 2007). While other countries were researching bullying, the United States had invested little into their own research studies (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008). The horrific events at Columbine sparked what Olweus, bullying prevention pioneer, referred to it as an “explosion in research” on the topic of bullying (Vail, 2011).

Research conducted in other countries has been critical to the United States’ understanding of bullying and victimization among school-aged youth, but the U.S. has situations and policies that are unique (Swearer & Espelage, 2004). For example, most
research conducted in the U.S. to gather information from students must have parental
permission, which influences the demographics of the participants (Espelage & Swearer,
2004). Legislative mandates, research policies, and school shootings are unique factors
to the U.S. that may influence research conducted in U.S. schools (Espelage & Swearer,
2004). By 2001, only one large-scale study on bullying had taken place in the United
States (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and
Scheidt (2001) conducted a study of 15,686 sixth through tenth graders by surveying
about bullying and found 29.9% of the students reported moderate to frequent
involvement in bullying, of which 13% identified themselves as bullies, 10.6% as
victims, and 6.3% as bully-victims. This study provided a starting place for future
bullying research (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). DeVoe, Kaufman, Miller, Noonan,
Snyder, and Baum (2003) found that 7% of students, ages 12–18 reported that they had
been bullied at school. The percentage of students in this age range who had been bullied
increased from 5 percent in 1999 to 8 percent in 2001, but no differences were detected
between 2001 and 2003. Unnever and Cornell (2003) conducted a study to assess the
nature and extent of attitudes towards bullying in middle schools. Based on the data of
six middle schools and over 2,400 students, their results showed that 48 percent of the
students thought they could join bullying a student whom they didn’t like, and 64 percent
of the students almost never or only once in a while tried to prevent bullying (Unnever &
Cornell, 2003). Prevalence of bullying in elementary schools is higher than that of
middle and high school. (Dake, et al., 2003). Research indicates that bullying reaches its
peak in early adolescence and then tapers off throughout the secondary years of school (Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2004).

**Bullying Behaviors**

Bullying can take four basic forms: physical aggression, verbal aggression, relational aggression, and cyber bullying (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Physical and verbal aggression, also known as direct bullying, are more recognizable because they are generally seen or heard and there may be tangible evidence (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Physical aggression may involve hitting, kicking, destroying physical property and enlisting a friend to assault someone for you (Beatty & Alexeyev, 2008; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Verbal aggression may occur as name calling, taunting, teasing, spreading rumors, extortion or threats (Beatty & Alexeyev, 2008; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Indirect bullying can be relational aggression or cyber bullying (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Relational aggression or gestural aggression (Rigby, 2002) is the demonstration of threatening or obscene gestures, exclusion of others, manipulating friendships or staring deliberately at someone (Beatty & Alexeyev, 2008; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Cyber bullying involves the use of technology, such as e-mail, to harass or intimidate someone (Beatty & Alexeyev, 2008, Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). What makes these behaviors bullying is that someone is repeatedly hurting another person on purpose (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009).
The Bully

Many researchers have found bullying to be more prevalent in boys than in girls and in younger children rather than older children (Nansel, et al. 2001; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Rigby & Slee, 1993.) There has been a substantial amount of research that supports that boys are more aggressive than girls (Block, 1983; Parke & Slaby, 1983). On the other hand, an important study by Crick and Grotpeter (1995) showed relational aggression as a type of aggression more characteristic of girls and involves girls hurting each other by damaging relationships or reputation. Recent research supports that differences in types of bullying and the gender involved may depend on contextual factors that might vary between research studies such as the definition of aggression, the method of assessment and the age of the participant (Knight, Guthrie, Page, & Fabes, 2002; Espelage & Swearer, 2004).

The male bully may be one boy or a group of boys (Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). A bully group is referred to as a contagion (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Christie (2005) states that there is evidence that the frequency of girls being the bully is increasing. Some research suggests that bullies are deficient in social problem solving while other research finds the bully to have positive social competencies and be seen as popular, powerful, attractive, and a leader by peers (Slee, 1993; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl & Van Acker, 2006; Thunfors & Cornell, 2008; Vaillancourt, Hymel & McDougall, 2003). Sometimes bullying is considered a dyadic
process where there is one bully and one victim (Sanders & Phye, 2004). According to Sutton and Smith (1999), bullying should not be seen as a dyadic process but as a group phenomenon because often more than one child is involved directly or indirectly with the bullying that occurs in their school.

Ramirez (2001) studied 315 students between the ages of 10 – 15 years of age and found that there were distinctly different characteristics between bullies and victims. “Bullies scored higher on psychoticism (to be affected by psychosis) and leadership measures while victims scored significantly higher on anxiety and shyness scales” (Sanders & Phye, 2004, p.6). Olweus (1978) identified two kinds of bullies: the aggressive bully and the anxious bully (Sanders & Phye, 2004). The aggressive bully often initiates the bullying, is easily provoked, and may seek out followers to join in the behaviors. The aggressive bully feels no remorse, possesses skills to avoid blame, and may use direct and indirect verbal aggression such as staring and hurtful words. On the other hand, the anxious bully, rarely initiates the bullying, and works alongside the aggressive bully (Sanders & Phye, 2004). The anxious bully often has low self-esteem and lacks confidence as an individual. Olweus (1978) indicated that the anxious bully most likely follows the aggressive bully and seeks approval from the aggressive bully to compensate for inadequate feelings about him or herself.
The Victim

Olweus 1993 states that a student who is the target of repeated coercive behavior, from another student, becomes a victim of bullying. Research has shown that victims vary in their academic, social, mental, physical, and interpersonal characteristics (Ma, 2004). Victims may be classified as passive or submissive; display varying levels of aggression, or persist in irritating their peers, which is known as provocative (Olweus, 1997, 1984, 1997; Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988).

Academically victims tend to appear to be less intelligent and demonstrate poorer academic performance than non-victims (Perry et al., 1988; Roland, 1989). Victims also tend to demonstrate less social intelligence, social cognition, and mental skills than their peers (Kaukiainen, Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, Osterman, Salmivalli, Forsblom, & Ahlbom, 1999; Sutton, Smith & Swettenham, 1999). Victims often have few to no close friends at school, but tend to have a close relationship with their parents (Olweus, 1978). Victims may have low self-esteem and see themselves as dull, stupid, and worthless (Slee, 1994). Bullies often target a victim because the victim is at a physical disadvantage such as being overweight, disabled, or physically unattractive (Olweus, 1997; Sweeting & West, 2001). "Being bullied creates a vicious cycle. These students tend to feel badly about themselves which predisposes them to being bullied. This in turn, makes them feel badly about themselves and thus vulnerable to even more victimization" (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008, p. 6).
The Bully-Victim

Students who bully but are also victims are referred to as bully-victims (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Bully-victims demonstrate high levels of aggression and depression and are often the most disliked students in the classroom (Veenstra, Lindenber, Oldehinkel, DeWinter, Verhulst, & Ormel, 2005; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). They tend to score low on measures of academic competence, pro-social behavior, self-control, social acceptance and self-esteem and are at risk for consequences of bullying behavior and victimization (Veenstra, Lindenber, Oldehinkel, DeWinter, Verhulst, & Ormel, 2005; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Haynie et al. (2001) found that out of 4,263 middle school students, 53% of the 301 students who had reported bullying three or more times over the last year had also reported being bullied or victimized three or more times. These researchers also found that bully-victims have the “least optimal psychosocial functioning” when compared with bullies and bullying victims (Urbanski & Permuth, p. 55).

The Bystander

*Bystanders are onlookers of the bullying and can either stand by and do nothing, encourage the bullying, or intervene to help the victim* (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). “Bystanders are those who witness, or are aware of a bullying situation without, taking an active part in the bullying” (Urbanski & Permuth, p. 56). Bystanders may respond to a
bullying situation by following the lead of the bully; reinforce the bully through comment, gestures, or body language; observe the bullying behavior but not get involved; oppose the behavior but not help because of fear; or defend the victim and try to stop the bullying behavior (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Essentially the bystander can play a crucial role by either reinforcing the bully or defending those at risk of being bullied (Sanders & Phye, 2004).

A study of bullying on playgrounds found observers to be present 88% of the time during bullying situations, but to intervene in only 19% of the situations (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; as cited in Urbanski & Permuth, 2009). Atlas and Pepler (1998) found similar results in a study they conducted on urban school playgrounds. During their study it was observed that peers were involved in 85% of the bullying episodes, participants in 48% of the episodes, reinforced the bullying 81% of the time, but only intervened 13% of the observed episodes.

**The Teacher**

Bystanders of bullying are usually thought to be peers, but in the school setting the teacher can also be a bystander. "Emerging evidence indicates that individual teacher responses to bullying may be an important area to be included in investigations of student bullying and victimization experiences" (Yoon, 2004, p. 37). *Teachers are the ones who are more likely to handle bullying situations* (Smith & Sharp, 1994; Smith & Thompson;
1991; as cited in Yoon & Kerber, 2004), yet research is still lacking in the area of teachers’ understanding of and responses to bullying (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005).

Research has found that sometimes teachers do not have an accurate understanding of the definition of bullying. Mishna et al. (2005) asked teachers to define bullying at the beginning of their qualitative study. Teachers acknowledged the existence of an imbalance of power, and the majority of teachers saw bullying as intentional. While teachers knew about indirect and direct bullying, they differed on how serious they considered various forms of bullying. Most teachers did not mention repetition as integral to bullying behavioral patterns.

A teacher’s perspective of bullying can impact their response to bullying. Boulton (1997) conducted a study to find out teachers’ attitudes towards bullying and their ability to deal with bullying. Most teachers considered physical assaults and threats as bullying, but a significant number did not view social exclusion and name-calling as bullying. Yoon and Kerber (2003) found that teachers recognize that there are different forms of bullying, but more teachers felt that physical bullying was the most serious followed by verbal and, to a lesser degree, social exclusion (relational aggression), and are therefore less likely to intervene in bullying situations involving social exclusion. Their research also revealed that teachers are less sympathetic towards the victim of social exclusion and use more lenient solutions such as talking about the problem or ignoring. Passive
approaches such as these can set the tone in a class that this type of behavior is appropriate (Yoon & Kerber).

Yoon (2003) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring three teacher characteristics that influence teacher responses to bullying behaviors: empathy, self-efficacy, and perceived seriousness. Results showed that the three teacher characteristics did in fact play a role in predicting teacher response to bullying behaviors. “Specifically, teachers who perceive bullying more seriously and report higher self-efficacy, and greater empathy were more likely to report that they would intervene” (p. 42).

Teachers tend to think they respond appropriately to bullying, however students do not always agree. According to Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, and Charach (1994), 85% of teachers reported intervening always or often to stop bullying, but only 35% of the students reported teachers intervening. Ziegler and Rosenstein-Manner, 1991 found similar results with 75% of teachers saying they usually intervened, while only 25% of students felt teachers usually intervened. Teachers have stated their lack of intervention is because they do not really know for sure what happened, and some even identify mild bullying as typical child development (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig & Pepler, 1997).

It is clear that school personnel do relatively little to intervene in the bullying cycle at school. There may be a number of reasons for this (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Stephenson and Smith (1988) report that 25% of teachers feel that it is sometimes helpful to ignore a
bullying situation. Because bullying often occurs in the form of verbal intimidation, isolation, and exclusion, teachers may view these behaviors as less serious than physical assaults where the "damage" is easily visible. The social (passive) skills of the victims may be such that teachers are less motivated to intervene and the behavior of the victim may play an important role as well (Batsch & Knoff, 1994). One behavior of victims in response to being bullied is avoidance and withdrawal from social interactions with others in an attempt to deflect attention from themselves, even from a teacher (Xin Mia, 2004).

In 2005, Dutch researchers Fekkes, Pijpers and Verloove-Vanhorick surveyed 2,766 elementary students, finding that only 53 % of the "regularly" bullied students told their teacher about the bullying. Data showed that a substantial number of teachers were unaware that the bullying was occurring. The majority of students said that, when aware, teachers tried to stop the bullying and were successful in about 49 percent of the time. Students who “regularly” bullied other children were also asked if their teacher talked to them about their bullying, and 52.1 % stated that teacher did talk to them. Forty-three percent of the students who reported bullying others frequently indicated that 43 % of teachers never spoke to them about their behavior. Almost half of the bullied students did not tell their teacher and this has been supported in other studies (Whitney & Smith, 1993; Rivers & Smith, 1994; as cited in Fekkes et al., 2005).
Teachers may also bully students. Bullying by teachers or staff is defined as “a pattern of conduct rooted in a power differential that threatens, harms, humiliates, induces fear, or causes students substantial emotional distress” (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009; p. 133). The abuse of power when a teacher bullies a student is an intentional misuse of power. It is a repeated behavior and often occurs in a public setting. When a teacher is a bystander to another teacher bullying a student this can cause tremendous harm to the student and climate at the school. Bullying by adults creates an environment of fear and distrust that can negatively impact a student’s ability to learn (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009).

**The Guidance Counselor**

Bauman, a researcher with a strong interest in the role of *guidance counselors*, began a series of studies, that followed the methodology of Yoon and Kerber (2003), investigating attitudes towards the three types of bullying behaviors (physical, verbal, and relational); and examining the disciplinary strategies used for each behavior. Additionally, her participants for each study varied. Bauman and Hurley (2005) examined experienced and first year teachers. Bauman and Del Rio (2006) examined preservice teachers. Bauman and Jacobsen (2007) examined guidance counselors. The three studies had very similar results. Preservice teachers, first year teachers, experienced teachers, and guidance counselors all indicated they saw physical and verbal bullying more serious and relational bullying as the least serious type of bullying (Bauman &
Hurley, 2005; Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Bauman & Jacobsen, 2007). They all felt less empathy for the victim of relational bullying, were less likely to intervene, and used less aggressive interventions in handing an incident of relational bullying (Bauman & Hurley, 2005; Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Bauman & Jacobsen, 2007). Treating different types of bullying differently makes a statement that one kind of bullying is more permissible than another type of bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). Relational bullying is more ambiguous and therefore may be more difficult to identify. Teachers may be more uncomfortable than guidance counselors in referring incidents of relational bullying, fearing that they as teachers may look less competent in the area of classroom management (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

Bauman and Jacobsen’s (2007) study raised concerns over the fact that guidance counselors, whose job in part is to support the emotional well-being of students, found relational bullying to be less serious. School counselors who had received anti-bullying training rated relational bullying more serious than those without the training (Bauman & Jacobsen, 2007). Overall, school counselors in schools with an anti-bullying program were more likely to intervene in all types of bullying than were guidance counselors from schools without a program (Bauman & Jacobsen, 2007).

Teachers and guidance counselors have separate roles in a school, but both work to promote the academic success and emotional well-being for students (Bauman, 2008). Bauman, Rigby, and Hoppa (2008) conducted a study to differentiate between the various
ways in which both teachers and guidance counselors choose to tackle cases of bullying in school. The training of a guidance counselor is different than a teacher, which leads them to view and intervene in different ways than a teacher (Bauman et al., 2008). The data “suggests that this sample of US teachers and school counselors support imposing sanctions on the bully” (p.847). The least agreement between teachers and guidance counselors has to do with what, if anything, should be done to help the victim. When there was a school policy on bullying, responses indicated that anti-bullying policies reduce the likelihood that bullying will be ignored and increase the likelihood that educators will involve other adults. When an anti-bullying program is in place, there is an increased awareness of bullying when compared to schools that did not have such a program in place, but did not help increase clarity as to what teachers should do in response to an incident. One area of significant difference occurred between the responses of guidance counselors and teachers in working with the bully. Guidance counselors indicated that this was very important which may be due to their training and job role, while teachers did not feel the same way. Data from this research raised concerns regarding current practices in training educators to deal effectively with school bullying. Eighty-six percent of the educators had not received any anti-bullying training in preservice or graduate programs and 42 % worked in schools with no anti-bullying policy (Bauman et al.).
Anti-bullying Programs

"The most tragic outcome of victimization is suicide" (Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004, p.1). In 1983, three adolescent boys in northern Norway died by suicide. The act was most likely a consequence of severe bullying by peers, prompting the country's Ministry of Education to initiate a national campaign against bullying in schools. As a result, the first version of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was developed by Dan Olweus.

Today, there are a variety of anti-bullying programs available such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Bully Busters, The Expect Respect Project, and The Method of Shared Concerns. Urbanski and Permuth, (2009) state that the goals for this type of program are:

- To increase awareness and knowledge about the problem of bullying
- To gain involvement of faculty, staff, students and parents
- To develop clear rules and consequences regarding bullying behavior
- To delineate expected behaviors for students and staff
- To provide support and protection for victims and
- To empower bystanders to safely and respectfully intervene in bullying behaviors" (p. 161).
Anti-Bullying programs differ from each other in some way, such as, some programs are punitive in style, purposely bringing shame to the bully, yet some are non-punitive, encouraging peer mediation and group responsibility for each other among peers (Olweus, 1993; Koivisto, 2004; Pikas, 1989). According to Smith, Pepler, and Rigby (2004) the belief that differs the most is working and counseling with students who have been identified as bullies.

There are different opinions as to the success of anti-bullying programs. Four recent reviews of anti-bullying programs have stated the success of these programs have met with mixed results (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). These studies have reported that there is inconsistency as to whether bullying is decreased when an anti-bullying program is in place or whether one particular anti-bullying program is more effective in reducing bullying. A meta-analysis from 2004 of the effectiveness of 14 whole-school anti-bullying programs by Smith, Schneider, Smith, and Ananiadou (2004) found small to negligible effect sizes for desired changes in student self-reports of both victimization and perpetration. In some cases, the effect was negative indicating an increase in bullying among students (Swearer et al., 2010). Self-reports of victimization and bullying were the most common outcome measures available for review (Smith et al., 2004). While these are not comparable across studies because they refer to incidents occurring at different periods of time, the research illustrated that these self-reports of
victimization and bullying, although not necessarily inaccurate, do not correspond with data obtained from peers, teachers, and observations (Smith et al.).

Vreeland and Carroll (2007) examined the findings of 26 studies which evaluated school-based studies versus classroom curricula studies, whole-school/multidisciplinary interventions, and social and behavioral skill groups targeting specific bullies and victims. They found school-wide programs to be more effective in reducing bullying and victimization than classroom curricula programs and skill groups. Of the 10 studies of whole-school programs evaluated, two studies had examined the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and found disparate results of increases in bullying and victimization. Even though Olweus had conducted evaluations in 1993 and 1994 showing decreases in both areas, Roland (1993, 2000) reported an increase in bullying for boys and an increase in victimization for boys and girls. Seven of the other eight whole-school programs demonstrated some significant improvement in bullying and victimization, although results varied across subsamples and measures.

In 2008, Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, and Isava looked at 16 studies published between 1980 and 2004. The focus was on school bullying interventions broadly and on a range of environments and conditions. This meta-analysis included data from more than 15,000 K-12 students in Europe, Canada, and the United States. Positive effect sizes were found for one third of the outcome classification variables. There was no pattern to the significant effects. Merrell, et al. (2008) concluded that there was some evidence to
support school bullying interventions in "...enhancing students' social competence, self-confidence, and peer acceptance; in enhancing teachers' knowledge of effective practices, feelings of efficacy of regarding intervention skills, and actual behavior in responding to incidences of bullying behavior; and to a lesser extent, in reducing participation by students in bully and victim roles" (Merrell et al., p. 38).

Ttofi, Farrington, and Baldry (2008) yielded some of the most positive, yet mixed results. This study required rigorous study selection procedures which included focus on reducing school bullying, bullying defined clearly, bullying measured using self-report, studies including both experimental and control conditions, inclusion of effect sizes and sample sizes of at least 200. The research found bullying and victimization reduced by 17 to 23 percent, with the programs based on Olweus to be the most effective in comparison to other anti-bullying programs. They also found that certain variables such as parent training, increased playground supervision, non-punitive disciplinary methods, home-school communication, classroom rules, classroom management and use of training videos were associated with reduction in bullying. These mixed results of anti-bullying programs suggest that there is not one program that is suited for all schools (Swearer et al., 2010).
The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a whole-school, “systems-change” program made up of four levels (Olweus & Limber, 2007). These four levels are considered to be general requirements of the program. Within each level are requirements with explicit directions on how to implement the components of that level. (See Appendix B) The four components are the school level, classroom level, individual level and the community level. The program is designed so that administrators, teachers and other staff are responsible for introducing and implementing the program.

The OBPP is based on a core set of guiding principles which are a result of “research on the development and modification of the problem behaviors implied in bullying, most notably aggression or abuse among peers” (Olweus & Limber, 2007). The program is built on the idea that the school environment is characterized by these core principles:

- warmth, positive interest, and involvement by adults
- firm limits to unacceptable behavior
- consistent use of nonphysical, non-hostile negative consequences when rules are broken
- adults who function as authorities and positive role models (Olweus & Limber).
"The goals of OBPP are to reduce existing bullying problems among students, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and achieve better peer relations” (Olweus & Limber, 2007, p.1). The program is designed for elementary, middle and high school students, although there is less data on the effectiveness of the program for students beyond the tenth grade (Olweus & Limber).

OBPP recommends the adoption of the program's four anti-bullying rules which have been developed to specifically address all aspects of bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2007). These rules are:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home (p.51).

The OBPP guide provides a timeline for implementation for the program (see Appendix C). At the school level, the first task is to form a building-level committee, called the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) which will be responsible for the implementation of the program. This committee is comprised of a school administrator, a teacher from each grade level, a non-teaching staff member, and one or two parents depending on the size of the school, a community representative, and
other school-personnel who bring expertise of some type to the focus of the committee. The committee participates in a two-day training led by a certified Olweus trainer. All other school staff, teaching and non-teaching, participate in a one-day training. Much emphasis is placed on the importance of the BPCC establishing consistent procedures for the staff to follow regarding intervening in bullying situations, communication with administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, documentation of offenses and the handling of reports and investigations of bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2007).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has a survey; the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ), that is used by schools that implement the program (Olweus & Limber, 2007). Kyriakides, Kaloyirou & Lindsay (2006) conducted an analysis of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) which analyzed for two separate scales: the items of the questionnaire concerning the extent to which pupils are being victimized, and those items concerning the extent to which pupils express bullying behavior. Using the Rasch model, both scales were analyzed for reliability, fit to the model, meaning, and validity. Both scales were also analyzed separately for boys and girls to test their variance. The OBQ was found to be a psychometrically sound instrument with satisfactory psychometric properties; construct validity and reliability.

One of the first tasks of the BPCC is to administer the OBQ to the students in grades 3-12 before the program begins. The survey is anonymous and takes
approximately 45 minutes to complete. The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire has three main purposes:

1. It creates awareness and involvement on the part of adults by providing detailed information about bullying and the social relationships among students.

2. It helps the school tailor its bullying prevention efforts to the needs of your particular school community.

3. It measures changes in bullying behavior over time and provides information on program progress and any bullying problems that need additional efforts. (Olweus & Limber, 2007, p. 39).

The OBQ allows the committee to understand the nature and extent of bullying problems in the school, provides information regarding the school environment that might contribute to the bullying, and provides a common definition of bullying for students (Olweus & Limber, 2007). The questionnaire can also be used to assess the program's effectiveness and inform the future efforts of the plan. The OBQ is typically administered once a year, seven to eight weeks after school begins or winter break.

The OBPP has several activities that are considered critical to the success of the program. Class meetings are encouraged on a weekly or regular basis (Olweus & Limber, 2007). These class meetings offer students time to build a sense of cohesion, teach and
discuss rules, and help students understand their role in the program. Another activity, which takes place during the class meeting, is role-playing. "Role playing is key to helping students' problem-solve and generate solutions for bullying situations" (p. 47). Parents and the surrounding community are also considered an important part of the OBPP. Communication through newsletters, workshops and discussion groups help build a relationship where the school, parents and community work together.

**Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Research Results**

The initial evaluations of the Olweus Bullying Prevention program took place between 1983 and 1985 in Bergen, Norway (Limber, 2011). These evaluation, later called the First Bergen Project Against Bullying, showed considerable decreases in students’ self-reports of being bullied by 62% after eight months and 64% after 20 months, a decrease in the number of students bullying others from 33% after eight months and 53% after 20 months, and decreases in teachers’ and students’ on bullying among students in the classroom. Six more evaluations followed involving over 150 schools and approximately 20,000 students. One of these evaluations, a five-year follow-up study of 14 schools, had decreases of self-reports of victimization of 40% and relative decrease of self-reported bullying by 51%. While these reports were considered significant that a program had considerable long-term effects, these types of results have never been able to be replicated (Limber, 2011).
Evaluations in the United States have taken place over diverse settings. The first evaluation took place in South Carolina in the mid-1990s (Limber, 2011). The participants were primarily African-American from large rural school districts of low socio-economic status. Results were mixed with both decreases and increases in bullying among students and no significant effects for students' reports on being bullied. The researchers did document low fidelity of implementation and felt that after the second year of implementation it could no longer be considered the OBPP.

In six Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, elementary and middle schools, the OBPP was evaluated over four years (Black & Jackson, 2007; as cited in Limber, 2011). Data were collected through observation of elementary school students on the playground and middle school students in the lunchroom. “Bullying density decreased 45% from 65 students per 100 hours to 36 incidents per 100 hours, but because of substantial attrition among respondents, it was felt conclusions could not be drawn from these reports” (p. 81).

A nonrandomized control study was conducted in Washington in 10 middle schools (Limber, 2011). In this study, researchers found decreases in physical bullying by 37% and decreases in relational victimization of 28% among white students, but did not find similar effects for students of other races and ethnicities.
In California, a study was conducted involving three elementary schools over a three year period using a cohort design (Limber, 2011). Data were collected through use of the OBQ with students and another similar version adapted for teachers. This study showed decreased self-reports of being bullied by 21% the first year and 14% the second year. Results from the anonymous teacher survey showed a strong consensus among staff that the teachers felt they were consistent in handling bullying and felt there had been clear communication throughout the entire school when the program was established.

In Virginia, recent research has showed encouraging results for OBPP. Goodwin, Fobbs, and Moffett (2011) conducted a study with 61 elementary and middle schools and one alternative school, which analyzed the four questions from the OBQ that dealt with the main objectives of this program: changes in the climate of the school and changes in bullying behavior. Between 2006 and 2010, Virginia had 90 schools from 10 school districts, over 94,000 students, participating in the OBPP. Thirty-four of the schools had two years of follow-up data and 28 schools had one year of follow-up data. Wilcoxon Rank Sum Tests were used to analyze the four questions and chi-squared tests were used to evaluate changes in bullying behavior by year and school level. The results of the study showed decreases in the frequency of students being bullied by others and students bullying other students, especially after the first year and at the middle schools. The question having to do with an increase of the students’ perception of the teacher actively counteracting bullying in the classroom varied more when comparing schools with one
year of data and those with two years of data than the other questions. In conclusion the researchers stated that there were differences in the fidelity of implementation of the OBPP at the schools, some having done a much better job than others, but individual school results were not shared (Goodman et al., 2011).

Studies evaluating the success of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program have produced varying results, but there is still a place for more research to understand why some implementations of the OBPP are more successful than others (Limber, 2011). With more than 90 schools having implemented this program in the state of Virginia, there is significant need to know why the program’s success differs from one school to the next and be able to apply this knowledge and provide schools and their stakeholders with the best bullying prevention program possible (Goodwin, et al., 2010).
Chapter 3

Methodology

Bullying is a topic of much discussion among students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators. In the United States, school bullying has gained attention over the past decade, mostly as a result of the violence occurring in schools and even more so recently with the potential effect it can have on school performance in regards to mandated state testing such as the Virginia Standards of Learning and the requirements of passing these tests in order to receive a high school diploma. The goal of any bullying prevention program is to stop bullying, even before it ever begins. Despite all good intentions to stop bullying behavior, not all programs or strategies are effective. Once a bullying prevention program is in place, it is important to evaluate the program to determine the extent of program implementation and program effectiveness (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009).

Program Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The purpose of this study is to conduct a program evaluation of implementation fidelity and outcomes, of the OBPP, in three elementary schools in Virginia that have evidence of reduced numbers of students involved in bullying. These particular elementary schools are being selected from a study conducted by Goodman, Fobbs, and Moffett’s (2011) reported findings in their recent study of 62 elementary and middle
schools in Virginia. Thirty-four of these schools had a pretest and two years of follow-up data and twenty-eight schools had a pretest and follow-up data of one year. Research focused on four questions from the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) which related to changes in school climate and changes in bullying behaviors; two of the main objectives of the program. These questions used 4 and 5 point ordinal scales. "Wilcoxon Rank Sum Tests were used to evaluate changes in the four key questions from Year 0 – Year 1 and Year 1 and Year 2, for each school. Chi-squared tests were used to evaluate changes in frequent bullying behaviors by year as well as differences by school type" (Lee, T., Cornell, D., & Cole, J.C.M., 2011). Some of these schools reported statistically significant increases in students reporting they had been spoken to frequently by a teacher about their bullying behaviors, an increase in students who felt teachers had addressed bullying situations more frequently, a decrease in frequency of students being bullied, and/or a decrease in students reporting they had bullied others.

Goodman et al. (2011) state that some of the schools in their study implemented the program with less fidelity than others and often because of something over which the school had little or no control. Talking to stakeholders such as school administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors may provide further information and understanding of implementation practices and their impact on reductions in bullying in a school. For this reason, this program evaluation will seek to find data from interviews to support the decreases in bullying at the three schools. If educators know what other educators who have participated in the implementation of an OBPP feel were the facilitating conditions
and constraints in their program’s implementation and success of their program in reducing bullying behaviors, there is the possibility for more schools to conduct an implementation of the program that has desired outcomes.

**Evaluation Questions**

1. To what extent are there confirmatory outcomes of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program between the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence?
2. To what extent has the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program been implemented with fidelity to the *Four Levels of General Requirements* of the program?
3. What are the facilitating conditions and constraints to the fidelity of implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program?

**Research Design**

This research study was a program evaluation using a mixed-methods approach. A mixed-methods approach is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Quantitative data was collected from extant Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) summary results and the Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) results. Qualitative data was collected in the form of individual interviews with
stakeholders in the program being evaluated. “Qualitative and quantitative data can be combined when they elucidate complimentary aspects of the same phenomenon” (Patton, 1999, p. 1194). Qualitative data from interviews with stakeholders provided data from people who are participants in a school’s OBPP.

**Quantitative Research Phase**

**Quantitative participants and setting.** The participants in this program evaluation were from three elementary schools in Virginia. The schools selected within the divisions are all elementary schools, with the purpose of studying schools with the youngest age-group of students where bullying begins. These schools were selected because they are likely to be “information rich” in data contributing to the program evaluation and because they have all implemented the OBPP (Gall et al., 2007) and were found to have reported statistically significant decreases in bullying (Goodman et al., 2011).

**Quantitative instrumentation.** The Olweus Bully Questionnaire is an anonymous self-report survey, which was originally used in 1986 and then was revised in 1996, has also undergone many modifications by some of those using the questionnaire (Lee & Cornell, 2010; Furlong, Sharkey, Felix, Tanigawa & Green, 2010). The survey has been used in over 15 countries including the United States (Lee & Cornell). Evidence of published support for the validity of the OBQ is lacking and Olweus himself acknowledges this, but claims the data is not there and just has not been published due to
lack of time (Lee & Cornell). In responses to a charges of a lack of published research, Limber (2011) states,

Assessments of the reliability of the OBQ have been quite positive. At the individual level (with individual subjects as the unit of analysis), scales assessing frequency of being bullied and those assessing frequency of bullying others have typically yielded internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) in the .80s or higher, depending on the number of items included in the scales. In analyses in which the school is the unit of analysis, the reliabilities have been even higher, typically in the .90s (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Positive assessments have also been made regarding the validity of OBQ. For example, Olweus (1994) reported that scales assessing being bullied or bullying others correlated in the .40 -.60 range (Pearson correlations) with reliable peer ratings on related dimensions. (p. 74)

The DCV uses incident-based reporting that is consistent with federal standards. It is a self-reporting process which requires superintendents to verify the accuracy of this data to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The process employs 130 - 139 offense codes and data elements that are consistent with those recommended by the National Center for Education Statistics. Incidents range in seriousness from minor disruptions to serious offenses that may involve suspension and even expulsion. Data is reported yearly on the 130 plus offenses for school divisions and regions (Virginia Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence 2009-2010).
**Data collection.** The quantitative research phase of this program evaluation involved the reviewing of the results of two reports from each school participating in this research study: the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) report and The Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence. All available results from the administration of the OBQ were requested from the schools and reviewed. Data from The Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence were collected for the division and region beginning one year prior to the implementation of the program. These data can be accessed from the VDOE website.

**Data analysis.** Quantitative data from the existing Olweus Bully Questionnaire (OBQ) reports were analyzed for each year that it had been administered. Analysis of the OBQ report assisted in answering the second research question.

The Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence was analyzed for each of the three school’s division and Region, beginning with one year prior to the implementation of the program at each of the schools through the 2010 report. The intent was to review the bullying (BU1) data, which are the bullying incident results for each school district and region, beginning with one year prior to implementing the OBPP. This data will assisted in answering the first research question.

**Qualitative Research Phase**

The qualitative phase consisted of interviews with stakeholders. The steps in preparing and conducting interviews are: defining the purpose of the interview; selecting
a sample; designing the interview format; developing questions; conducting a pilot test of
the interview; conducting the actual interview; and analyzing the interview data (Gall et
al., 2007). The instrumentation in this evaluation was the researcher who conducts the
individual interviews with each participant. Interviewing is a conversation “with a
purpose” between the interviewer and participant in order to:

- understand individual perspectives
- probe or clarify
- deepen understanding
- generate rich descriptive data
- gather insights into participants’ thinking
- learn more about the context (Rossman & Rallis, p. 180).

**Interview sample.** The participants at each school included one building
administrator, three classroom teachers, and one guidance counselor. The criteria for the
participants were as follows. The administrator may be a principal or assistant principal
that was at the school when the program was implemented, and if this is not possible, one
that has an active part in the program. The three teachers were selected by the building
administrator based on years of experience at their school. One teacher selected was at
the school at the time of implementation; one teacher was at the school one to three years;
and one teacher was new to the school, either in their first year of teaching there or the
most recent hire. The purpose was to have teachers of different lengths of employment,
providing the opportunity for more in depth information and understanding as to the
implementation phase and the introduction of the program to the teaching staff. The guidance counselor was also asked to participate regardless of length of time at the school. The decision was made by the researcher to interview a few specific individuals from each school in order “to obtain an ‘in-depth understanding’, which is not possible from a larger sample” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.175).

**Data sources.** Interviews consisted of oral questions asked by the interviewer and oral responses from the participants. Participants spoke in their own words and their responses were recorded using an audio recorder. The advantage of interviews is that the interviewer has the flexibility and adaptability to build a rapport with each participant and schedule the interview so that is convenient for all involved. The design of the interview format in qualitative research was that of a standardized open-ended interview using an interview protocol found in Appendix D. The questions were a predetermined sequence of questions, worded the same way for each participant. The data obtained was systematic and thorough, with the process reducing flexibility for the interviewer and participant. The interviewer read the questions using the same wording for each participant, and did not hint at preferred responses. Probes containing specific terminology from the *Four Levels of General Components of the OBPP* were used to encourage rich and in-depth answers to the questions. The interview process and questions were pilot tested at the evaluator’s own school that also uses the OBPP. Feedback guided any changes in the questions that needed to be made.
Data collection. Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett were contacted to request permission to use their data regarding elementary schools that have shown significant decreases in bullying problems. Next, permission was requested by an email from each of the three selected school division's central office to conduct the program evaluation (see Appendix E). After permission was granted, school administrators were contacted first by an email and then followed by a phone call to confirm their participation. Information concerning the process for the selection of participants and interview procedure and protocol was shared. Data will be collected through the process of interviews. The researcher shared that the interview procedures would be recorded with an audio recorder. Tentative dates were scheduled for the interviews. Once the participants had been selected, the Participant Introductory Letter (see Appendix F) and Consent Form (see Appendix G) was emailed to each participant and collected on the day of the interview before it begins.

Data analysis: Interview data was transcribed for analysis. Once the interviews were transcribed, "the qualitative analysis depends on astute pattern recognition" (Patton, 1999, p.1191). Patterns, linkages, and plausible explanations were explained through inductive analysis which is the organizing of data in different ways that might lead to different findings (Patton, 1999). It was important to also analyze the data logically, thinking about other logical possibilities and seeing if those possibilities can be supported by data. The analysis involved coding which entails thinking through what the researcher thinks is evidence of a category or theme (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher
looked for competing themes and explanations that may or may not lead to alternative explanations (Patton). The researcher compared across and within categories to generate constructs, themes, and/or patterns (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

In data analysis, the logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no one single method of collecting data adequately solves the problem of rival explanations (Patton, 1999). It is possible in qualitative inquiry to achieve triangulation by combining different types of methods, mixing purposeful sampling, and including multiple perspectives. The point of triangulation is not to look for data that yield the same results, but to test for the consistency of the results. To achieve triangulation, quantitative and qualitative methods may be combined and analyzed in which they compliment aspects of the same phenomenon. Once analysis of the qualitative data has been completed, the researcher compared interview responses with the quantitative data from the extant reports with the goal of answering the research questions (Patton). The rubric that was used to measure completion of specific steps in the implementation process was the components of the four levels in the OBPP (see Appendix B), some of which are also stated in the logic model. The evaluator has analyzed and compared the logic model with the Four Levels of General Requirements of the OBPP and has noted on the logic model the matching requirements. The analysis of the interview data will assist in answering the second and third research questions.

**Trustworthiness**
Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated that a qualitative research project’s trustworthiness is judged by two sets of standards which are interrelated. First is the study competently conducted and, second is the study ethically conducted. They further stated that, “For a study to be trustworthy, it must be more than reliable and valid, it must be ethical” (p. 63). As recommended by Rossman and Rallis, four dimensions of trustworthiness are considered in the design of this study; transferability, credibility, confirmability, and dependability.

**Transferability.** The standard of generalizability is not part of qualitative research, but what is learned in a study can still be useful for other studies (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In qualitative research it is transferability that is important. Researchers interested in carrying out a program evaluation similar to this one will be able to judge sufficiently as to whether there is enough data to “compare and contrast” with this researcher’s results to make a decision whether the research and results are similar and sufficient enough to apply to their research.

**Credibility.** Qualitative researchers believe they are searching for multiple perspectives about a phenomenon, constructed by the participants, and it is the task of the researcher to present the participants’ account honestly and fully as possible (Rossman & Rallis). In actuality it still is an interpretation by the researcher of what the participant is saying. One way to do this is through member checking, which is the researcher repeating throughout the interview what they feel is being said by the participant.
Member checking will be a part of the interviews. It is the researchers' role to present the true value of the participant's feelings.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability is the third dimension of trustworthiness and is the extent to which the researcher attempts to make sure the perspectives they present are not their own personal perspectives. Reflecting personal perspectives of the researcher can lead to bias and results that may not valid. Qualitative researchers acknowledge that some bias will exist because it is impossible to be disconnected from the process. Reflexivity takes place during the interview setting when the researcher and participant interact and the researcher reacts to the participant's words and actions, trying to hypothesize, build constructs, and patterns based on the researcher's knowledge. Reflexivity is reciprocal between the researcher and participant because the participant also reacts to the interviewer. A relationship exists between the researcher and participant, and the researcher's and participant's reflections on this relationship may compromise the reflexivity of the relationship. A reflexive journal and Researcher as Instrument document have been submitted by the researcher to help the reader explore how the researcher has shaped the project and findings (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

**Dependability.** Dependability refers to the applicability of this research to other situations. Because generalizability does not apply to qualitative research, the focus is on how what is learned from the study may be useful to other research settings (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Usefulness can be established through thick rich description, of what the researcher has learned. The description should be detailed so that others can determine
whether the results can be used in a new, but similar setting. Instead of a replication of the study, others can compare and contrast the specifics of this researcher’s study with their own.

Assumptions

Assumptions in a study are things that are somewhat out of the researcher’s control (Simon, 2011). The selected schools in this research study have been chosen because they currently use the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. It is assumed that the building administrator selected the participants from their school following the specified criteria explained in the Letter of Introduction to the administrator (see Appendix F). It is assumed the participants answered the interview questions honestly because they were informed how their identity will be anonymous and confidential, not using their name or the school’s name (see Appendix G). Participants were also informed by the researcher that they may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study with no ramifications and this should help create an environment of not feeling pressured to answer questions.

It is further assumed that the selected schools participated in collecting data through the yearly administration of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire. It is also being assumed that the selected schools employ the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programs because they understand the dangers of bullying and want to prevent bullying in their schools.
Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought approval through the College of William and Mary Protection of Human Subjects Committee to conduct this research study. Participants were sent an introductory letter (see Appendix F) and were asked to provide written consent (see Appendix G). Participants will also be provided contact information for the Chair of the Protection for Human Subjects Committee should they have any complaints or concerns about the study. Participants were informed of their right to decline to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Limitations

There was limited data access to complete the reviews initially planned in this study. Due to the fact that each school had their own way of documenting the implementation of the OBPP and managing the OBQ data, schools did not save and display their OBQ data in the same format. One school shared data through a power point that had been used at a staff meeting, another school shared the data in an email, and one school was able to email the actual reports the school had received on their OBQ results. In order to compare the OBQ data across all three selected schools, the researcher found four questions from the OBQ for which all schools had similar OBQ data.

Data from the OBQ and DCV collected, did not allow comparisons as planned. OBQ data was collected at the individual school level while DCV data reported incidents
only at the entire school division and regional levels. The researcher had planned to use individual school data sent to the state for compilations into the DCV but this data was not maintained by either the reporting schools or the Department of Education.

**Summary**

This research study design is one of a mixed methods approach, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Schools were specifically chosen because they were elementary schools recommended as a result of the research by Goodman, Fobbs, and Moffett (2011) that had successfully implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The usefulness of this research study is very appropriate when compared and contrasted with other schools using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. “Robert Stake takes the position that, how we learn from the singular case is related to how the case is like and unlike other cases we do know, mostly by comparison” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 236). While qualitative and quantitative data may be useful for external parties, this program evaluation makes no claim of generalization of these findings to other schools using the OBPP.
Chapter 4

Results

Numerous elementary schools in Virginia have implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in an effort to prevent or reduce bullying in school. Little research has been done to assess the effectiveness of this program other than the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) which is given by schools at the time of program implementation, but not always consistently after the initial administrations. While the OBQ gives valuable data that informs a school of strengths and weaknesses in their program, the data is quantitative and does not allow for dialog with the school staff and its Olweus Bullying Committee (OBC). Qualitative data from interviews with stakeholders may provide evidence to support their schools’ successful bullying prevention program.

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of fidelity of implementation and outcomes of the OBPP in three elementary schools in Virginia using a mixed methods approach of reviewing extant data from the school OBQ reports and the Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) and data from interviews with staff from the three schools. These three particular elementary schools were selected from a recent study of 62 elementary and middle schools in Virginia conducted by Goodman, Fobbs, and Moffett (2011) because they were considered to have successful programs in their schools.
Elementary School Staff Interviews

Interviews were scheduled with staff at each of the three Virginia elementary schools to gather qualitative data regarding the fidelity of implementation of the *Four Levels of General Requirements* of the OBPP. Interviews allowed for the participants to elaborate in their own words on their own experiences of being part of a staff from a school using the OBPP. The principal at each of the three elementary schools was asked to provide an administrator, guidance counselor, and three teachers for the interviews; a teacher who was at the school when the program was implemented, a teacher who had been hired after the implementation, and a teacher new to the school. These interviews provided rich qualitative data concerning the fidelity of implementation and current practices of the bullying prevention program at each school. Table 1 provides a description of the staff interviewed at each of the three schools.
Table 1

Description of interviewed participants at each school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal- was the assistant principal when OBPP implemented</td>
<td>Principal – Had only been at school 2 years, was not present at program implementation</td>
<td>Principal – Had been at school 9 years; was present during program implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselor - On original OBC; PT at school now</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor – Present at program implementation; chair person of current OBC</td>
<td>Guidance counselor – Was present during program implementation; on current OBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teacher -On the original OBC; Current Teacher leader and chair of OBC</td>
<td>Second grade teacher-At school 15 years; on original OBC and on current committee</td>
<td>Kindergarten teacher – Had taught 15+ years; was present at program implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th grade teacher -Taught 13 – 15 years; second year at School 1.</td>
<td>4th grade teacher -Had been at school 3 years</td>
<td>4th grade teacher – Was present at program implementation; on current OBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year teacher-New to teaching</td>
<td>First year teacher-New to teaching</td>
<td>2nd grade teacher – Had only been at school 2 years; first year on the OBC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question 1. To what extent are there confirmatory outcomes of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program between the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and the Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence?

Each of the three elementary schools participating in this study administered the Olweus Survey Questionnaire (OBQ) during the implementation phase. School 1 in Division A was an accredited pre-kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school of approximately 735 students. School 2 in Division B was a pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school of approximately 730 students. School 2 was fully accredited and had met all of its federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) in reading and math. School 3 in Division C was a Title I kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school with approximately 450 students. This school was also a recipient of the 2012 Virginia Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award which recognizes schools and school districts that achieve excellence goals and far exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards for at least two consecutive years and made progress towards the goals of the governor and the State Board of Education.

School 1

School 1 implemented the OBPP and administered four rounds of the same OBQ survey; November 2006, May 2007, November 2007, and May 2008. The data shown in Table 2 indicate decreased numbers of students being bullied and a decrease in the number of students who were bullied and told no one.

Table 2

School 1 results from selected items on the OBQ administered to 3rd through 6th graders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of boys and girls bullied 2-3 times a month</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do teachers/others stop bullying?</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>18.0%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of boys and girls who were bullied and told no one</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do other students try to put a stop to bullying?</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>12.2%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Positive number supports decrease due to wording of question (...had not been bullied).
School 2

Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) data from School 2 was collected during the years 2007 through 2011. They did not administer the OBQ in 2011-2012 due to financial constraints. The cost to administer the OBQ is $1.00 per student. The data shown in Table 3 shows decreased numbers of students being bullied and an increase in the number of teachers and students responding to others being bullied. This last item in Table 3 is important to the school as it is part of their School Improvement Plan: to increase bystander behavior.

Table 3

*School 2 results from selected items on the OBQ administered to 3rd through 5th graders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>Change 2006-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of boys and girls bullied 2-3 times a month</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>-39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do teachers/others stop bullying?</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>24%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of boys and girls who were bullied and told no one</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do other students try to put a stop to bullying?</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>8%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Positive number supports decrease due to wording of question (...had not been bullied).*
School 3

School 3 did not show the same pattern that the other schools' data showed. In Table 4, the questions asking how many boys and girls had been bullied 2-3 times a month and how many of the boys and girls who were bullied and told no one showed that the percentages increased, where as School 1 and School 2 showed a decrease. Another question from School 3 that showed a different pattern was the question of how often do other students try to put a stop to bullying? The percentage of students decreased in School 3 while School 1 and School 2 showed an increase. There was one question where the pattern for all three schools was alike. All three schools showed an increase in how often teacher/others stopped bullying. Other than that question, the results for School 3 showed markedly different results than were indicated by School 1 and School 2 data.

When asked why School 3's data presented as it did, the guidance counselor responded, “During our initial Olweus Committee training we were told to expect that there would be high incidents of reporting in many (if not all) of the OBQ categories administered to 3-5 graders. This is due in large part to the identification of a common language of bullying as well the committed effort made by the staff to encourage the students to report bullying and bullying-like behaviors. We have never been under the belief the program would eliminate all bullying but rather create the environment of intolerance of such behaviors among students. In this case we can look at the data and hypothesize that the increases may be due to students becoming comfortable with
identifying and reporting bullying behaviors. I can tell you it remains an effort to this day clarifying the difference between someone being "mean" versus someone who is bullying (per the Olweus definition)."

Table 4

*School 3 results from selected items on the OBQ administered to 3rd through 5th graders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Change 2007-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of boys and girls bullied 2-3 times a month</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do teachers/others stop bullying?</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of boys and girls who were bullied and told no one</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do other students try to put a stop to bullying?</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>- 8.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Virginia Report on Discipline Crime and Violence (DCV)**

Data from the DCV is reported by school division and not by individual school. Schools in this study are located in three different school divisions. The DCV collects data on 130-139 potential student discipline incidents. The number varies by the year of the report. These incidents include discipline infractions against other students, staff property or disruptive behaviors in classrooms. Bullying is one of eight incidents in a category labeled *incidents against students* that can be reported. When bullying was
reported in the DCV as one of the 130-139 total incidences, bullying does not always appear in the top ten most frequently reported incidents (Table 5), but when reported as one of eight possible codes for *incidents against students*, bullying was always the most frequently reported incident (Table 6).

Table 5.

*VDOE totals for bullying incidents reported as compared to the total number of incidents reported*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Incidents</th>
<th>Bullying Incidents Reported</th>
<th>Percent of bullying incidents as compared to total number of incidents reported</th>
<th>Change from previous school year</th>
<th>Ranking of bullying as a reported offense out of 130-139 offense codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>371,933</td>
<td>12,525</td>
<td>3.37%</td>
<td>2,072</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>329,004</td>
<td>6,594</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>-5,950</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>308,112</td>
<td>6,694</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>266,198</td>
<td>5,493</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>-1,201</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>176,628</td>
<td>6,118</td>
<td>3.46%</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

VDOE totals for bullying reported as an incident against students from 2006-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total incidents against students</th>
<th>Bullying incidents against students</th>
<th>Percent of bullying incidents as compared to total number of incidents against students</th>
<th>Change from previous school year</th>
<th>Ranking of bullying as an incident against students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>24,773</td>
<td>12,525</td>
<td>50.58%</td>
<td>2,072</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>15,633</td>
<td>6,594</td>
<td>42.18%</td>
<td>-5,950</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>15,313</td>
<td>6,694</td>
<td>43.71%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>13,956</td>
<td>5,493</td>
<td>39.36%</td>
<td>-1,201</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>14,357</td>
<td>6,118</td>
<td>42.61%</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 7, 8, and 9 show data for each of the districts A, B, and C concerning the number of bullying incidents reported during the years 2006-2011. There is no pattern of increase or decrease in the number of bullying incidents from one year to the next in any of the three divisions. The data show that in all three divisions in 2007-2008, each school division had a decrease in the percentage of bullying incidents reported than the year before in 2006-2007. All schools had implemented their program during this time frame.
Table 7.

_Bullying incidents reported from Division A to VDOE from 2006-2011_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Incidents</th>
<th>Bullying Incidents</th>
<th>Percent of bullying incidents as compared to total number of incidents reported</th>
<th>Change from previous school year</th>
<th>Ranking of bullying in top 10 reported incidents for Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>3,278</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>9.76%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>18,204</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>2.16%</td>
<td>-7.60%</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>20,424</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>.62%</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>16,867</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>.749%</td>
<td>2.03%</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>8,104</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.

_Bullying Incidents reported from Division B to VDOE from 2006-2011_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Incidents</th>
<th>Bullying Incidents</th>
<th>Percent of bullying incidents as compared to total number of incidents reported</th>
<th>Change from previous school year</th>
<th>Ranking of bullying in top 10 reported incidents for Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>7,606</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>16.06%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>12,563</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>3.65%</td>
<td>-12.41%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>10,568</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>4.86%</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>9,743</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>7,853</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>4.75%</td>
<td>-0.54%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9.

*Bullying Incidents reported from Division C to VDOE from 2006-2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Incidents</th>
<th>Bullying Incidents</th>
<th>Percent of bullying incidents as compared to total number of incidents reported</th>
<th>Change from previous school year</th>
<th>Ranking of bullying in top 10 reported incidents for Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>3,090</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>8.64%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>-4.47%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>8,562</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>5.64%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>6,314</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6.34%</td>
<td>.70%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>5,056</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>3.86%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

Data from individual schools, school divisions and regions are all important when evaluating the progress of stopping bullying. Even though each set of data tell a story about this progress, they are not all comparable. Individual school data from the OBQ is crucial for a school to evaluate the progress and outcomes of its OBPP. DCV data is equally important for school divisions to evaluate the progress in stopping bullying in a group of schools that make-up a larger community. The inconsistent use of or failure to use data from the OBQ to evaluate the OBPP leaves many questions that are unclear as to the OBPP’s progress in stopping bullying.
Evaluation Question 2. To what extent has the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program been implemented with fidelity to the *Four Levels of General Requirements* of the program?

The *Four Levels of General Requirements* for the implementation of the OBPP are the School Level Components, the Classroom-Level Components, the Individual-Level Components, and the Community Level Components. Interview questions focused on each directive in each of the four components (Appendix B). School-level components include establishing a committee, training the committee who then in turn trains the staff, administering the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and holding staff discussions to identify bullying that exists in the school, introduction of school rules against bullying, a review of the school’s supervisory system, and holding a kick-off event for students and their parents. Classroom-level components include the teacher posting and enforcing the schoolwide rules against bullying, holding regular class meetings, and holding class meetings with students’ parents. Individual-level components include responsibilities of the staff as a whole such as supervising student activities, ensuring that all staff intervene immediately when bullying occurs, holding meetings with students involved in bullying and with parents of those students, and developing individual intervention plans for involved students. Community-level components include involving community members on the OBPP, developing a partnership with community members to support the school’s OBPP, and to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice.
### Table 10

**School Completion of Four Levels of General Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Requirements</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School-Level Components</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct committee and staff meetings.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire schoolwide</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold staff discussion group meetings.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the school rules against bullying.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and refine the school’s supervisory system.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold a school kick-off event to launch the program.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve parents.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom-Level Components</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post and enforce schoolwide rules against bullying.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold regular class meetings.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold meetings with student’s parents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual-Level Components</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise students’ activities</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that all staff intervene on the spot when bullying occurs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold meetings with students involved in bullying.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold meetings with parents of involved students.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop individual intervention plans for involved students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community-Level Components</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve community members on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop partnerships with community members to support your school’s program.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Help to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community.

| | 0 | 0 | 0 |

X The participants talked about this implementation descriptor: 0 This descriptor was not talked about by the school participants during interviews

School 1

School-Level Components

Establishing a committee. School 1 implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in 2006. Of the five school staff interviewed, two had been a part of the original committee at their school. School 1 originally sent a team of teachers to attend an informative session to learn about the OBPP. These teachers felt that their school would benefit from such a program and came back presented the program to the staff. This led to the development of a school committee. Some teachers volunteered to be on the committee and some were asked to achieve a variety of teacher representation. One participant said, “Our principal arranged a day off campus and we invited people (teachers) from each grade level and we went through it and sold them and they in turn presented to the rest of the staff.”

Conduct committee and staff trainings. After School 1 had established an Olweus Bullying Committee, a certified Olweus trainer came to School 1, trained five or six teachers, and then these teachers provided training to the remaining teachers. “I do remember the Olweus people came and gave us this training. There were binders and it
was ongoing training. They gave us the first steps but then they kind of monitored our progress through the year and helped with additional steps.”

**Administer the OBQ.** Next a school wide survey was administered to all third through fifth graders. A teacher said, “The first thing is a survey to help people recognize there is a bullying problem. No school wants to know that.” “You don’t want to be known to have this problem,” stated another teacher. The guidance counselor also stated, “We did a survey and found out what was occurring and where it was occurring and we did a post. We obviously did all of the surveys that Olweus required. I assume because we turned it all in. and now what we do we don’t go to the survey. We have data in our Isis (school data base ) that shows how many incidences of bullying are being reported.”

The principal shared there were a few times when the survey was mandatory and the Olweus trainers requested it be used. She went on to say that even though they did not administer the OBQ anymore, they used their own survey and they review their own discipline data from referrals.

**Hold staff discussion group meetings.** School 1 staff shared that they had about a half day of staff development before the children returned in September, the year the implementation began. They continue to have staff discussions at staff meetings held on early release Mondays.

**Introduce the school rules against bullying.** During staff development at the school, teachers at School 1 introduced the four bullying rules, and decided as a staff to
“put their own spin on it”. They gave the rules a theme of bees buzzing, “What’s the bullying buzz?” Teachers were taught that “all school staff should enforce the rules so that everyone spoke the same language.”

**Review and refine the school’s supervisory system.** School 1 has a Positive Behavioral Support Program that works in conjunction with the OBPP. The committee is made up of a lead teacher and a grade level teacher from each team. A referral system was put in place so that if the behavior is repeated there is a record of it. Teachers often used the guidance counselor as the first person to consult for assistance if needed and then one of the administrators. One teacher shared that because their school considers themselves as having zero tolerance for bullying, the staff acts immediately, when learning of bullying behaviors that are occurring by contacting parents and school administration.

**Hold a school kick-off event to launch the program.** School 1 participants agreed that their school kick-off event was the “best thing of the implementation of the OBPP in their school.” They had a past Miss Virginia, who had been bullied as a child, speak at an assembly during the day for students. Their school had a student rap group that sang about no bullying and everyone had yellow t-shirts that said “No Bullying”. Each year they hold a kick-off assembly but the staff stated that the other kick-offs have not been as big. They have used videos of interviews with students that have been bullied, demonstrated the bullying circle, and used student council to present the rules.
**Involve parents.** During the first year of the Olweus Bullying Program, School 1 held the same kick-off assembly two evenings for parents that had been held for students during the day. There were over 700 parents and students attending the evening assemblies. Parents have not always been invited since the first assembly. One teacher stated, “There’s not really space to have all of the parents and students together.” Parents are made aware of the school’s OBPP through information going home in the Thursday folders, the monthly PTO newsletter and Back-to-School nights.

**Classroom-Level Components**

**Post and enforce schoolwide rules against bullying.** Teachers at School 1 posted the no-bullying rules in their classrooms, throughout the hallways, and reviewed these rules at class meetings. One teacher stated, “It’s supposed to be all of us. We’re all on the same page. We all know the same language. We all go to the kick-off so I would say everybody because even if the kids are in PE or music they know the expectations are the same.” The rules were visible in the halls throughout the school and were observed in the three classrooms that were visited. Class meetings are a time when these rules are discussed. The first four class meetings involve learning about one of the four bullying rules.

**Hold regular class meetings.** A teachers stated, “The class meetings are every week, once a week for 15-20 minutes and each classroom teacher has another staff person assigned to their class and it’s every Monday morning and each class is doing it.” A
teacher that had been with the OBC from the beginning at School 1 shared, “The first
time we started class meetings I put a six week lesson plan together that was basically
straight from Olweus; how to introduce the class meeting, the components of the class
meeting...and then basically it is just building trust. You teach the lesson, then you do
the bullying circle, and then it’s a lot of vocabulary; getting them to all be aware of it.”
Another teacher stated that, “At the class meetings we teach the bullying circle, teach the
skills and strategies if you are ever bullied or see bullying happening. I think for all of our
kids it’s an introduction to the language and I think one of the most impressive things I
found out when I came here was that everyone had a common language and they knew
what to do and it was everywhere in the building.”

**Hold meetings with students’ parents.** There was no mention of holding any
class meetings with student’s parents present at the meeting. There was information
shared about conferences that are held with the parents of students involved in bullying,
and these conferences were usually with the parent of the bully.

**Individual-Level Components**

**Supervise student activities.** Teachers compare data of which students are
involved in bullying incidences, who the classroom teacher is, and how often it is
happening. A teacher shared, “I have a lot of kids that just stop in and talk so that I keep a
check on them....the more adults are aware, the kids know that someone is looking out
for them.”
Ensure that all staff intervene on the spot when bullying occurs. A teacher stated, “We encourage the kids a lot to tell an adult, so they can tell a teacher, an administrator, any adult, they can tell anyone they trust then from there it usually goes to the referral, a specific referral and so we are kind of tracking repeat offenders and from there it is dealt with by administration.” Another teacher shared, “There is really not tolerance of bullying here at our school. And you know kids are suspended and there are pretty strict consequences…. I would say pretty much everybody follows through and there is zero tolerance for bullying at the school and when we see it happening, we act immediately.”

Hold meetings with students involved in bullying. A teacher at School 1 talked about trying to keep in touch with students. She stated, “I have a lot of kids that just stop in and talk so I try to maintain a relationship with those students so that I can keep a check on them. We have a teacher mentoring program so we try to keep an eye on them so that more adults are aware and the kid knows that someone is looking out for them. That is very helpful.” Students that are exhibiting bullying behaviors often begin talking with the classroom teacher, then proceed to the guidance counselor and then possibly end up talking with an administrator if the bullying persists.

Hold meetings with parents of involved students. School 1 had a procedure in place for dealing with bullying. One teacher shared an experience that involved a student who was bullying and after multiple removals from class, a high level of contact with the
child's parents, the behavior was too much and was impacting the level of learning in the classroom. The student was eventually suspended and then recommended for expulsion. School 1 also talked about meeting with the bystanders, victims, and the parents of those students. The counselor helped with those situations.

**Develop individual intervention plans for involved students.** While there was no mention of a specific intervention plan, it was very evident that the story of the student who had been a bully involved a lot of contact with teachers, parents and administration.

**Community-Level Components**

**Involve community members on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee.** At the time of the first bullying kick-off assembly the school stated they had advertised about the kick-off assembly through a school brochure and posters at the local grocery store. They wanted to invite the community and let the community know that Miss Virginia was coming to the assembly. The posters also told about the rap group, The Bully-Nots that would perform during the assembly. Since that first kick-off assembly the community has not been invited and parent participation limited and the reason given was that space was not really available for all of the students and their parents.

**Develop partnerships with community members to support your school’s program.** School 1 had not developed any partnerships with community members to support their OBPP.
Help to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community. School 1 did not report any community partnerships or links with the community to spread the word about their OBPP, beside the first kick-off assembly. They did not have a parent or community member on the school’s committee. School 1 felt though that the families of the students were part of the community and therefore that part of the community knew they were a school that did not tolerate bullying.

School 2

School-Level Components

Establishing a committee. A committee was developed with a teacher representative from each grade level, guidance counselor, administrator, PTA parent, and a prevention specialist from the local mental health agency. Two of the original committee members chose to still be active members of the school’s current Olweus Bullying Committee (OBC) and one of the two teachers states she asked to be on the committee because she feels so strongly about what the program can do.

Administer the OBQ. The OBQ was administered to the third through fifth grade students. It has been administered yearly up until this last year when funding was not available. One teacher stated that the guidance counselor presents the data from the survey at as faculty meeting. “She’ll let us know every time there’s been progress. Here’s the first year, here’s the second year, or if there are any kids that aren’t feeling strongly
(positive) about something, she’ll notify us so that we can try to make it better for the children.” School 2 had administered the survey the most consistently of all three schools.

**Hold staff discussion groups.** After administering the survey, the data allowed teachers to identify target areas where bullying was occurring. The guidance counselor stated, “What are our target areas? What are we doing well with? What do we need to work on? So I mean in my opinion the survey drives the program. It tells what we need to understand what we have to do next.”

**Introduce the school rules against bullying.** School 2 uses the four Olweus rules. The four Olweus rules were introduced by teachers and a participant stated, “We use the Olweus rules. We have them posted all over (the school). We haven’t changed them. They are strictly Olweus.”

**Review and refine the school’s supervisory system.** The principal at School 2 stated that the teachers tried to take care of bullying behaviors first at the classroom level. If they needed more support they could ask the guidance counselor, assistant principal, or principal. School 2 also trained more than just the teachers so that the system could be consistent throughout the school.
Hold a school kick-off event to launch the program. Students attended an assembly during the day at school, but parents and students were invited back for a program in the evening.

Involve parents. School 2’s first fall kick-off event which was done in conjunction with a family pizza night dinner with approximately 700 students and their parents attending over two nights. School 2 has a brochure that is sent home each year to parents telling about the program, pledge, and rules. School 2 has also done presentations at PTA meetings and have also conducted parent workshops.

Classroom-Level Components

Post and enforce school wide rules against bullying. A teacher from School 2 stated, “We use the Olweus rules. We have them all over (the school). Number one, we will not bully others. We haven’t changed them. They are strictly from Olweus.” A new teacher at School 2 shared, “Basically we are all given a list of bullying rules and they are displayed in our classrooms. As you can see mine are posted at the front of the room. So the first week of school when I am talking about my classroom rules we also talk about how we have bullying rules and that they apply not only in the classroom but on the bus and outside even at recess.

Hold regular class meetings. Teachers hold the class meetings and the first four meetings are designed to each review one of the rules. Teachers are asked to hold at least
one class meeting a week and may hold more if needed. A teacher said, “I mean you really have to make time for class meetings. I think more than anything as busy as we are we don’t have a spare second in the day, I just think you have to have that weekly meeting.” Another teacher stated, “That’s really crucial to just make time for it (class meetings). I think if some teachers aren’t implementing it, then other problems are going to arise later.” Another teacher summed it up stating, “Well, since we are giving our teachers all of the tools that they need, we ask that any situations that occur in their classroom they address. But obviously if that becomes a more repeated difficult situation they will eventually send it to the guidance counselor and sometimes to the administrator as a discipline issue.”

**Hold meetings with students’ parents.** Teachers called parents to report bullying behaviors of students, but there was no mention of parents being included in the class meetings.

**Individual-Level Components**

**Supervise students’ activities.** School 2 has involved many staff other than just teachers in the OBPP training. Students are supervised not only in the classrooms, but in the less structured areas such as the cafeteria, playground, and bus. The principal said, “Even if our custodians are in the lunchroom and they (the students) are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, they remind them.”
Ensure that all staff intervene on the spot when bullying occurs. At the individual level School 2 had included not only teachers but the instructional assistants and custodians in the training. They had also started a Peaceful Bus program to continue the emphasis of their OBPP to and from school. The administrator stated, “It’s really a school-wide effort.” The guidance counselor shared that one of the things they do if a teacher comes upon a situation and it does not involve one of her students is that the teacher goes to that classroom teacher to make them aware. She further shared, “And what we have asked classroom teachers to do it to alert other staff that are involved with that student such as art, music and PE that this is something we need to be watching for. So we try to communicate amongst the staff who are involved with that student whatever is going on.”

Hold meetings with students involved. There was a procedure in place as to how to handle a report of bullying. Teachers are the first level of intervention and as one teacher shared, “If I know about a bullying incident and it happens in the room I am going to talk to them right away. If they’re being a bully I really try to address it, not revealing a name, and in class meetings so the whole class gets to hear about the bullying behavior. … The kids are aware of it.”

Hold meetings with parents of involved students. Teachers call parents to let them know if their child is a bully or a victim in a bullying incident that occurs and it is documented. When a staff member hears of bullying behaviors or a possible bullying
incident, and they need more assistance, the first person consulted is usually the guidance
counselor and then if needed the principal or assistant principal. The guidance counselor
at School 2 shared, “We always try to address it at the kid level and give them
opportunities to change their behavior and then we ask that there’s a phone call made,
letting parents know we have some concerns about the behaviors we are seeing. If there is
another offense we generally try to schedule a parent meeting where we can discuss the
issue...and depending on what the issue is, it might just be the teacher, parent and me. If
it is a more serious issue an administrator will be involved.” The principal of School 2
stated, “Not everything is necessarily an office referral so I keep notes... if it’s to the
degree we feel like it’s become a pattern and not an isolated incident then we either do
have a phone conference or ask the parents to come in and talk about it. ...If they are
repeatedly being a bully they are suspended.”

**Develop individual intervention plans for involved students.** At School 2 the
guidance counselor shared, “Well we try to make a plan. We have a plan and say this is
what we are going to do to monitor the behavior, like we’re going to check back in two
weeks. There haven’t been a lot of those, but there certainly have been some where we
have designated staff at all points to supervise this student or maybe his schedule has
been rearranged. Maybe he’s not allowed to use the restroom when other students are in
the restroom, or when students are switching in the halls, so those things become part of a
plan.”
Community-Level Components

Involves community members on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee. Interviews with School 2 shared that they have a prevention specialist from the local mental health agency and a PTA parent that is on the OBC. The guidance counselor shared that having these two members on their committee helped spread the word outside of the school about the OBPP.

Develop partnerships with community members to support your school’s program. School 2 uses the combination of the OBPP and the Four Core Values program to recognize students every month that model respect, accountability, responsibility, and honesty. Parents and grandparents are invited to have breakfast with their child and pictures are taken and hung up on a bulletin board. These students are also recognized with ice cream parties supplied by a local community business. The guidance counselor shared, “We certainly have it on our website. We have it on our PTA website too. Our community knows about it because we have a business partnership that helps with the filling your bucket with compliments. If a classroom gets to 100 compliments then there is an ice cream party. So we don’t do a lot of talking about it. If they come into our building, they see the ruled posted, they hear us talk the talk, and I don’t know that they would necessarily know its Olweus.”

Help to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community. School 2 has their school and PTA website where there is mention of their
school having an Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. School 2 had not gone out into the community to share their no bullying belief, but felt having the PTA member and representative of a local mental health agency on their committee had helped in spreading the word of what their school’s anti-bullying program was about. The guidance counselor shared the following story. “The Boy Scouts meet here (at the elementary school) and the leader asked me one day, you know I noticed all of these rules and we thought they were really good so we started using them at our Boy Scout Meetings. So we realized the power of advertising.”

School 3

School-Level Components

Establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee. The initial committee were the grade level chairs, the guidance counselor, and other teachers who went to hear about the program and came back to share how powerful they felt the program could be in their school. Since then two of the original committee members are still on the committee because they believe the OBPP is very important and has brought positive results to their school. One of the teachers interviewed was a new member of the committee and she had been asked to serve on the committee by the principal.

Conduct committee and staff trainings. School 3 spent a year training and planning before actually beginning to implement the program in their school. One teacher
shared that when the initial group of teachers learned about the program and they decided that the program would be beneficial for their school, they all agreed how “powerful” this program could be in transforming their school’s learning environment. The OBC conducted the training over a school year and trained not only instructional staff, but also the custodians, cafeteria staff, and the bus drivers. One teacher stated, “Once we were able to identify as a staff what bullying was, then as a staff we were able to take that information and get on board.”

Administer the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire. When the survey was administered to students “hot spots were mapped out”. The principal of School 3 stated, “When I looked at the problem of bullying and trying to implement a program, once we were able to map out the hotspots and put the bullying program in place the referrals went from 600 to about 20 or 30 a year.” School 3 continued to use the survey for three years and then made a survey of their own which they administer yearly.

Hold staff discussion group meetings. School 3 had used the data from the OBQ to learn more about bully-proofing their school. The guidance counselor reflected on a survey that showed that recess was a hot spot for bullying behaviors. “We used to have a system of recess that was unscheduled. We had an upper and lower playground but, no structure in place for who was assigned to each playground. Teachers learned we weren’t doing a good job supervising. That actually led us to discussing it and (the principal) put into place an actual recess schedule.”
Introduce the school rules against bullying. During the first year the committee also adapted their school pledge to also include a message about no bullying. The guidance counselor shared, “I am embarrassed to say how many hours that took. We wanted everybody to agree, not just a majority, so it took many hours in our monthly meetings. So we modified our school pledge and that is something that we do every day.” The principal shared that their school operates on the Five Effective School Qualities of instructional focus, parent and community involvement, high expectations, measurement of progress and school climate and also uses Effective School-Wide Discipline. The principal feels that School 3 was able to “fit all of these programs along with Olweus under one umbrella.” The Olweus rules of no bullying are part of the school-wide expectations and these are conveyed through the school pledge. Some teachers may have their own classroom rules too. The principal shared that the pledge states, “I am a smart, valuable, special person. I respect myself and I respect others. I will not bully or join others in bullying. My words and actions are very kind and honest. I accept only my best in all that I do. I am proud to be me!” He also stated, “So in that pledge are all of the rules. Every day every kid says the pledge and is accountable for what they say.”

Review and refine the schools’ supervisory system. The principal of School 3 provided the teachers with clear instructions as to how bullying behaviors and incidents will be handled. The use of the class meeting minutes’ notebook keeps in informed of possible problems that might escalate. Teachers complete discipline forms where they document a problem and how they handled it. When it reaches a referral stage, the
principal will look at the trail of discipline notices to make sure the teacher has followed all procedures for intervention and parent contact because he feels that once it reaches his desk the problem has reached a level that needs administrative intervention. The teachers, guidance counselor, and principal make phone calls and/or conference with students and parents when needed.

**Hold a kick-off event to launch the program.** One teacher shared, “Then after the staff was trained, we introduced it to our students as something exciting and something that is coming to our school. We did that with a big assembly in the afternoon. I think we did a skit that introduced the children to every point of a bullying situation. The teachers were in the skit acting it out for the children. We showed videos from online. They (the students) were really excited and we even got wrist bands for the students and t-shirts for the teachers that said ‘No Bully Zone’.”

**Involve parents.** The kick-off program was repeated in the evening for parents. School 3 planned for their first kick-off event throughout that first year of training. The principal said, “First, I was trying to get buy-in from the community. I invited them to Back to School Night. The reward was that everyone that comes was given a t-shirt. I had a captive audience and I was able to focus on exactly what we were doing. … We also gave out wrist bands that said ‘No Bully Zone’. The wrist bands and t-shirts were probably a large part of our success. I ordered 600 plus t-shirts and I ran out.”
Classroom-Level Components

Post and enforce schoolwide rules against bullying. School 3 has schoolwide rules that are not specifically the four no bullying rules from Olweus. The guidance counselor from School 3 said, “Some (teachers) will actually have the bully rules from Olweus. Some will kind of include those into their classroom rules. Everybody has a copy of the pledge.”

Hold regular class meetings. The teacher’s role in school 3 was clearly defined by the principal. “The teachers’ role is that every week they are required to have a class meeting. There is a bully-box in every classroom where the students confidentially stick a note in there any time during the course of the week and on Thursdays during the grade level planning times, they (the teachers) pull it out and talk about the notes in the box. Teachers also discuss these notes during the class meetings.” The principal collects all grade level and class meeting minutes so that he knows of all bullying behaviors. “So I take those two meetings’ minutes and I look at the data. It is all data driven. ... This is my class meeting notebook. So what gets measured gets done.” Teachers understand the importance of class meetings and the expectation that they will hold the class meetings. A teacher who had been on the original OBC stated, “My class calls it our family meeting because a lot of the time we are with the people in this school more waking hours than we are with our own family. We talk about it (bullying) and put it out in the open so it won’t happen again. ...it needs to be part of the initial training period of the class.”
Hold meetings with students’ parents. School 3 shared they had not involved parents in class meetings.

Individual-Level Components

Supervise student activities. One teacher stated, “We used to have our system of recess not scheduled. You could have upper and lower playground area, but we never had in place a structured play area. Even when the teachers were outside we learned we weren’t doing such as good job supervising. So now we have the classes staggered by 5 or 10 minutes and upper elementary stays in their area and primary in theirs. We did away with chairs that teacher used to take outside at recess, so that forced people to be more observant.”

Ensure that all staff intervene on the spot when bullying occurs. It is an expectation at School 3, that everyone helps enforce the bullying rules. Procedures are in place of how to document bullying behaviors. Bullying behaviors are documented on incident forms by the teacher that witnessed the behavior and are sent home to be signed. Students can get two of these incident forms that are warnings. The third time it is written up on a referral form which then goes to the principal. All incidents are documented in the grade level minutes, so that the principal is aware of any problems.

Hold meetings with students involved in bullying. Teachers and other staff meet with students if they are having problems with bullying. If the teacher is unable to
take care of a bullying problem through the class meeting and working with the students involved, the guidance counselor is brought in for assistance in the matter.

**Hold meetings with parents of involved students.** By the time the second incident form has gone home there have been conversations with parents on the phone and/or conferences. This is part of the responsibility of the teacher and guidance counselor. The principal will also conference with students and parents when necessary.

**Develop individual intervention plans for involved students.** There was no mention of individual intervention plans during the interviews.

**Community-Level Components**

**Involve community members on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee.**

The guidance counselor stated that parents had expressed interest in the OBC, but none had ever shown up for a meeting. It was unclear as to whether there was a direct invitation given to any parents.

**Develop partnerships with community members to support your school’s program.**
School 3 does have a business partnership with a local bank that assists with funding evening programs such as the Family Fitness Nights, but it is not directly involved with the OBPP.

**Help to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community.** School 3’s principal talked of wanting to develop ‘buy-in’ from the community to support the OBPP when it began at their school. Community referred to the families of the students at School 3. The principal does hold a monthly ‘Principal’s Tea’ for anyone who wants to come and talk about any concerns. He stated that if questions come up about bullying he can usually address those questions at the tea.

**Summary**

None of the three elementary schools implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program with 100% fidelity. All three schools differed slightly in the completion of the directives within the *Four Levels of General Requirements* (Table 10). Each school was allowed the freedom by the Olweus trainers to adapt the directives for their own school, such as School 1’s ‘Buzz’ theme, School 2’s incorporation of the Olweus rules with the Four Core Values, and School 3’s Effective School Qualities and the adaptation of the school pledge. In the school-level components, there was no evidence that School 2 had reviewed and refined the school’s supervisory system. Under
the classroom-level component, all of the schools had failed to invited parents to attend the class meetings. Under the Individual-Level Component, directives were all completed except for *develop individual intervention plans for involved students* in two of the schools. Participants from all three schools reported that meetings were held with students and parents, but only School 2 spoke about making a *plan* during a meeting with parents that created steps to keep a check on a student’s whereabouts because of a particular bullying situation, and that they would check back in a couple of weeks to see if the situation had improved. The fourth level, the community-level components, had the least amount of directives actually implemented by any of the 3 schools. Participant responses were similar stating that their school had made an effort to include the community of parents of their students, some more than others. School 1 had no one on their OBC except for school staff and the program recommends having a parent and community member on a school’s committee. Schools 1 and 3 had not developed any business partnerships that supported their OBPP. School 2 had a business partnership that covered the cost of ice cream parties for students recognized for being an active bystander in helping to stop bullying, and a PTO parent and a local mental health agency representative on their OBC. School 3 had invited parents to their school’s OBC meeting with no success, but had established a business partnership with a local bank to help support school activities that brought parents out to the school, but not specifically pertaining to the school’s OBPP. Several of the participants interviewed stated that if *community* referred to their parents, they felt they had done a good job in letting them
know about the OBPP, but if community referred to the neighborhoods and surrounding businesses, they really felt that their community was not aware of the OBPP. None of the schools had developed a plan to help spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in their community.

The directives within the Four Levels of General Requirements were completed differently in each of the three schools in the study. From the interview data, it was observed that the schools differed in their approach and follow through in completing directives. Having been given the freedom by Olweus to adapt the OBPP to their own school’s operating structure, schools differed in the emphasis they placed on the implementation of some of the directives. For example, School 1 talked a lot about the initial planning and kick-off program. School 2 seemed to emphasize the importance of keeping the four original OBPP rules and administered the OBQ more consistently. School 3 put a lot of emphasis on procedures for teachers in handling bullying problems in their classrooms and documenting the bullying problems in meeting minutes so that the administrator would know about them. All schools talked extensively about the classroom meetings, so it was very evident that each school felt this directive of the classroom-level component was important to the success of the program. Data from the interviews indicated that each school’s individual approach to fidelity of the directives shaped the school’s implementation of the school’s OBPP.
Evaluation Question 3. What are the facilitating conditions and constraints to the fidelity of implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program?

For the purpose of this study, facilitating conditions are those activities and supports that promote the implementation process of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). Constraints are those activities and supports, or lack thereof, that hinder the implementation process of the OBPP. All three schools interviewed in this program evaluation were recommended as participants because they are all considered to have successful programs through the research conducted by Goodwin, Fobbs and Moffett (2011). To understand the success of these three schools’ bullying prevention programs, the researcher went through a process of coding to find themes to help explain these reasons. Open coding allowed for the researcher to read through the interviews highlighting sentences, phrases, and word patterns that were the focus of the program evaluation. As this coding process continued, initial categories and sub categories began to emerge and after continued coding of the categories and subcategories the data merged into three primary categories; teacher leadership, administrative leadership, and schoolwide commitment.

The category teacher leadership highlights the many roles of the teacher and guidance counselor in the implementation process. Administrative leadership pertains to all of the administrative support that occurred during implementation and after. The final category was that of schoolwide commitment. The schoolwide commitment reflected the
continued commitment of teacher and administrative leadership started during the implementation and continued throughout the use of the OBPP in each school; it also revealed the culture that had evolved within the school during this process. Tables 11 and 12 summarize these findings.

**Facilitating Conditions**

**Teacher leadership.** School 1 has a teacher on their OBC that was in Colorado at the time of Columbine and had experienced working as a counselor with a group of youth concerning bullying issues. She was able to share what she had learned about bullying with her fellow teachers. This teacher also identified with how teachers feel about the responsibilities of their job. When asked what her school had to do to get their OBPP running she stated, “I’d say this is not technical but actually it is teacher ‘buy-in’ because teachers – you know it’s another thing we have to do. It’s another thing that takes time and unfortunately in Virginia with the SOLs there is a lot of stress and it’s another thing that takes time.” She was also very active in the OBPP at a local, state and national level speaking and attending conferences whenever she can. This teacher has continued to be the committee chair since the program began in School 1. A first year teacher at School 1 stated, “It was made clear to me as a new teacher at this school that my responsibility was to use the same language so that the school had a common language, a bully-free school and the kids use the language.” There is a teacher’s manual with a section designated to the OBPP with lessons provided for the teacher. They also have a teacher mentoring
program through which they also have a portion of the new teacher training devoted to
the OBPP at School 1. Both of these are examples of the teacher leadership present in
School 1. Teachers understood the importance or training new teachers and made sure
information and teacher support were present to support the school’s OBPP.

School 2 has a guidance counselor that was in on the initial training and has
remained the chair of the OBC at the school. She is considered a resource and “expert”
by her staff in the process of dealing with bullying. A teacher at the school stated, “She’s
the one that keeps it going, keeps us motivated, gives the suggestions, encourages us to
get it going every year at faculty meetings... but there is a core group of teachers, one per
grade level that supports it strongly to keep it motivating.” The guidance counselor also
makes sure new teachers are trained and is available to assist if needed with class
meetings. Teachers at School 2 are the first line of intervention. They are expected to
handle their classroom problems. When asked which staff enforce the bullying rules one
teacher answered, “All of the staff members do. We have our meetings. Every teacher is
expected to have class meetings and is expected to go over the rules at the beginning of
the year.”

At School 3 all participants except for one were OBC members and they all
expressed their support of the OBPP in their school. Teachers at School 3 have very
specific directions to follow for reporting bullying behaviors. Teachers discuss these at
weekly planning sessions and then the principal receives the minutes and is kept up to
date on any problems. Teachers are the first level of intervention for addressing bullying behaviors. They have incident forms for the bullying behaviors and then a separate referral form for when the bullying behavior is called bullying. The first two reports are incidents and the third is a referral to the principal. Teachers are expected to have called parents and kept them informed of any problems in their class.

Administrative leadership. School 1’s principal was the assistant principal of School 1 at the time the OBPP was implemented. The principal at the time of the program implementation had arranged a day off campus so that the staff could learn about the OBPP. One teacher spoke of the current administration saying, “The administration expects us to have class meetings. The whole school has class meetings at the same time on Monday mornings from 9:00-9:30. It is an expectation that when the administrators walk around during that time all teachers are doing their class meetings.”

The current principal of School 2 has only been at the school for two years. She feels that the assistant principal, guidance counselor and she are the ones in charge of the OBPP at their school. She is the final resource if bullying behaviors become a true case of bullying. She encourages reviewing the program every year and making any changes that are needed. She states, “Right now OBPP is part of the culture.”

School 3 has a principal that wrote his dissertation on bullying and then researched anti-bullying programs before deciding on Olweus. He has given his teachers specific instructions and procedures for tracking bullying behaviors. He expects teachers
to have done everything they can do as a teacher before he intervenes. The principal also holds quarterly assemblies where he reviews the bullying rules and his expectations of their behavior. Students demonstrating good citizenship are selected by their teachers and recognized at the assembly by the principal. The principal of School 3 stated, “Our Olweus program is built on a system. If I leave today the system will still have success. … Any elementary school that takes on the details of finding out what bullying is, trains the staff to recognize what bullying is, and puts this system in place will have success with their bullying program, because it is not so much the people as it is the system that makes it work. Staff have to input into the system and let the system do what it is set up to do.”

**Schoolwide commitment.** School 1 had a school committee that oversees the two behavior management programs in the school. One program is the Positive Behavior Approach Committee and the other is the OBPP.

School 2 has a program called the Four Core Values which emphasizes respect, accountability, responsibility, and honesty. The program also supports the four rules of the OBPP. The school has a monthly breakfast recognizing students who have demonstrated the four core values. When asked which staff enforce the bullying rules a teacher replied, “All the staff does. We’ve included all of our employees in our trainings; our instructional staff and instructional assistants. Even if our custodians are in the cafeteria and the students are not doing what they are supposed to be doing they remind
them. We enforce the rules on the busses. We have peaceful school bus meetings with the drivers and build that sense of community with them, let them know we are here to support them and vice-versa and so we try to incorporate everybody. It really is a school-wide effort. " School 2 had educated their PTA and the OBPP is addressed at the beginning of every school year with a letter to parents sharing information about their OBPP and the program is also promoted at Open House Nights. They also have a PTA member and a local mental health agency representative on their OBC.

The schoolwide commitment at School 3 to the OBPP is an expectation of the principal and the staff supports his expectations. The principal at School 3 took time with the implementation process to make sure all programs were aligned including the OBPP with the other current schoolwide programs. Teachers are required to turn in grade level minutes that keep the administrator informed of possible bullying problems. Teachers also share any concerns at staff meetings so that all teacher can be aware of a possible bullying problem.

Constraints

Constraints are those activities and supports, or lack thereof, that hinder the implementation process of the OBPP. Constraints evidenced in the implementation of the OBPP at each school were lack of time, lack of funding, lack of using OBQ data to assess the progress and areas of concern in the school’s OBPP, and the lack of involvement of parents and the community in the school’s OBPP.
Lack of Time. Teachers and administrators talked of the need for time to implement the OBPP in their school. Time was needed at the beginning of school for teachers to form their Olweus committee for the school year. The time teachers came back before the students was considered an ideal time to begin the plans for the upcoming school year’s kick-off assembly, reviewing the OBPP at their schools and training new teachers, but there are also many other things that must be done in preparation for the new year. Teachers stated that the administrators helped make this time available. One school admitted it had not had its kick-off assembly for the current school year yet due to not having had time for planning. Teachers had to make the time for class meetings and administrators had set expectations for the class meetings to be held. In one school there were teachers that at first did not want to make time for the class meetings.

School 1 has committee meetings every other week. The staff shares concerns and information about bullying at staff meetings. All teachers have a scheduled class meeting every Monday from 9:00-9:30. School 2 has an OBC that initially meets once a week, and then as the year evolves they meet once a month or at least every other month. Teachers are required to hold weekly class meetings, but are encouraged to hold more if needed. Staff meetings are used to discuss survey data and areas of need or to celebrate successes. School 3 has an OBC committee that meets monthly. Teachers are expected to hold weekly class meetings and to discuss any bullying concerns at grade level meetings. Teachers at School 3 had concern over using instructional time for the class meetings, but after putting the meeting in place, felt it was worth the time and actually saved time that
might have been spent on problems if they had not been addressed at the class meeting. Staff meetings are used to discuss hot spots and tweak the process if needed.

**Lack of Funding.** There is a cost for a school to administer the yearly OBQ. School 1 had administered the survey during the first two years and School 3 during the first three years. School 2 had administered the survey for four years, but had stated funding was not available this past year. Schools have to make decisions as to how money is spent and the OBQ has not been viewed as a priority. Each school administered the OBQ differently. School 1 only administered if during the first two years because this was what Olweus required. School 2 had administered it every year except for the last year when they did not have funding to cover the cost of administering the survey. School 3 administered the OBQ for the first three years and then their office of student services created a shortened survey that they have since used each year and at no cost.

**Lack of Using Data from the OBQ.** If a school does not administer the OBQ, the data from the OBQ survey is not available for a school to check for improvements that have occurred or areas of concern that remain or have appeared. When speaking with the participants from each school, it was the guidance counselor in two of the schools and a teacher in the third school that were the ones that oversaw the administration of the OBQ and shared the data with the staff. It seemed to be that these three individuals had the responsibility of working with the staff and OBC to make any necessary changes, driven by the data, to the program at their school. At two of the
schools, neither of the administrators talked about the data, only how their school administered the OBQ. The third school, talked about the data from reduced referral numbers, and talked about data from the documentation that teachers kept on incidents that were happening in the grade level, but not survey data at all. This was the school with the marked difference in the data from the OBQ. This school shared a survey that had been created by the district office of student services and on this survey the school showed improvement in the percent of students bullied two to three times a month, how often teachers or others stop bullying and how often other students try to stop bullying.

**Lack of Parent Involvement.** All three schools did not involve parents in the class meetings. The schools had involved parents in the initial kick-off assemblies and had at one time or another sent some type of information home with students about the school’s OBPP. When the schools did not implement the directive to include parents in class meetings, they not only did not implement their school’s OBPP as recommended, they also decreased the opportunity for parent involvement, understanding, and support in their OBPP.

**Lack of Community Involvement.** Schools did not involve the community in their OBPP. Only one school had invited a community member to serve on their OBPP. When asked about community involvement in their OBPP, schools responded referring to community as their school community; the parents and students from their school.
Olweus defines the community as the businesses, religious organizations, and community groups that surround the school and play a part in the student's lives.
Table 11

*Summary Code Table for Categories of Participant Interviews for Facilitating Conditions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Category Descriptions</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Leadership</td>
<td>Teachers on original OBCC</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Interviews provided data relating to the importance of teachers believing in the importance of implementing this program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current teachers on the OBC</td>
<td>Belief in power of OBPP to change their school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Teacher Buy-In</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Common Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class Meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Leadership</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Building level support from the principal</td>
<td>Principals providing opportunity for staff to adopt OBPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Prinicipals providing release time for some teachers to learn about Olweus and then come back and share with staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time allowed for training, administering OBP and kick-off assembly each year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Requirement and expectations of class meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disciplinary support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schoolwide Commitment

School staff (teachers, paraeducators, custodians, cafeteria staff, and bus drivers trained and empowered to enforce the OBPP.

Expectations that everyone in the school enforces the no bullying rules.

A culture of belief in no bullying.

Training was often provided for not only the administrators and teachers but may include para-educators, custodians, cafeteria staff and bus drivers.

Table 12

Summary Code Table for Categories of Participant Interviews for Constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>Teachers have many responsibilities that they must fulfill</td>
<td>Teachers were required to plan for their OBPP kick-off, hold class meetings and participate in staff discussions as to the progress of the program in their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td>Administrators have many priorities to consider for spending available funds</td>
<td>To administer the OBQ at a school requires the school to pay a fee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of using OBQ data</td>
<td>If the OBQ was not administered there was no data to evaluate the program.</td>
<td>Staff evaluated their program without data from the OBQ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of involving parents</td>
<td>Parents were not included in class meetings.</td>
<td>The parents did not have an opportunity to learn about class meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of involving community</td>
<td>Community members were not included in the school’s OBPP.</td>
<td>The community never became aware if the school’s OBPP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

Facilitating conditions and constraints became evident as the data from the interviews were compared to the *Four Levels of General Requirements* and the status of the current program in each school. For facilitating conditions, interviews provided data relating to the:

- importance of teachers believing in the importance of implementing this program and taking leadership roles in implementing the OBPP.
- importance of building level administrative leadership in supporting teachers with time allowed for training new teachers, planning a yearly kick-off, staff discussions on program updates and concerns throughout the year.
- presence of requirements and expectations for teachers to hold class meetings.
- expectation of all staff to enforce the no bullying rules.

For constraints, interviews provided data relating to the

- lack of time teachers felt they had to plan each year’s kick-off, hold class meetings, and have staff discussions regarding their OBPP.
- lack of funding relating to the yearly administration of the OBQ.
- lack of using data from the OBQ to evaluate the school’s current OBPP.
• lack of parent involvement in class meetings.

• lack of community involvement in the school’s OBPP.
Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

The increase in bullying incidences in the media has drawn national attention and has forced public schools to look for ways to prevent it from occurring. One of the bullying prevention programs that are available for schools to use is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). More than ninety schools in Virginia are using this bullying prevention program (http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/virginia_study.page).

This study used a mixed methods approach of reviewing extant data from three schools’ Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) reports and the Virginia Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV); and analyzing data from interviews with staff from three elementary schools in Virginia, selected from a study by Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett (2011). The OBPP has a survey, the OBQ, available for schools to monitor their programs’ progress. In Virginia, public schools report bullying incidents yearly and these data are reported in the Report on Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) by division and region. This study examined the data of both reports to assess impacts or relations with successful program implementation.

While quantitative data from the OBQ indicates both positives and negatives about a schools’ ability to handle bullying, there are schools that have not administered the survey yearly as recommended by the program. These schools in this study have an
OBPP that each of the school feel is a very successful OBPP, regardless of what the OBQ data may reflect. To explore beyond these data sources, this study employed the use of interviews with school staff to look at the fidelity of implementation of the program in three elementary schools to allow for school staff to share what makes their OBPP so successful. By allowing these voices to speak and be heard, information was shared about the OBPP that may be helpful to other schools that implement this program.

Summary of Research Findings

Below is a summary of this researcher’s findings in this study.

1. The data from the Report on Discipline Crime and Violence (DCV) was not comparable to the data from a school’s OBQ data. The data from the state’s DCV report describes the bullying problem in Virginia public schools by using data reported from over 130 different offenses within the school division. DCV data is reported by school division only, not single schools. In contrast, data obtained from the OBQ is specific to the individual school, where it is administered by staff to students, and provides information as to the attitudes, behaviors, bullying incidents and other related issues in a school environment in order to increase awareness and monitor progress of the school’s OBPP. These differences made direct comparisons of the two data sets impractical for analysis, but sociological theory stresses the importance of the entire community that surrounds the child, and this data from the DCV includes data from a division and region including other neighboring schools which are part of a student’s
community. DCV data is valuable for divisions and regions to use in evaluating the progress of stopping bullying.

2. After initial implementation of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ), the failure to administer the subsequent administrations of the OBQ survey made it impossible to examine the progress of the program as determined by analyzing the OBQ data. The OBQ is administered during the initial implementation of the program and is recommended to be used yearly after that. In this study each school administered the OBQ a different number of times and schedules. All administered the questionnaire during the initial implementation as directed. School 1 administered the OBQ four times within two school years, 2006-2008, and then did not use it again. School 2 administered the survey one time a year 2007-2010. School 3 administered the OBQ during the years 2007-2009 and then administered a survey created by their district office for the next 3 years. No schools administered the OBQ as directed for fidelity of implementation.

3. Failure to complete every directive listed within the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program’s Four Levels of General Requirements did not prohibit the implementation of the Olweus program. None of the three elementary schools implemented the OBPP with 100% fidelity. There were directives within the Four Levels of General Requirements for program implementation that none of the schools completed. The three schools had not included parents in the class meetings or helped to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community. Two schools did not speak of
developing intervention plans for students involved in bullying. All three schools had the fewest completed directives within the Community-Level Component. Schools 1 and 3 did not complete any of the community-level components. They had not reached out into the community for support from community members, developed any business partnerships, or spread their anti-bullying messages outside their school. School 2 did involve a community member on the committee and developed a business partnership, as directed, but had not done anything to spread the word of their OBPP out in the community, another directive of the *Four Levels of General Requirements* for program implementation of the OBPP.

4. **Facilitating conditions and constraints were identified through coding of the interviews.** Facilitating conditions are the activities and supports that promote the implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). Three categories of facilitating conditions: teacher leadership, administrative leadership, and schoolwide commitment, were a result of the coded interviews.

   Staff talked about facilitating conditions of teacher leadership as establishing the understanding of the importance of staff support and accepting the teacher responsibilities that are part of the OBPP. Teacher buy-in was critical for the program to be taught and carried out using a common language amongst staff, students, and parents.

   Administrative leadership was demonstrated through the expectations and beliefs of the administrators. All three administrators stated they believed the OBPP had made
positive changes in their school. They respected the teacher leadership that went into sustaining the program. All three administrators had established expectations for teachers to hold class meetings. Staff also realized their administrators support when time was set aside for the training and planning they needed to keep the program operating successfully.

All staff talked about the schoolwide commitment of teachers, students, and parents sharing a common language and understanding of what bullying is and the schools' enforcement of the no bullying rules. All three schools talked about their school culture when referring to the way their school had bought into and accepted the rules and beliefs of the OBPP. Their explanations of how they operated as a school conveyed a belief that the OBPP in their school was a way of life for them, that it was an understood belief system.

Constraints are those activities and supports, or lack thereof, that hinder the implementation process of the OBPP. Constraints that were identified from the coded interviews involved lack of time, lack of funding, lack of using data from the OBQ for program evaluation, lack of including parents in the class meetings, and lack of including the community in the school's OBPP. Time had always been and always would be a constraint for teachers. There is never enough time for teachers to get all the work they need done. Funding was also a constraint because schools had to pay for the yearly administration of the OBQ and school budgets did not always allow for this expenditure.
When a school did not use the OBQ it was not able to use the data from the survey to assist the staff in making decisions as to what parts of the program were and were not working. Lack of including parents in class meetings and the lack of reaching out into the community to build support offered the possibility that the OBPP at these three schools might have been missing an opportunity to be an even stronger program with the support of others that influence the students' lives. Despite the possible constraints shared through staff interviews, no evidence was found that supported these constraints as negatively impacting the OBPP at the three schools.

5. School 3 displayed a successful OBPP implementation, as evidenced by a large decrease in discipline referrals, from 600 to about 20 or 30 as reported by the principal, despite OBQ data that showed an increase in bullying, an increase in students not reporting bullying, and a decrease in students putting a stop to bullying. School 3 shared that their data was acceptable because they had been told by the Olweus trainers that many schools saw increases in bullying because students may find it easier to report bullying knowing that if they reported it, others would try to stop the bullying. School 3 also shared other data from a survey created by their school district which showed their OBPP had made progress and had a lower percentage of students being bullied two to three times a month, and increase in the percentage of teachers or others stopping bullying, and an increase in the percentage of students trying put a stop to bullying.
Bullying Data

The researcher was unable to identify relationships between the school district data in the Report on Discipline Crime and Violence (DCV) and the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) data for an individual school due to the differences in the two reports highlighted earlier. The DCV displays data on the number of bullying incidences in each school district. The data in the DCV is reported yearly by school districts from their data base which tracks specific incident referrals. The OBQ provides data on the behaviors and attitudes in a particular school concerning bullying and is administered with the purpose of monitoring a school’s OBPP and making changes if necessary. For the purpose of this study, the DCV data reviewed showed little change in the ranking of bullying as a reported offense of the 130 plus incidents, but was always ranked number one as an incident against students. It would be more appropriate to look at the individual school’s data of their discipline referrals having to do with bullying as compared to the school’s OBQ data.

Implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

After interviewing the three elementary schools’ staff members, and before even looking at what data they each had to share, through the interviews with enthusiastic teachers, involved guidance counselors, and supportive administrators it was communicated that each school believed that the OBPP made a positive difference in their schools’ culture. Data from the questions schools selected to share from the OBQ in
Tables 2 and Table 3 in Chapter 4 supported the success in Schools 1 and 2; but data in Table 4 did not support the success of School 3.

It is very difficult to explain the differences in the OBQ data between Schools 1 and 2 as compared to School 3 without talking extensively with administration and reviewing data such as bullying referrals specific to School 3. There were several unique pieces of information about School 3 that were shared during the interviews. The principal had been assigned to School 3 because the school was having a lot of problems academically and behaviorally. He had researched the OBPP and selected it for his staff. The principal and his staff shared the significant decrease in discipline referrals after he had come to the school and implemented the OBPP; 600 to 20 or 30 discipline referrals. The principal of School 3 required very specific documentation through grade level and class meeting minutes from the teachers. Even though School 3 has a successful OBPP like Schools 1 and 2, School 3’s adoption and management of the program was markedly different. The OBPP program at School 3 was selected and promoted by the administrative leadership in the school and the principal saw himself as the head of the Olweus Bullying Committee (OBC), whereas the other two schools’ programs were promoted and supported first by teacher leadership and a teacher or guidance counselor was the chair person of the OBC.

**Implications of lack of fidelity of implementation**
None of the three elementary schools implemented the OBPP with 100% fidelity. While these schools did not follow all of the directives in the *Four Levels of General Requirements of the OBPP*, they were successful in establishing the OBPP at their school and becoming a school with a successful program according to Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett (2011).

**Parents**

The importance of parents and schools working together for students' success is not a new idea. Administrators and teachers welcome parent support at school. Multiple research studies reinforce the importance of this connection. The three elementary schools had let parents know about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in their school through invitations to assemblies, letters home, school websites, posters with no bullying rules in classrooms and throughout the school, and through educating the students about the bullying prevention program. Teachers interviewed stated that the parents of their students knew that there was no tolerance for bullying at their school because it was part of the school's culture. But even with success in informing parents about the schools' OBPP, all three schools still failed to include parents in the weekly class meetings, a directive under the Classroom-Level Components, which Olweus, 2007 recommends doing several times a year.

Despite the failure to implement the Olweus program with 100% fidelity, these schools had implemented what the school and others considered a successful program.
This was the case despite a failure to implement all components connecting parents to the Olweus program. What is unknown from this study is the impact that more parent involvement might have on a school’s OBPP.

Community

When asked about developing community support for each school’s Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), teachers often asked for clarification as to what was meant by the word *community*. Their first thought was that their school’s community referred to the families of their students. The community surrounding a school includes the families of the students that attend the school, but Olweus (2007) states the community is also made up of volunteers and workers of youth organizations, local government, businesses, community non-profit organizations, and law enforcement. Students are a part of the community surrounding their school and have the opportunity to be influenced by positive role models that might also support a school’s OBPP if the community has been made aware of the school’s program. For many students, they are at school and other places in the community more than they are at home. The school and community working together can provide supports and activities to further the OBPP at a school.
Olweus Bullying Questionnaire Data

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program provides the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) to reveal the nature and extent of bullying at one’s school. Each of the three elementary schools administered the OBQ differently. The issue that arises is that when the OBQ is not administered at least once yearly, there is no quantitative data to support the OBPP as it was designed to do.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should include more study of the factors that impact Olweus program implementation such as school climate, administrative leadership, and teacher leadership. The three schools participating in this study had strong teacher and administrative leadership and support established throughout the entire school long before even considering the idea of adopting the OBPP for their school. If the presence of these strong leadership skills made a difference for these three schools, the question could be asked as to whether all schools are equipped with the necessary leadership to consider adopting a bullying prevention program before first offering other professional development opportunities to a staff to build leadership skills amongst the staff.

Future studies should be conducted comparing the OBPP in schools that administer the OBQ yearly and use the data to evaluate their school program to make changes as needed compared to schools that do not use the OBQ as recommended,
therefore not reviewing the same type of data, or possibly no data at all. If the OBQ is important and valuable and should be used by all schools implementing the program, then consideration should be given to making the survey more affordable or removing the cost of the survey altogether.

Data that could be more appropriate to review in comparison with the OBQ data would be an individual school’s referrals concerning bullying during the years that the OBPP has been in place as compared to data from the school’s OBQ results. Further study might also focus on an external data source for comparison to the OBQ data collected internally. Although the data in the DCV was complied by school division (and not individual schools), other data sets may be available to accomplish this important comparison at the school level.

Staff at schools have a lot of rich information to offer about the OBPP in their schools. Additional research studies involving expanded interviews with teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators about missing components in the fidelity of implementation and program outcomes from this study could increase understanding of the importance of these factors in the success of bullying programs.

Conclusion

Bullying is unacceptable and schools have to find ways to control it or the end result not only hurts other students, but impacts a school’s ability to provide a safe
environment where students can learn. This study provided evidence that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program can be an effective bullying prevention program, although none of the three elementary schools in this study implemented the program with 100% fidelity.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory of ecological systems proposed five socially organized subsystems that guide human growth and development; the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. These subsystems describe the relationships and interaction among these subsystems and their impact on childhood development. From the child’s immediate environment of the family and school, extending out into the surrounding community, Bronfenbrenner stressed the relationships and interactions that occur among these subsystems are inseparable from the child. All of the three schools in this study neglected to include parents in class meetings as stated in the individual-level component of the Four Levels of General Requirements of the OBPP. Parents were usually not invited to the yearly kick-off assembly after the initial event. The community level component was also lacking in all three schools. Swearer and Doll offered the perspective that bullying does not occur in isolation and is encouraged or discouraged by the results of the interactions within the child’s social ecology. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program contains the community-level component in the Four Levels of General Requirements of the OBPP, which supports Bronfenbrenner’s theory, but schools did not follow through with implementing this component. The omission of this component of the Olweus Bullying Prevention program, when
considered within the theoretical framework of child development defined by Brofenbrenner’s subsystems, would seem to have negative impacts on successful implementation of the program.

Teacher leadership is key to the success of OBPP becoming a schoolwide program. Teacher buy-in is needed and is a result of the teacher leadership during the implementation of the program. Teacher representatives make up a school’s Olweus Bullying Committee and it is this committee that becomes the vehicle by which the OBPP is brought before the school each year. Teachers are the first line of intervention and use the program daily as they interact with students, therefore they have to believe in the power of the program and make the OBPP part of their school’s culture. Teacher leadership was a strong presence at each school.

Administrative leadership is also very important. Administrators have to make sure there is time for staff meetings to discuss progress of the program and concerns within the school. Administrators also play a crucial role in the accountability of teachers to provide class meetings. Analyzing data and making data driven decisions is a part of administrative leadership in a school. The OBPP provides the OBQ by which schools can measure progress or lack thereof and use this data to make changes as needed to a school’s program. With the lack of consistent use of the OBQ, data has not played the role in evaluating the success of the OBPP like it could have. Data from the OBQ offers a way for a school to measure the outcomes of their program and without using this data,
outcomes may be perceived incorrectly and areas where improvement is needed not addressed.

Administrators must be aware of the political aspects involved in the implementation of a program such as the OBPP. Stakeholders at each school have beliefs and values that may differ concerning the implementation of the program. Bolman and Deal (2009) refer to this need to consider the political frame of an organization and its stakeholders and how they differ in their individual and group interests when reviewing school-based success. Schools 1, 2 and 3 were very different in how they were organized. School 1’s principal was the assistant principal at the time of program implementation and their chairperson had experienced counseling students about bullying out in Colorado following Columbine and also participated as a speaker at Olweus conferences. School 2 had a principal new to the school since implementation and depended on the guidance counselor to run the program. At School 3 the principal had been brought to the school because the large number of behavior problems and poor test scores, with the purpose that he would help improve these areas of concern. The school administrator must decide how to bring together the values and beliefs of the stakeholders, the school’s resources, and the school’s goals to be successful. If the OBPP is a program that the stakeholders all agreed was an important program to implement, then it is the leadership of the school administrator that is critical to make decisions that support this implementation.
These three elementary schools were recommended for this study because they are considered, as a result of the research of Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett (2011), to have a successful OBPP. One can only assume the possible additional strength of these programs if the implementation had included the parents, community, and the use of data from the consistent yearly administration of the OBQ as the OBPP was designed to do. Schools must take seriously the implementation process when implementing a bullying prevention program. The safety of students at school is a priority, therefore the implementation fidelity of a bullying prevention program such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is crucial in achieving the successful outcome to stopping bullying and improve the safety and security of students and staff.
APPENDIX A
The Program Evaluation Standards

Utility Standards

The utility standards are intended to increase the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs.

**U1 Evaluator Credibility** Evaluations should be conducted by qualified people who establish and maintain credibility in the evaluation context.

**U2 Attention to Stakeholders** Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program and affected by its evaluation.

**U3 Negotiated Purposes** Evaluation purposes should be identified and continually negotiated based on the needs of stakeholders.

**U4 Explicit Values** Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning purposes, processes, and judgments.

**U5 Relevant Information** Evaluation information should serve the identified and emergent needs of stakeholders.

**U6 Meaningful Processes and Products** Evaluations should construct activities, descriptions, and judgments in ways that encourage participants to rediscover, reinterpret, or revise their understandings and behaviors.

**U7 Timely and Appropriate Communicating and Reporting** Evaluations should attend to the continuing information needs of their multiple audiences.

**U8 Concern for Consequences and Influence** Evaluations should promote responsible and adaptive use while guarding against unintended negative consequences and misuse.

Feasibility Standards

The feasibility standards are intended to increase evaluation effectiveness and efficiency.

**F1 Project Management** Evaluations should use effective project management strategies.

**F2 Practical Procedures** Evaluation procedures should be practical and responsive to the way the program operates.

**F3 Contextual Viability** Evaluations should recognize, monitor, and balance the cultural and political interests and needs of individuals and groups.

**F4 Resource Use** Evaluations should use resources effectively and efficiently.

Propriety Standards
The propriety standards support what is proper, fair, legal, right and just in evaluations.

**P1 Responsive and Inclusive Orientation** Evaluations should be responsive to stakeholders and their communities.

**P2 Formal Agreements** Evaluation agreements should be negotiated to make obligations explicit and take into account the needs, expectations, and cultural contexts of clients and other stakeholders.

**P3 Human Rights and Respect** Evaluations should be designed and conducted to protect human and legal rights and maintain the dignity of participants and other stakeholders.

**P4 Clarity and Fairness** Evaluations should be understandable and fair in addressing stakeholder needs and purposes.

**P5 Transparency and Disclosure** Evaluations should provide complete descriptions of findings, limitations, and conclusions to all stakeholders, unless doing so would violate legal and propriety obligations.

**P6 Conflicts of Interests** Evaluations should openly and honestly identify and address real or perceived conflicts of interests that may compromise the evaluation.

**P7 Fiscal Responsibility** Evaluations should account for all expended resources and comply with sound fiscal procedures and processes.

**Accuracy Standards**

The accuracy standards are intended to increase the dependability and truthfulness of evaluation representations, propositions, and findings, especially those that support interpretations and judgments about quality.

**A1 Justified Conclusions and Decisions** Evaluation conclusions and decisions should be explicitly justified in the cultures and contexts where they have consequences.

**A2 Valid Information** Evaluation information should serve the intended purposes and support valid interpretations.

**A3 Reliable Information** Evaluation procedures should yield sufficiently dependable and consistent information for the intended uses.

**A4 Explicit Program and Context Descriptions** Evaluations should document programs and their contexts with appropriate detail and scope for the evaluation purposes.

**A5 Information Management** Evaluations should employ systematic information collection, review, verification, and storage methods.

**A6 Sound Designs and Analyses** Evaluations should employ technically adequate designs and analyses that are appropriate for the evaluation purposes.

**A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning** Evaluation reasoning leading from information and analyses to findings, interpretations, conclusions, and judgments should be clearly and
completely documented.

**A8 Communication and Reporting** Evaluation communications should have adequate scope and guard against misconceptions, biases, distortions, and errors.

**Evaluation Accountability Standards**

The evaluation accountability standards encourage adequate documentation of evaluations and a metaevaluative perspective focused on improvement and accountability for evaluation processes and products.

**E1 Evaluation Documentation** Evaluations should fully document their negotiated purposes and implemented designs, procedures, data, and outcomes.

**E2 Internal Metaevaluation** Evaluators should use these and other applicable standards to examine the accountability of the evaluation design, procedures employed, information collected, and outcomes.

**E3 External Metaevaluation** Program evaluation sponsors, clients, evaluators, and other stakeholders should encourage the conduct of external metaevaluations using these and other applicable standards.
APPENDIX B

FOUR LEVELS OF GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE OBPP

School-Level Components

- Establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC).
- Conduct committee and staff trainings.
- Administer the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire school wide.
- Hold staff discussion group meetings.
- Introduce the school rules against bullying.
- Review and refine the school’s supervisory system.
- Hold a school kick-off event to launch the program.
- Involve parents.

Classroom-Level Components

- Post and enforce school wide rules against bullying.
- Hold regular class meetings.
- Hold meetings with students’ parents.

Individual-Level Components

- Supervise students’ activities.
- Ensure that all staff intervene on the spot when bullying occurs.
- Hold meetings with students involved in bullying.
- Hold meetings with parents of involved students.
- Develop individual intervention plans for involved students.

Community-Level Components
- Involve community members on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee.

- Develop partnerships with community members to support your school’s program.

- Help to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community.
# APPENDIX C

## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Dates for Fall Launch</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late winter/early spring</td>
<td>Select members of the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (OBCC) and an onsite OBPP coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>Administer the OBQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/May</td>
<td>Hold a two-day training with members for the BPCC; have the committee meet every two weeks to work out the details of program implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June</td>
<td>Obtain data for the OBQ; review the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August/September</td>
<td>Conduct a one-day training with all school staff. Also hold your school kick-off event(s) with students and parents</td>
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| Beginning of the fall semester, following the one-day staff training | Plan, schedule, and launch other elements of the school wide program:  
  - Introduce school/class rules against bullying  
  - Begin class meetings |
• Increase supervision; review and coordinate your supervisory system.

• Initiate individual interventions with students.

• Start regular staff discussion groups (scheduled before the school year starts)

• Hold parent meetings.

Olweus & Limber, 2007, p.13
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduce self and thank the participant for volunteering to participate. Review the confidentiality of the interview. Ask the participant how long they have taught at the school and chat briefly about their position to build a level of comfort.

Opening Statement: (to be read to all participants) I am interested in understanding how schools that use the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) implement the program in their school and how they monitor the program’s progress. I have a set of questions that I will ask you about the OBPP in your school. The questions will allow you to talk about the program from its implementation through today. Please share as much as you can to answer each question.

School Level Component Questions:

How did your school go about implementing the OBPP?

Who is in charge of the OBPP in your school?

Is there a committee that is in charge of the operation of the OBPP?

How did the committee and staff learn about the OBPP program when it first began?

Was there any type of survey?

How often does your school administer the OBQ?

How does your staff get a chance to share with other staff about how the program is going?

What were the first things the school had to do get the OBPP operating?

Was there a kick-off event?

How did you let the parents know about the program?

Classroom-Level Components

What does the teacher need to do to make sure the students in his or her class know about the program?
Are there any specific school wide rules? What are they?

Does anyone ever meet with the students to talk about bullying problems?

Is there anyone else teachers talk to about bullying problems a student in their class may be having?

**Individual-Level Components**

Which staff enforce the bullying rules and what do they do to enforce them?

What do staff do if they know of a bullying incident?

Are there ever any conferences held to address bullying that is happening? With who?

What steps do you take if a student is repeatedly having problems being a bully or a victim?

**Community-Level Components**

How does your community surrounding the school know about the OBPP in your school?

How do you include the community in your efforts?
Email sent to the school division administrator to introduce self and request permission to interview staff.

Dear ___________________,

My name is Barbara Wood and I am a doctoral candidate for my Ed. D. in K-12 Administration at the College of William and Mary. For my dissertation, I am conducting a program evaluation on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in three elementary schools in Virginia, and have heard that you have an elementary school that has implemented this program. The purpose of my research is to look at the implementation process and expected outcomes of the current program. I am aware that Olweus has a questionnaire that is used by schools to survey staff and students as to the state of bullying in their school.

My program evaluation would involve reviewing any of the survey data that the school might already have and conducting 5 interviews. I would like to interview a building administrator that was at the school during implementation of the program if possible, or a building administrator that is very active in the program. I would also like to interview one guidance counselor and three classroom teachers; one that was there when the program was implemented, one that came to the school after the first year of implementation, and then one of the newest teachers in the school. The participants would remain anonymous along with the name of the school. Each interview would take
approximately 30 minutes. I am willing to accommodate the administrator, guidance
counselor and teachers' schedules at their convenience. In order to conduct these
interviews, I am able to spend a day at the school, if necessary, to conduct interviews
before school, during planning times, and after school. I know how important
instructional time is and I do not want to interfere with this in any way.

If you can, I would greatly appreciate being able to learn about the Olweus
program in your school division. I am not asking for a particular elementary school,
because I would like for the school to want to be a part of this evaluation, and for the
division administration to play a part in the selection. My own school uses the Olweus
Bullying Prevention Program, so I understand the importance of a safe environment
where students can learn. If you are able to consider this request, please advise me on my
next step of making contact with your elementary school. Thank you for considering my
request.

Respectfully,

Barbara Wood
Dear Fellow Educator,

I am a doctoral student at the College of William and Mary. I am conducting a dissertation title, *The Program Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at Three Rural Elementary Schools in Virginia*, as part of my degree requirements. Thank you so much for agreeing to volunteer to take part in my research study. As you know, bullying is a major concern of schools today. It seems like there are more and more incidents of bullying happening in schools every day. I would like to learn more about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at your school. I am particularly interested in the program evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and I would like to talk to staff, such as yourself, to gain insight into how you perceive the functioning of the program. I do have knowledge about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program because my elementary school also has this program in place, but I realize that all schools do not conduct programs the same way.

I would like to come to your school and conduct an interview with you. This interview will be confidential and anonymous. I will not use any of the participants’ names or the school’s name in any part of my report. I plan to spend a day at your school, if necessary, to be able to hold the interviews at a time that is convenient for you; such as before school, during planning, lunch, or after school. The interview should take about 30 minutes, so please schedule it so that it fits best into your day. I will be in touch with your administrator to finalize a date and time in the near future. I will collect the signed Informed Consent from you at that time. You must at least 18 years of age to participate. You may withdraw your participation or consent at any time without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with me, the College of William and Mary, or your school division.

You may report any dissatisfaction with an aspect of this study to the Chair of the Protection of Human Subject committee, Dr. __________________________. If you have questions or concerns please call me at 757-876-8665 or email me at barbara.wood@poquoson.k12.va.us. Once again, thank you for assisting me in my research.

Respectfully,

Barbara Wood
APPENDIX G

The Program Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
In Three Elementary Schools in Virginia

Participant Interview Consent Form

This study, conducted by Barbara Wood, reviews the implementation and outcome of your school’s bullying prevention program. I understand that I will participate in an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. I understand that I do not have to answer any question I choose not to answer and may discontinue participation at any time.

I have been informed that information obtained from me in this interview will be confidential and kept under lock and key by the researcher. I understand there is one researcher conducting this project. There are three dissertation committee members, and the research team of Goodman, Fobbs and Moffett, who conducted the original study, who will also have access to this information that I provide. I will be provided a summary of the study’s results at my discretion.

To withdraw my consent and participation, I understand that I need only call or email the researcher with this direction. If I choose to withdraw, I may ask that any data generated be returned to me. Finally, I understand that any incentive or payment for participation will not be affected by my responses or by exercising any of my rights.

There are no foreseeable risks with this research. The potential benefit is the contribution to the prevention and stopping of bullying in school. No costs or payment are associated with participating in this research study. If any discomfort should arise regarding material addressed in the study, participants can call __________________________. My signature below signifies I am at least 18 years of age, I have received a copy of this consent to participate in this study.

________________________________________
Date                 Signature of Participant

Print Name: _____________________________
APPENDIX H

Interview Transcription Example

Introduction of self and study

Interview #1

*How did your school go about implementing the OBPP?*

There was a team of teachers and a counselor brought it back to our school and we had some training and they gave us lessons to do with our class.

*Tell me a little more about the staff training.*

We had staff development during our days before the kids came. A ½ day was devoted to learning what the program is. Here’s what he lessons in your classroom are going to look like and sort of rolled it out that way.

*So who’s in charge of the OBPP in your school?*

Currently now it is in conjunction with PBS which is the Positive Behavioral Support Program so there’s a committee and a lead teacher and a grade level rep from each team that kind of runs the bullying stuff and the school wide behavior policy.

*So did the committee and staff learn about the program when it first began?*

We got a grant - the counselors got a grant and that’s how it sort of started.

*Do you remember any type of survey or questionnaire that they did?*

We’ve had it so long but I feel that at first we did and we talked about what the problems were bullying wise with our kids we thought we had with bullying of our kids. We’ve evaluated every year to see if it helped. We had more when we started I think it was a rating scale 1-5.

*So you take that survey mid-year or at the end of the year every year?*

So when we first started the program we had a little more of an evaluation because we were new. We had the kids evaluate like self-surveys that I believe were straight from the
Olweus people, like I think bulling is. It was like a rating scale 1-5, if it’s a problem at our school... I know what to do. The teachers and the students did it. And that was at the beginning.

*How does your staff get a chance to share with other staff how the program is going?*

Probably during our staff development time. We have an early release Monday and not that we do this every time, but that is a time when we can come together to talk about the bullying. We also have class meetings every week. That is how we do Olweus how, we don’t evaluate it as much as we did in the beginning, but that gives us our current forum for talking about bullying issues. We have a big kick-off where there is a big bullying assembly and we talk about the bullying circle and there’s bullying prevention policy where the kids can get referred to the office for bullying and the kids all know the expectations.

*So you have a kick-off every year. Did you have the same kind of kick-off when you first started?*

No It has sort of grown into that. Once we did it for a few years we got our feet wet and now knew a little more about what we were doing so now we realized we need a kick off. But we didn’t at the beginning. We know we needed to the kids to be more aware and excited about being bully free. The kids really into it and we have posters all over the school that say the steps and it is very out there.

*How did you or did you let parents know about the program?*

I believe we also have Thursday folders and notes go home from the office and the administration and the parents were notified that way. There also invited to the bully kick-off and if they want they can come to get more information and we also talk about it at our back to school night. This year we are doing a smaller portion of the teacher time in the classroom and the parents can go down to the cafeteria and there are different tables set up one of the tables is about Olweus.

*What does the teacher need to do to make sure the students in his or her class know what to do?*

We actually have a teacher’s manual with a whole section on Olweus and it has all of the bully prevention lessons laid out for the teacher so they would just have to check the
manual. We also have a teacher mentoring program so if you are new here we also have a portion of the new teacher training devoted to the Olweus program here.

*Are there any specific school-wide rules?*

Yes, there are 4 of them and actually I just put my poster away and Tammy will probably give them to you. There kind of hard to remember.

*Does anyone ever meet with the students to talk about bullying? I know you mentioned the class meetings, but does anyone else meet with them?*

The counselors, we have two. Phoebe is retired but comes back pt and Kate Crane is been here about 3 years and meets regularly with the kids and she is amazing and the kids know they can go to her if they have problems.

*If the teacher needed to talk to someone about a bullying problem in his or her classroom who would they go to?*

Probably administration but then maybe then a counselor, I would go to Kate first. We have the referral system in place so if you feel it is repeated then you would fill out the referral so on the referral form there is a place that has the definition that has to be repeated to the student when you’re writing them up.

*Who makes the decision on the referral? Tell me about what happens when the student gets written up?*

That would totally be up to administration. It was the first offense the consequence would be different than if it was the second or third offense. I luckily I feel that since we’ve had these procedures in place I personally haven’t had a whole lot of bullying in my classroom. And any times I have seen it honestly with girls the most, I sent them to the counselor and they have had lunch bunches or groups to discuss it and that could also be because in the lower grades it is very different in the upper grades. Phoebe would be a good person to talk to about that.

*When you were first telling be about the definition that you have to read, how does that work?*

During the class meeting lessons they are all laid out for you that bullying is a repeated offense like teasing and picking on someone the kids know the difference between picking on someone once and your bothering someone over and over again.
And they know that because..?

The class meetings. So the kids by the time they get to third grade they have had this over and over again.

Tell me about your individual class meetings.

They’re set up- we meet in a circle but I guess each class does it somewhat differently. In my class we have this box set up that they can put problems in and then we can talk about it and if the student feels this problem is solved it is ok and if not they can just write me a letter and put it in the box. During those class meetings we start out with compliments so that are multi things going on.

What are the expectations of your administrator for the teachers as to how things are handled and how things get reported?

Well the admin expect us to have class meetings well the whole school has class meetings at the same time on Monday mornings from 9:00-9:30. It is an expectation that if the admin walk around during that time that all teacher are doing their class meetings. We are supposed to have a buddy that helps out with the class meetings like mine is the librarian, but it could be an IA or specialist to come help you so if you were to refer a student after the meeting you have to do if that day and talk with an administrator

Do you have to call the parents?

The administrators would. I know I probably would too. I know my neighbor -teacher on my grade level team has had a couple of problems and so she has referred the kids and she has usually taken the kid to the office and then check in with the administrator and they would make the phone calls from the office.

Which staff in the school enforce the bullying rules?

There’s supposed to be all of us, we’re all on the same page, we all know the same language, we all go to the kick-off so I would say everybody because even if the kids are in PE or music they know the expectations are the same.

Talk to me about what you would do besides just writing it up if you know there is a repeated problem going on?
Like if I know there is a problem going on in my classroom? I would discuss it at class meetings. Cause it gives us a whole break from 9:00-9:30 from instruction. It gives us a whole forum to discuss it. However because we have this time set aside on Monday and we had another problem I would just have another class meeting closer to the time if I didn’t think it could wait.

*How does the community surrounding the school know about the Olweus program in your school?*

Through the Thursday folders. Oh, you mean if they weren’t parents?

*Well it could be both. Let’s start with parents.*

Parents would know through the Thursday folders and coming to the kick-off. Every year Jaimie would send home a letter explaining.

*Then there’s the kick-off and you said they are all invited to that. Now is there any way you have linked this into the community surrounding the school?*

I don’t think so?

*Are there a lot of schools in Fairfax that use Olweus?*

I believe so. I don’t know that much about the neighboring schools whether or not they do. From my perspective as a teacher and not being the head of any of the committees, I don’t know that we’ve linked — I know that Tammy and Phoebe have gone to trainings, but whether they are right here in Fairfax I don’t know.

*Ok. We are finished. Can you think of anything else you want to add?*

From when I first started here it is so nice to be using the same language because bullying will happen in unsupervised areas like in PE and so when they get to third grade it’s not like I’m introducing this — they know what is expected here. And I think just drawing attention to it is good. The kids just know it isn’t accepted here.
Researcher as Instrument Statement

I am the research instrument for my study. I know that it is important for readers to understand my experiences, beliefs, values and expectations as they might influence my interpretation of the data I collect from interviews with staff from the three elementary schools. I will examine the fidelity of implementation and outcomes of three elementary schools in Virginia that are considered to have a very successful Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at their school.

My experiences that impact who I am began when I was adopted at the age of 3 months. My parents could not have their own biological children so they adopted their children and I was the first of four. When asked when I found out I was adopted, I tell people that I always knew. My parents made it part of their relationship with me to talk about my being adopted in a way that there was never one big moment when I found out. I have been curious through my life as to what type of person my birth mother might be, but I have never searched for her because I had a mother and father and really couldn’t imagine how another parent would fit into my life. I also knew that when my parents adopted my siblings and I, adoptions were ‘closed’ and all paperwork was confidential. They adopted us at a time when the confidentiality of adoption was respected in order to give all involved a new start and I respected their belief in that.

As a child growing up in my family, I was raised to be honest, polite, not to talk about other people’s business. I do not remember my mother or father ever swearing or calling another person a derogatory name, especially any name that reflected on a person’s race or cognitive ability. I went to church every Sunday unless I was sick or on vacation and was very active in my church activities. I moved from being a child that went to Sunday School and Bible School to a
teenager and young adult that taught younger children in Sunday School and Bible School and served on many different church committees. I firmly believe that my experiences as a young adult in my church, serving on a pastor search committee with six other adults shaped a lot of the ways that I listen to and get to know others. We traveled to other churches and interviewed many perspective ministers. The other adults I was with were incredible role models for anyone moving into adulthood and they were not only adults I respected, but we all became friends. Our interviews and conversations were confidential and I learned a lot about the closeness and trust that it took for us to perform our assigned task. I have continued to be active in my church, the same church, as an adult.

I decided to become a teacher when my daughters were in elementary schools and went back to college to earn a teaching certificate. Teaching seemed to come naturally to me and I felt loved everything about teaching elementary aged students. I taught grades kindergarten through third and decided to further my education and work on a masters degree. I had the opportunity to work as an instructional specialist in two failing schools and then moved into the next phase of my career. I took a position working as a coordinator of professional development. In this job I worked with school administrators and seemed the right thing to do and became an assistant principal and then a principal. As a teacher and now as a principal I find myself working as a mediator between students that do not get along, trying to help them use positive friendship skills and to understand that the world is a much happier place when you treat others like you would like to be treated.

When it came time to write this dissertation I decided to conduct a research study on bullying. My own school uses the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, but not in the way it could and should be used. I was not the principal at the school when the program was
implemented and many teachers have retired or moved, so there have been many new teachers added since then. I personally lacked a lot of the knowledge I needed to have as the administrator of a school with this bullying program. Bullying is a topic all schools everywhere spend time dealing with. In a perfect world there would be no bullying, but the world will never be perfect, so striving to make the most with what we have is how I see we have to tackle this issue. I hope that when I am finished with this study I find that my school has a diamond in the rough with the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and that the staff, parents and students can find success through using this program to help stop bullying.
REFERENCES


