

Evaluation of Iowa's Anti-Bullying Law: Compliance and Impact

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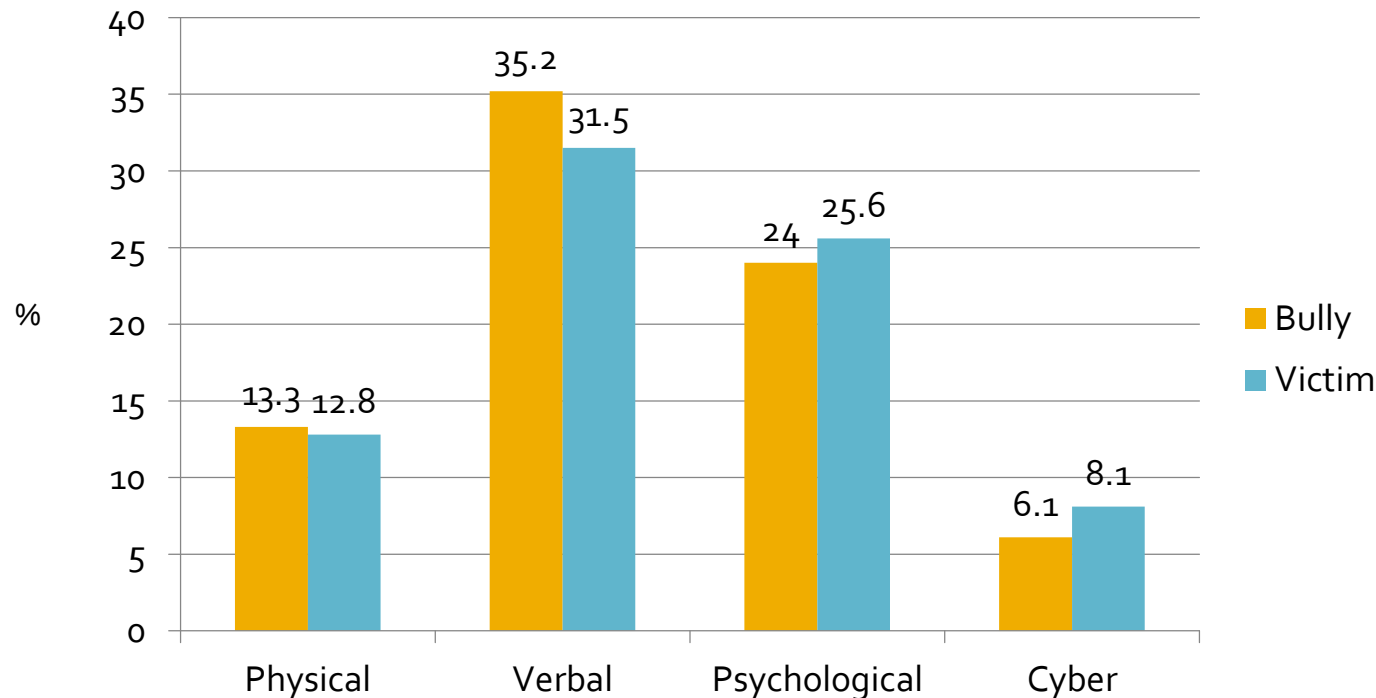
What is bullying?

- FORM of aggression in which one or more peers repeatedly and intentionally intimidate, harass, or physically harm a victim
- Key elements of bullying are
 - aggression
 - repetition
 - the context of a relationship with an imbalance of power
- most prevalent form of victimization in schools
- rates slightly higher in rural than urban schools

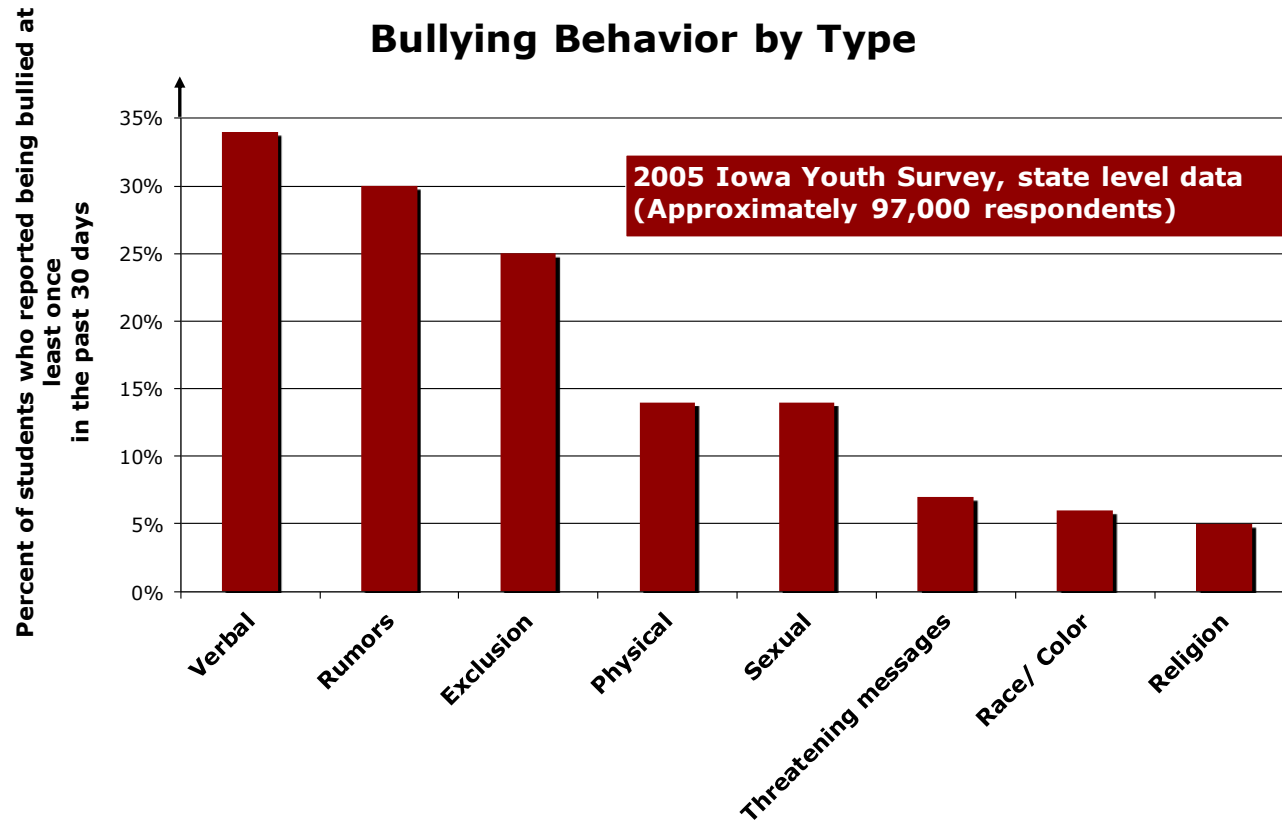
Prevalence of bullying by type

US 2005/2006

- 3.7 million youths engage in bullying, and more than 3.2 million are victims of “moderate” or “serious” bullying each year.
- 56% of students have witnessed some type of bullying at school.
- Over two-thirds of students believe that schools respond poorly to bullying.



Bullying at School – A Common Experience in K-12 Iowa Public Schools



According to the 2005 Iowa Youth Survey...

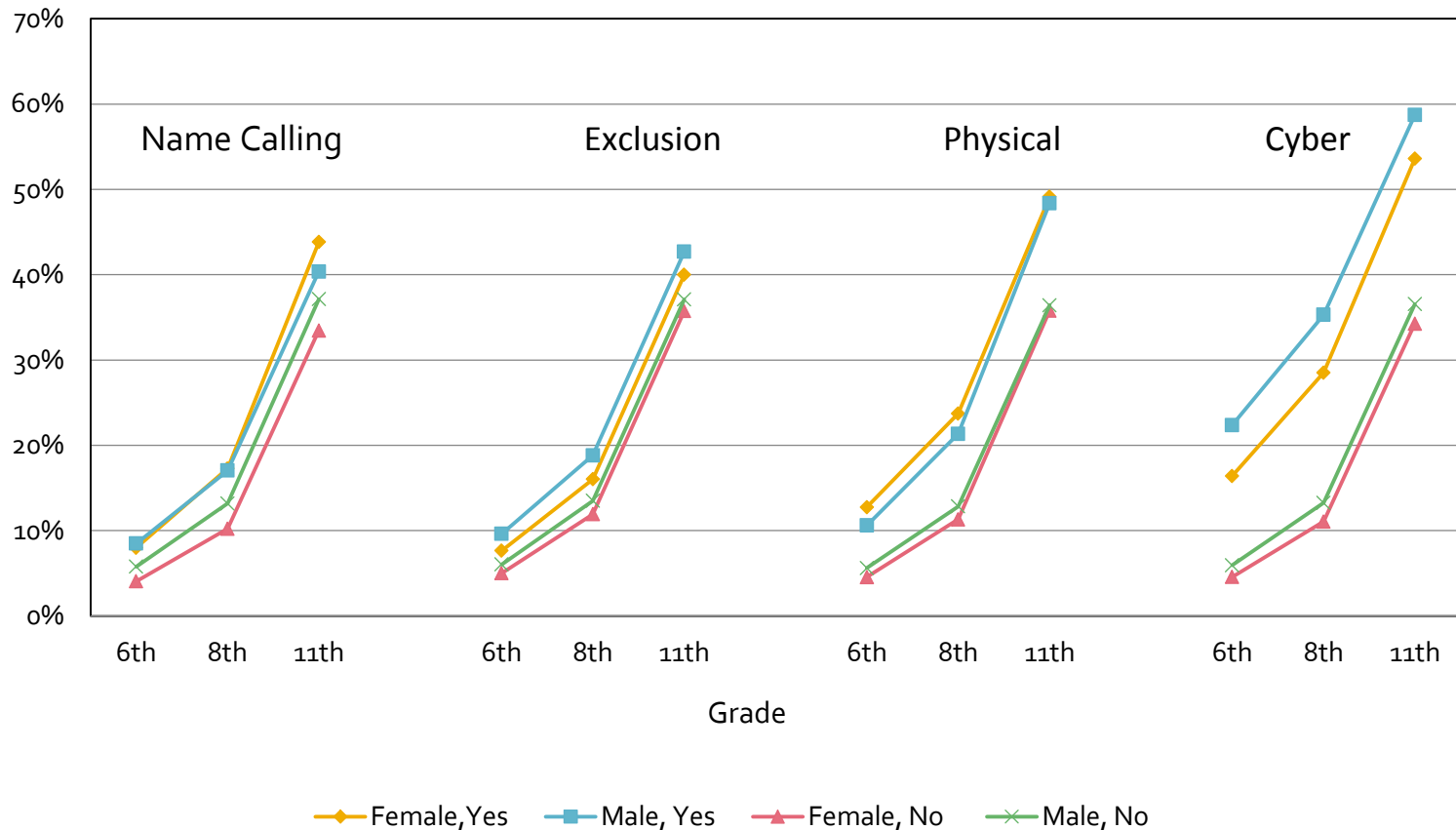
Over 50% of 6th, 8th, and 11th graders reported being bullied one or more times in the past 30 days

Impact of bullying

- Cross-sectional data indicate that victims of bullying have elevated levels of social isolation, depression, anxiety and substance abuse
- Bully-victims especially have increased self-harm behaviors and suicide ideations
- Externalizing behaviors (harmful to others), include violent behaviors and weapons carrying
- Cohort studies in Scandinavia, UK and Sweden indicate that adults who reported being bullied in childhood had increased risk for depression and poor self-esteem later in life

Iowa Youth Survey, 2010

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities for Recent Alcohol Use by Type of Bullying Victimization



Show Video about mis-directions about bullying

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/videos/2012/08/misdirections.html>

Types of Prevention Strategies

- Educational
- Environmental
- Enforcement (law/policy)

Whole-school multidisciplinary interventions

- Multidisciplinary whole-school approaches that include some combination of schoolwide rules and sanctions, teacher training, classroom curriculum and individual counseling
- In general, reported some positive effects with decreases in bullying or victimization
- <http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/>

Behavioral Ecological Model- a framework for anti-bullying interventions

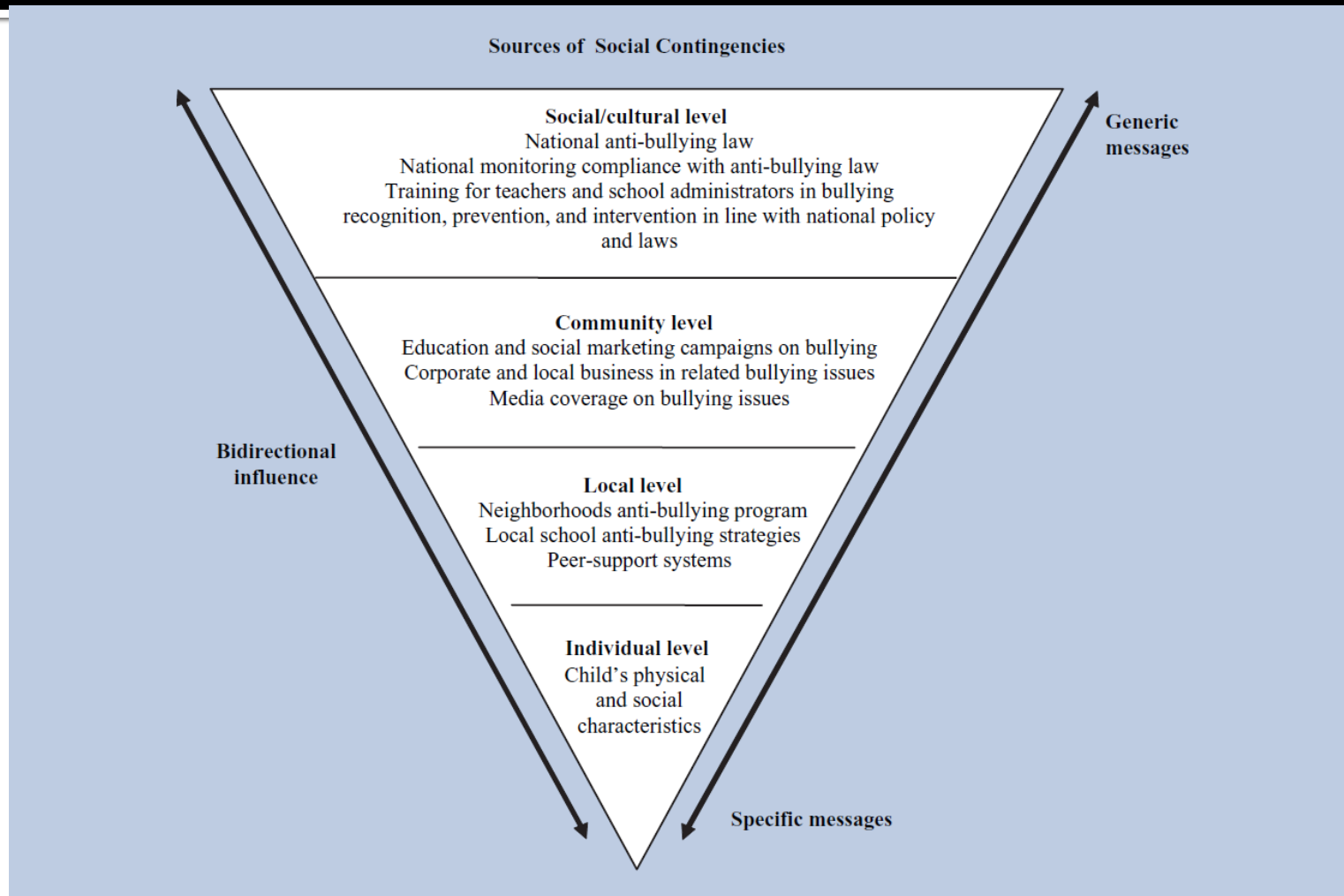
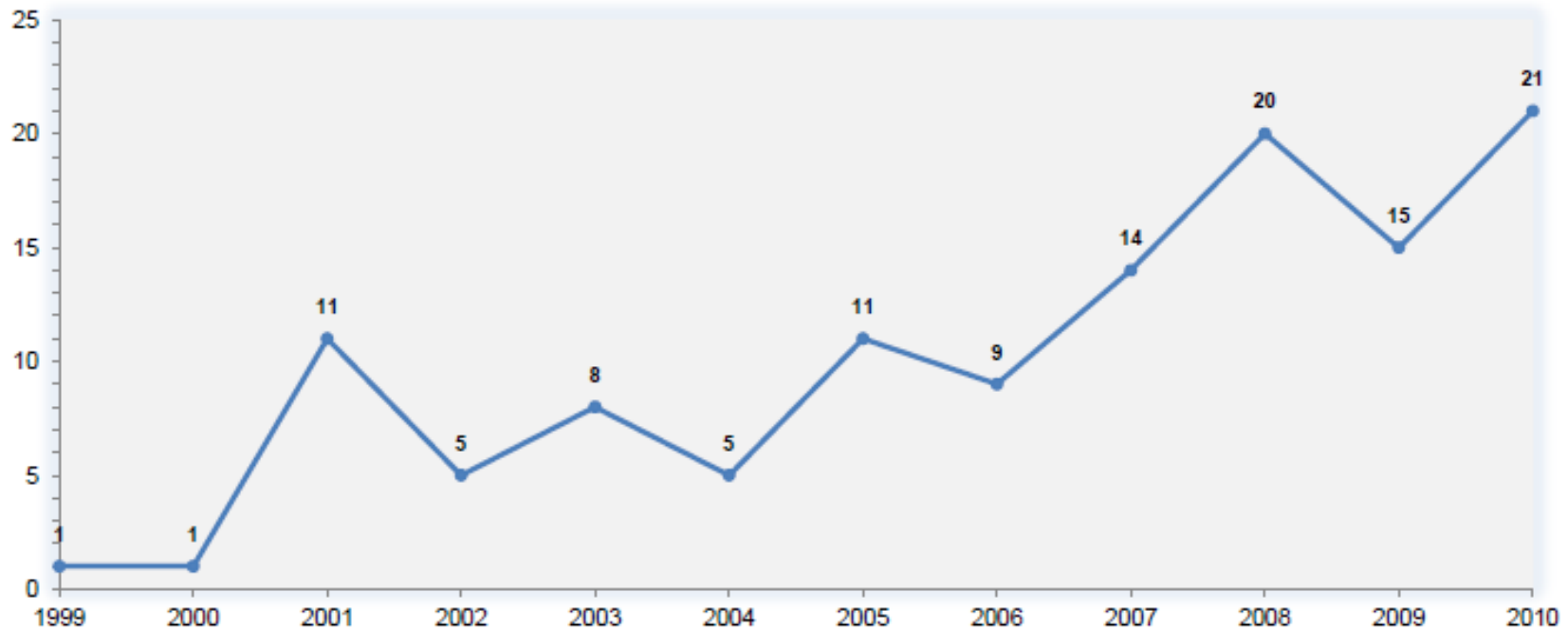


Figure 1. The Behavioral Ecological Model. Adapted from "The Behavioral Ecological Model: Integrating public health and behavioral science." by Hovell, Wahlgren, & Gehrman, 2002. In R. J. DiClemente, R. Crosby, & M. Kegler, (Eds.), *New and emerging theories in health promotion practice & research* (pp. 347-385). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Numbers of state laws enacted in the U.S. by year

Exhibit A. Number of state bullying laws enacted by year: 1999–2010

Bills enacted or amended



Iowa school bullying legislation

Governor Culver Signs Safe Schools Legislation
Bill Provides Greater Protection to Iowa's
Students – Feb 2007

- September 1, 2007: All school boards required to adopt an anti-bullying/anti-harassment policy (Iowa Code Section 280.28)
 - Defines harassment and bullying
 - Includes consequences for those who violate policy
 - Procedure for reporting and investigating complaints and acts
 - Recommends training but not required

Iowa's Anti-bullying Code 280.28

Required Elements

- ✓ Policy adopted on or before September 1, 2007
- ✓ Policy declares bullying a violation of state and school policy
- ✓ Policy states definition of bullying according to code
- ✓ Policy indicates consequences and remedial actions for violators
- ✓ Policy indicates procedures for reporting bullying incident and identifies school official responsible for handling complaints
- ✓ Policy indicates procedures for investigating complaints and identifies the school district official in charge of investigations
- ✓ Policy identifies official responsible for policy implementation
- ✓ Policy indicates of how the policy is to be publicized
- ✓ District must maintain system to collect bullying incidence data

Recommended Elements. To the extent funds are available, schools are encouraged to establish programs designed to eliminate bullying and harassment.

- ✓ Train school employees and volunteers with student contact on anti-bullying policies
- ✓ Develop a process to provide school employees, volunteers, and students with skills and knowledge to help reduce incidents of bullying.

Iowa's definition of bullying

Iowa Code section 280.28

- "Harassment" and "bullying" shall be construed to mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:
 - Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
 - Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
 - Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
 - Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Iowa Department of Education Resources

- http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1030&Itemid=1293

Evaluation of Iowa's Anti-Bullying Legislation: Compliance and Impact

Prepared by

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Research Question 1

- Is the Iowa law effective in:
 - Reducing bullying victimization?
 - Improving teacher intervention (extent to which teachers put a stop to bullying)?

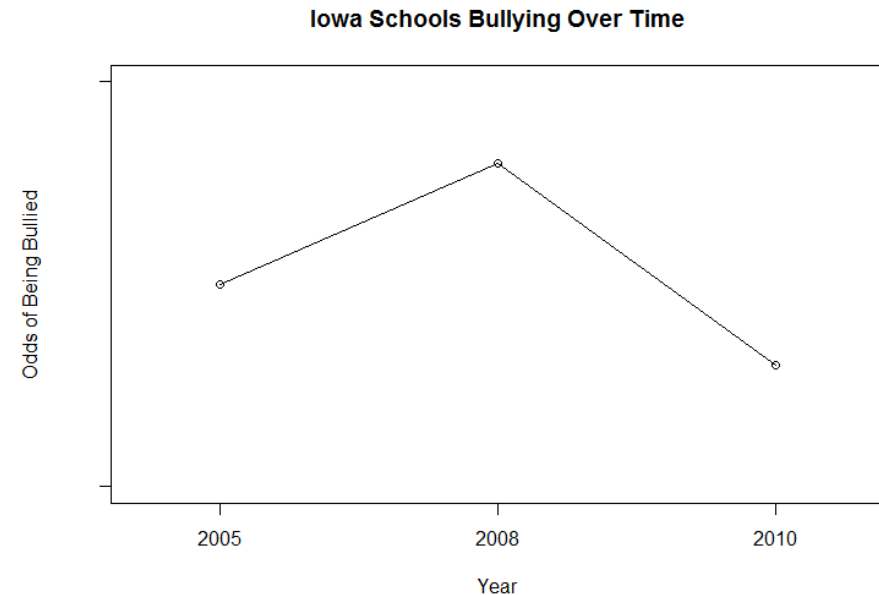
Hypotheses: Impact on victimization and teacher intervention

- **Victimization:**

- an increase between 2005 and 2008 due to increased reporting
- a decrease from 2008 to 2010 due to increased prevention
- an overall decrease between 2005 and 2010

- **Teacher Intervention:**

an increase in overall teacher intervention from year to year



Methods: Iowa Youth Survey Dataset



- The data set is a compilation of the Iowa Youth Survey from 2005, 2008, & 2010
- The survey covers 412 school districts in the state
- Approximately 90,000 surveys were completed (6th, 8th, & 11th graders) each year

Methods

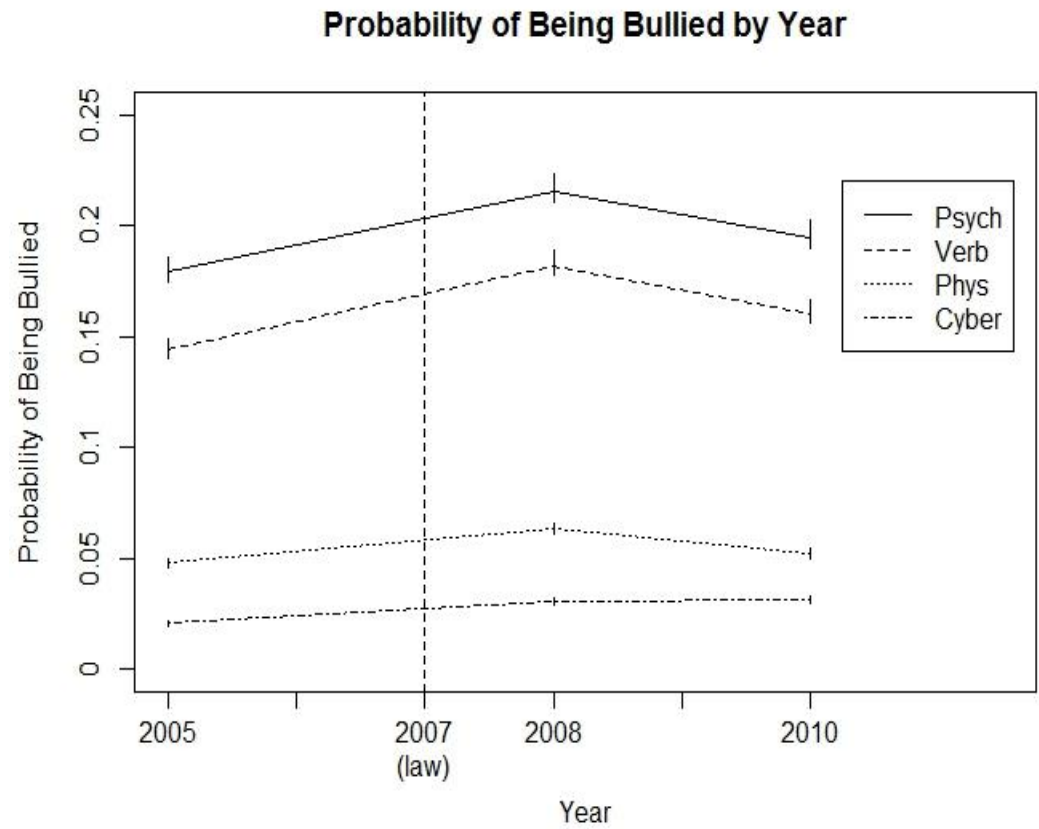
- Generalized Linear Mixed Models fit with GEEs & school district as random effect
- Independent variables
 - 2005 = pre-law
 - 2008 = 1 year post-law
 - 2010 = 3 years post law
- Dependent variables:
 - Not bullied vs. bullied
 - Not substantial intervention vs. Substantial intervention
- Controlled for gender, grade, ethnicity, living situation (living with parents, grandparents, foster parents, shelter, group home)

Sample Population (N=253,054)

	2005	2008	2010
Grade			
6 th	27,126 (31.8%)	30,249 (32.5%)	25,033 (33.6%)
8 th	29,603 (34.7%)	31,490 (33.8%)	26,126 (35.0%)
11 th	30,219 (32.4%)	30,219 (32.4%)	22,940 (30.8%)
Ungraded	44 (0.1%)	95 (0.1%)	120 (0.2%)
Gender			
Males	42,102 (49.3%)	46,915 (50.4%)	37,772 (50.6%)
Females	43,218 (50.7%)	46,226 (49.6%)	36,821 (49.4%)
Race/Ethnicity			
White	72526 (85.0%)	76,380 (82.0%)	63,634 (85.3%)
African-American	2510 (2.9%)	3,457 (3.7%)	3,847 (5.2%)
Native-American	843 (1.0%)	1,069 (1.1%)	1,049 (1.4%)
Asian	1,430 (1.7%)	1,805 (1.9%)	1,582 (2.1%)
Hispanic	3,488 (4.1%)	4,910 (5.3%)	4,481 (6.0%)
	85320	93141	74593

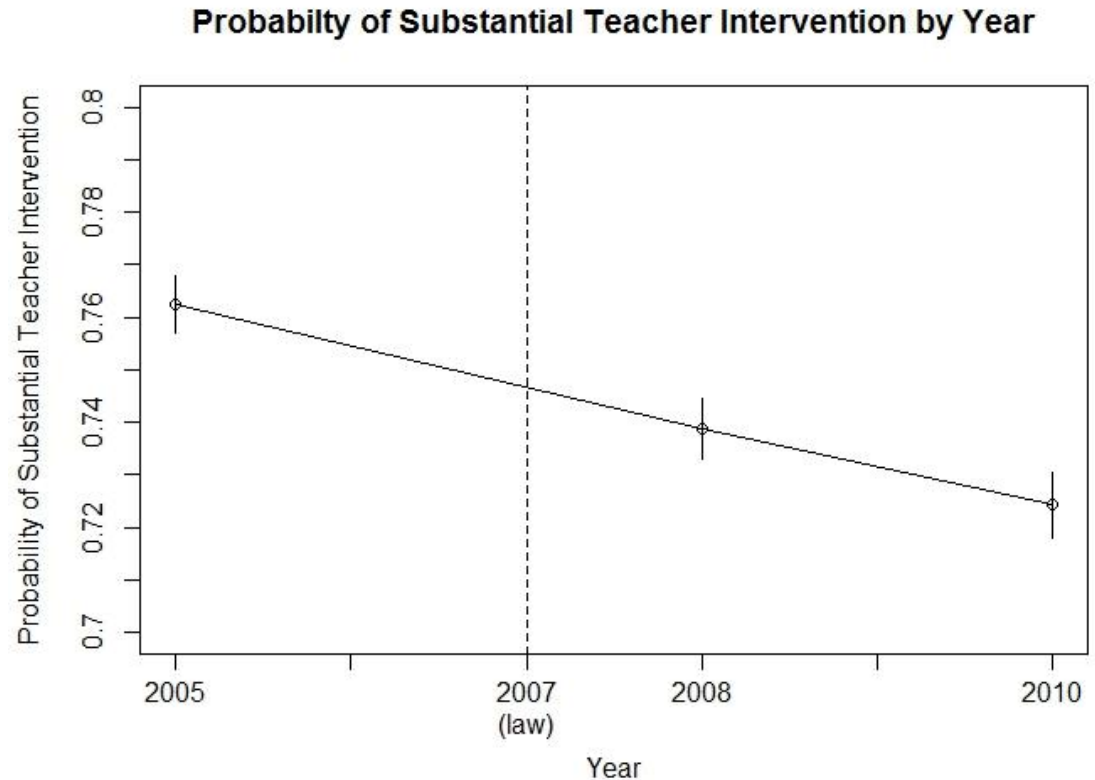
Findings: How does the law impact rates of bullying victimization?

- A policy effect is present
- The jump in 2008 is likely attributed to more awareness, yielding an increase in reporting
- The 2010 probability is greater than 2005 (not consistent with our hypothesis) but they are clearly less than the probability in 2008



Findings: How does the law impact teacher intervention?

- There is strong evidence of a decrease in teacher intervention over the study period
- This is not what we would hope to see, especially after the law was passed



Research Question 2

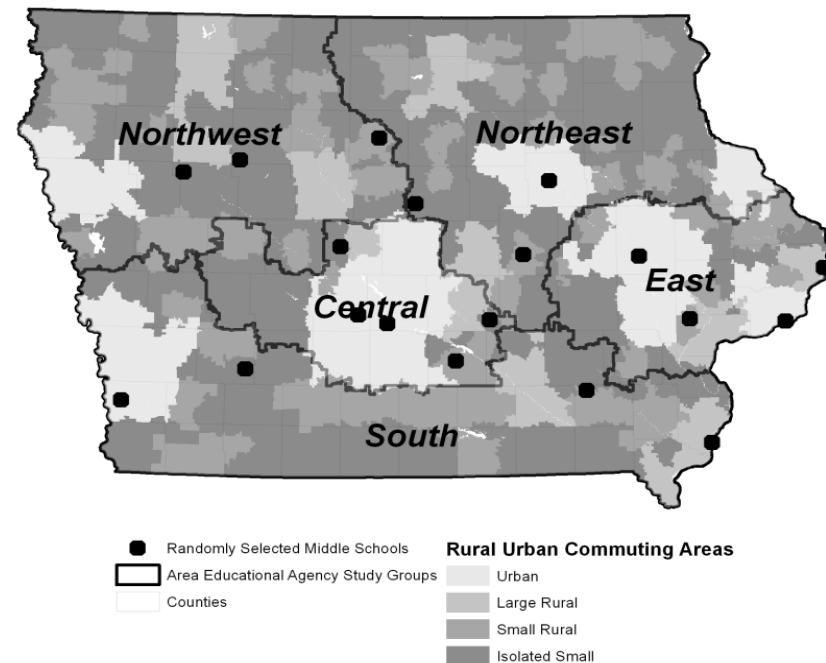
- To what extent have schools implemented the requirements and recommendations of Iowa's anti-bullying law?



Qualitative Phase

- Multiple Case Study of randomly selected middle schools (urban, large rural, small rural and isolated rural) (N=6 thus far)
- Interview school and district administrators
- Written policies will be collected from each school

Randomly Sampled Schools by rural urban classification and Area Educational Area Regions



Bullying Incidents

- Most believe they have 3-4 bullying incidents per semester
- Girls: inclusion/exclusion
- Boys: verbal → physical
- **Cyber bullying** is the main concern

- Examples:

A group fight targeted at one individual was recorded and uploaded on YouTube

A “hazing” incident involving 14 youth

A girl using Facebook to sent mean/hurtful messages about another’s appearance

Policy Awareness

- Know a policy exists
- Superintendents/school designees have more awareness than the principals
- Indicate when incidents arise, they continually refer back to their handbooks
- They know that the Iowa Association of School Boards provides the language for the policy
- The policy is standard across all schools in the district

Policy Implementation

- “We are implementing our policy”
- Clear description of investigations
- Programming
 - PBIS schools
 - Olweus
 - Project Wise Words
 - Friends for a change – “Rachel’s Challenge”
- Less clear on discipline for perpetrators

Strengths of State Legislation

- That it exists!
- Provided a framework for handling investigations

Having state legislation and our policy provides a resource for programming and procedures for handling and investigating complaints.

School Designee

The intent is noble. It says the state is taking a stance on bullying and identifying it as a problem that has lasting impacts.

Superintendent

Weaknesses of State Legislation

- Too much emphasis on bully perpetrators, lack of focus on empowering victims
- Difficult to interpret; sometimes cases arise they do not meet definitions for bullying based on how the code is written

The policy can be difficult to implement. There are many grey areas in the policy, and it is very difficult to interpret when identifying incidents and when disciplining bullies

Self-Assessment

Some success, but needs improvement	Successful
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disseminating the policy• Training staff and students on the policy• Obtaining resources from the AEAs• Developing remedial plans for bullies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting the 2007 timeline for implementation• Developing school/district policy• Developing and maintaining a reporting system

Conclusions

- Due to the increase in reports between 2005 and 2008, followed by a decrease in 2010, there appears to be a policy effect on bullying victimization
- Teacher intervention is a major factor in deterring bullying in schools, but the focus on intervention has not increased
- The success and challenges of the policy cannot be determined until
 - the 2012 data are available to see if the downward trend continues
 - we understand the extent to which schools are able to implement provisions of the law

Team and Partners

- Co-Investigators & Research Team
 - Erica Spies, PhD¹
 - Patrick Ten Eyck (PhD Student in Biostatistics)²
 - Joseph Cavanaugh, PhD²
 - Angela Onwuachi-Willig, JD³
 - Corinne Peek-Asa, MPH, PhD¹
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 - Iowa Department of Education
 - Iowa Department of Public Health
 - Iowa Department of Human Rights
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Questions???

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Table 1
 Definitions of “Olweus Standards” for core component implementation*

Component	Olweus Standard definition
School-wide	
1. OBPP survey	1. Administer survey & results shared with school
2. School assembly	2. Official implementation start date. Show commitment to bullying prevention, introduce concepts & school rules, raise enthusiasm
3. Student supervision	3. Schools should revise problem spots as identified, intermittently revisit protocol to ensure adequacy
4. Staff discussions	4. Hold regular meetings to discuss problematic issues, with goal of fostering collaboration in implementation efforts
5. Coordinating committee	5. Identify core group of people responsible for initial planning & oversight of implementation
6. School rules	6. Set common language & expectation for student behavior
7. Engaging parents	7. If engage parents, expectations & follow-through of consequences of student behavior at school can occur
8. Engaging students	8. In effort to change student attitudes and perceptions, involve students in activities to raise awareness. Target students who are otherwise known as bystanders
9. Tracking & identification of “hot spots”	9. Not by one-on-one experience with individual students per se, but by examining patterns of problem areas with intent to shift supervision as needed
10. Staff training	10. After coordinating committee trained, committee members train remaining adult staff
Classroom	
1. Class discussions	1. Regular & consistent discussions of schoolwide rules; teach skills to deal with bullying, foster empathy for others
2. Reinforcement of school rules	2. Teachers should feel comfortable in intervening in bullying incidents, either by actively stopping it themselves or at least identifying and reporting to administration/counselors
Community	
1. Raise community awareness	1. Public relations and foster OBPP-inspired program development based in the community

* Schools rated on 4-point scale: 0-no implementation, 1-attempted but not to Olweus standard, 2-meets Olweus standard, 3-exceeds Olweus standard.