

Stop Bullying Now

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To the Cooperative Middle School,

I have been meaning to write since I visited your school in the fall to commend you on the work you have been doing in building school climate and culture, and apologize for not writing earlier.

When we surveyed your students in May 2008 they said clearly that a large majority of them see school as a safe, welcoming place, with over 90% rating the school as safe, more than 85% reporting positive connections with staff members, and over 80% reporting that staff act respectfully toward them. Fewer than 5% answered that last question with "no."

Throughout my most recent consultation and training time with your staff and administration I continued to be impressed with the level of commitment and caring that I saw, as evidenced by specific questions about implementation of different strategies and examples of how the past trainings had been implemented.

That same impression of commitment and connection continued when I met with a group of student leaders to explore positive bystander options. It was clear to me that your students have been encouraged to think, to reason, and to care about each other. After an experiential bystander exercise, the students summarized what they had learned. Their list of learnings could be a model for students at any school. They said:

"You can have a negative impact on someone through silence, even if you don't want to.

Problems start small, but if they are not changed they can grow.

It just takes a small action from a lot of people to make things better.

Treat everyone well, as you would treat your friends.

Appreciate the power of a small positive gesture.

It's all about individual choice. Our choices lead to a positive or a negative outcome.

When you see a small problem, find and use a solution fast.

You don't have to know someone to help them in a small and important way."

I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and look forward to hearing about any way I can help in the future.

Yours,
Stan Davis