

Students in Kingsclear Consolidated School Bullying and School Safety — Elementary (2016/2017)



A safe school environment is critical for students' learning and well-being. Schools are safer when school staff, students, parents and community agencies work together to prevent bullying and exclusion. **Bullying** is when a person tries to hurt another person, and does it more than once. It can be physical, verbal, or social, and can also take place over the internet with emails or text messages. The bully usually has power over the person being bullied, such as when the bully is bigger physically or more popular. Sometimes a group of students will bully others. **Exclusion** is when students feel excluded or treated unfairly at school because of ethnic or cultural background, social class, religion, disability, or other perceived categorical boundary. Exclusion is a form of bullying, and often students that are excluded are victims of other forms of bullying. Students who are bullied are prone to experiencing low self esteem, anxiety, depression, and disaffection from school. In extreme cases bullying can lead to suicide.

Key Findings from the Research

- Twenty-two percent of Canadian students indicated they had been bullied in at least two ways during the previous four weeks. These results are based on data from over 30,000 students that completed the elementary *OurSCHOOL* survey in 2012. Verbal and social bullying were the most prevalent forms of bullying; about one-quarter of all students reported being bullied in these ways.
- Schools vary in their reported prevalence of moderate and severe bullying. In 2012, the average prevalence of moderate and severe bullying was 22%; however, it varied from 0% to 63% among elementary schools. One-half of all schools had a prevalence between 17% and 29%.
- There are several actions schools can take to prevent bullying and exclusion. School staff must be able to recognize different forms of bullying and be willing to step in when they observe a student being bullied.¹ Positive school policies and practices can make it safe for students to report bullying when it occurs and ensure that there are clear consequences for bullying that are consistently enforced. Schools can help equip students with appropriate strategies to deal with bullying and exclusion.²
- Bullying begins early. The *OurSCHOOL* survey data suggest that from grade 4 through to grade 9 the prevalence of bullying ranges from 21% to 28%. After grade 9, the prevalence declines, but only down to 19% by grades 11 and 12.
- Data from students can help school staff develop positive practices and policies.

Students from Kingsclear Consolidated School completed the *OurSCHOOL* survey which included questions about bullying, school safety and exclusion. This report summarizes their views.

1. The prevalence of school bullying

The literature distinguishes between bullies, victims and those who are both bullies and the victims of bullying.³ The percentage of students who report being victims of bullying is a useful school-level measure of the extent of bullying and its potential effects on youth. Students' reports of taking part in bullying and students' accounts of witnessing bullying are less useful as a school measure, because even a single incident of bullying may be seen or talked about by a wide range of students.

Overall, 40% of students in Kingsclear Consolidated School reported being a victim of bullying for at least one of the four types of bullying. In addition, *OurSCHOOL* classifies students as being moderate or severe victims. Figure 1 - shows the results for all students in Kingsclear Consolidated School, and separately for boys and girls, compared with the national average. Figure 2 indicates the types of bullying most often experienced by the students at Kingsclear Consolidated School. The results are based on students' reports of being victims of physical, social, verbal and cyber bullying in the previous 30 days.

Figure 1: Prevalence of bullying at Kingsclear Consolidated School

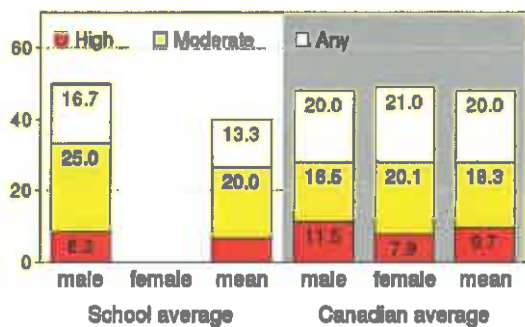
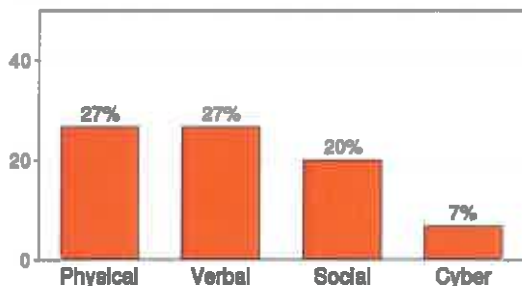


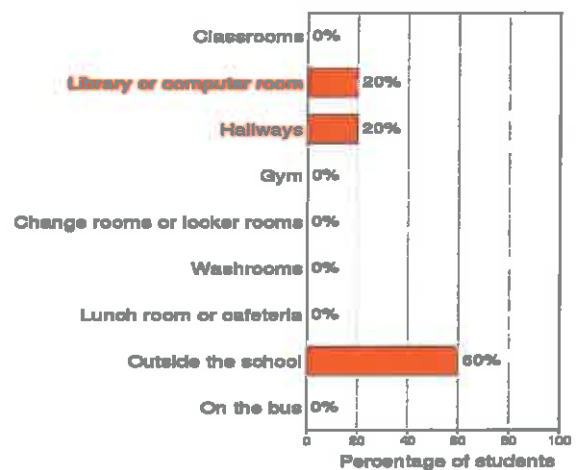
Figure 2: Bullying by Type at Kingsclear Consolidated School



2. Where and when bullying occurs

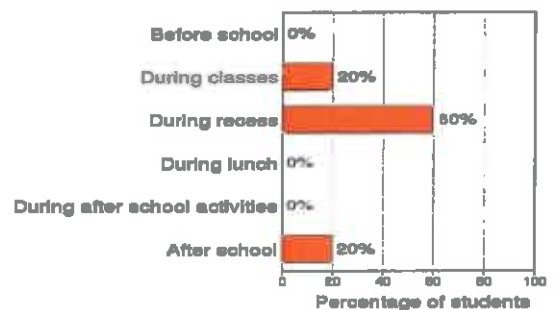
Bullying tends to occur most frequently in classrooms, hallways and the lunchroom, but this can vary among schools.⁴ Students quickly learn where the 'hot-spots' are, which tend to be places where there is inadequate supervision.⁵ Students at Kingsclear Consolidated School were asked where bullying happened most often in and near their school. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Where bullying occurs at Kingsclear Consolidated School



The students at Kingsclear Consolidated School were also asked when bullying most often occurred. Figure 4 displays the results.

Figure 4: When bullying occurs at Kingsclear Consolidated School



3. How students respond to bullying

Students in Kingsclear Consolidated School who reported being bullied in the past four weeks were asked what they did the last time they were bullied. Figure 5 summarizes their responses.

Figure 5: How students respond when bullied at Kingsclear Consolidated School

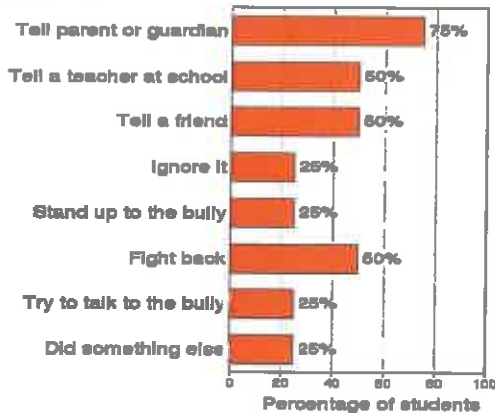
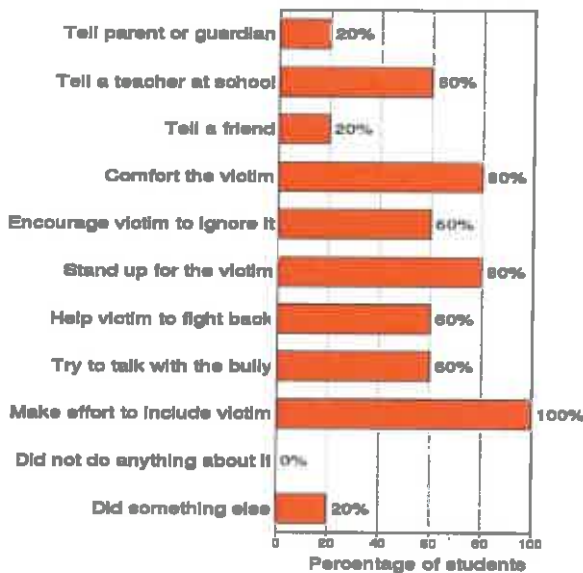


Figure 6 summarizes student responses when they saw or heard about a student being bullied.

Figure 6: Response when others are bullied at Kingsclear Consolidated School



4. Measures to prevent bullying

School policies and practices can help prevent student bullying. Students at Kingsclear Consolidated School indicated the extent to which they felt certain anti-bullying measures were practiced in their school. Figure 7 shows the percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed that these practices were evident in their school.

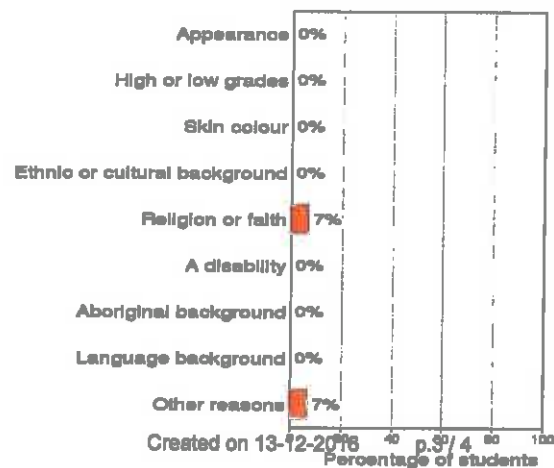
Figure 7: Measures to prevent bullying at Kingsclear Consolidated School



5. Students who feel excluded

Many students feel excluded by their peers because of their ethnic or cultural background, social class, religion, disability, or other perceived categorical boundaries. Figure 8 shows the percentage of students who felt excluded by other students for various reasons.

Figure 8: Reasons students feel excluded at Kingsclear Consolidated School



6. Feeling Safe at School

Students were asked whether they felt safe at school, and safe going to and from school. Overall, 0% of girls and 0% of boys in Kingsclear Consolidated School indicated that they did not feel safe at school. A further 33.3% of girls and 8.3% of boys indicated a neutral position, neither agreeing nor disagreeing that they felt safe at school. Figure 9 shows the percentage of students that felt safe at school.

Figure 9: Students who feel safe at Kingsclear Consolidated School

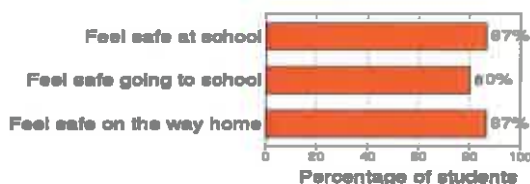
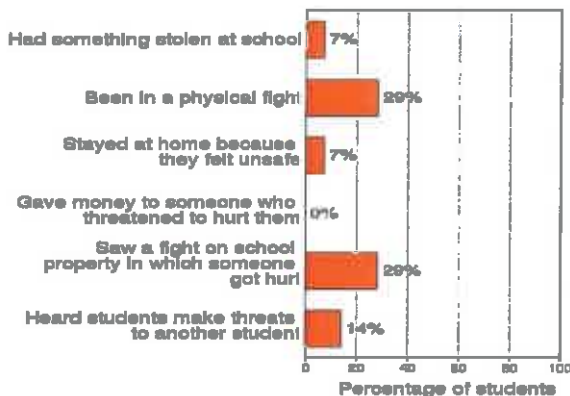


Figure 10 shows students' responses to six other questions concerning how safe they felt at school.

Figure 10: Indicators of an unsafe environment at Kingsclear Consolidated School



About OurSCHOOL

OurSCHOOL is an evaluation system that includes a dynamic web-based student survey, and optional teacher and parent surveys. The system provides leading indicators of student engagement and wellness, and the aspects of classroom and school learning climate that research has shown affect student engagement and learning outcomes. Please see www.thelearningbar.com for further information.

About this School Report

This report was prepared by Dr. J. Douglas Willms, Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick. It was based on data from 15 students at Kingsclear Consolidated School that completed the *OurSCHOOL* student survey in 2016. Schools can print this report free of charge for use in staff meetings and professional development activities. It can also be reproduced for distribution to parents.

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2. O'Morre, M. (2000). Critical issues for teacher training to counter bullying and victimisation in Ireland. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 26, 99-111.
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Students in Kingsclear Consolidated School Student Engagement – Primary (2016/2017)



Student engagement is "a disposition towards learning, working with others, and functioning in a social institution".¹ It includes students' sense of belonging at school, the extent to which they value schooling outcomes, and their psychological investment in learning. Measures of these aspects of engagement can be classified as social engagement, institutional engagement, and intellectual engagement. Engagement and learning go hand-in-hand: engagement begets learning and learning begets engagement. This dynamic and interactive process begins early – during the primary years or even earlier – and continues through to adulthood. Student engagement needs to be considered an important schooling outcome in its own right, sitting alongside academic achievement as a key measure of student success.

Key Findings from the Research

- The average levels of the three types of engagement tend to be quite stable during the primary school years. However, student engagement declines steadily as students proceed through middle and secondary school.
- At the primary level, teachers need to be aware of early signs of disengagement. Students who are prone to becoming disengaged tend to have a low sense of belonging at school, display poor social behaviours, and lack interest in their school work.
- Students who are intellectually engaged are more likely to feel confident in their skills and challenged in their classes. Students who lack confidence in their skills are more than one-and-a-half times as likely to suffer anxiety problems during middle and secondary school.²
- Aboriginal students and students from low socioeconomic families are less likely to be engaged at school. Immigrant students tend to be more engaged than non-immigrant students on measures of institutional and intellectual engagement, but this is not the case for measures of social engagement. Girls have slightly higher levels of engagement than boys.
- Schools vary in their levels of engagement, even after taking account of the family background of students attending each school. Some of this variation is attributable to five "drivers of student outcomes": quality instruction, teacher-student relations, classroom learning climate, expectations for success, and student advocacy.³ However, there is less variation among primary schools than among secondary schools.
- Data from students can help school staff develop policies and practices that increase student engagement.

Students from Kingsclear Consolidated School completed the *OurSCHOOL* survey which included nine measures of student engagement alongside the five drivers of student outcomes. This report summarizes the results.

1. A Framework for Assessing Student Engagement

The *OurSCHOOL* Primary School Survey includes nine measures of student engagement, categorised as social, institutional and intellectual engagement (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Measures of student engagement in *OurSCHOOL*

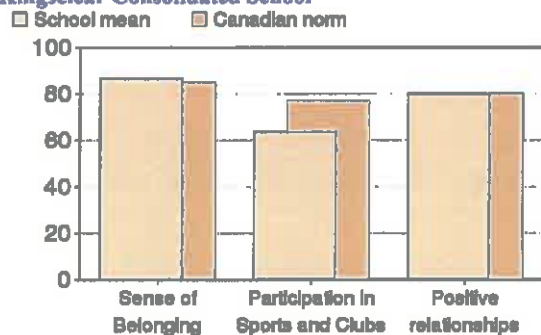
Social Engagement	Institutional Engagement	Intellectual Engagement
Sense of Belonging at School	Values Schooling Outcomes	Interest and Motivation
Participation in Sports and Clubs	Positive School Behaviour	Effort
Positive Relationships at School	Positive Homework Behaviour	Quality Instruction

For each aspect of engagement, students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements, such as "I get along well with others at school." Their scores were scaled on a 10-point scale, and students with scores above 6.0 (i.e., a mild to moderately favourable view) were considered engaged. Similar criteria were established for participation in sports and clubs and positive school behaviour.

2. Social Engagement

Students who are *socially* engaged are actively involved in the life of the school; their friends are there and they are involved in sports or other extra-curricular activities. This involvement can give them a sense of belonging at school and increase academic motivation.⁵ Figure 2 shows the percentage of students in Kingsclear Consolidated School that were socially engaged compared with national norms for students at the year levels assessed in this school.

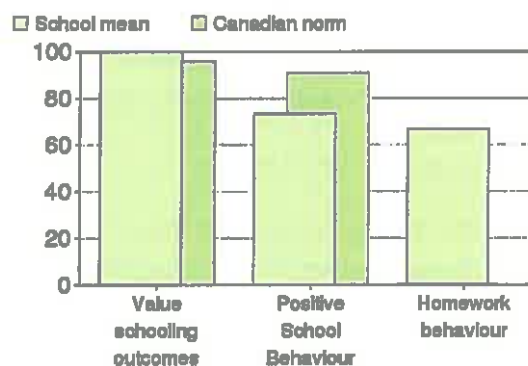
Figure 2: Percentage of students socially engaged at Kingsclear Consolidated School



3. Institutional Engagement

Students who value schooling outcomes and meet the formal rules of schooling are considered *institutionally* engaged. These students feel that what they are learning at school is directly related to their long-term success, and this view is reflected in their classroom and school behaviour and their effort in doing homework. Levels of institutional engagement in Kingsclear Consolidated School are shown in Figure 3.

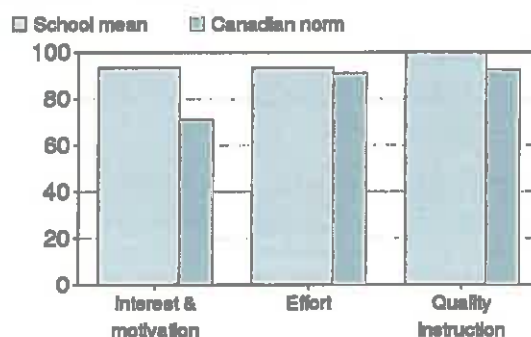
Figure 3: Percentage of students institutionally engaged at Kingsclear Consolidated School



4. Intellectual Engagement

Some students meet the institutional demands of school, but they are not truly engaged in their learning. Intellectual engagement entails a serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning, using higher-order thinking skills to increase understanding, solve complex problems, and construct new knowledge.⁴ It is closely tied to the quality of instruction offered at school as there is an interaction between a teacher's approach to instruction and student motivation. Figure 4 displays the results for Kingsclear Consolidated School on the three measures of intellectual engagement.

Figure 4: Percentage of students intellectually engaged at Kingsclear Consolidated School

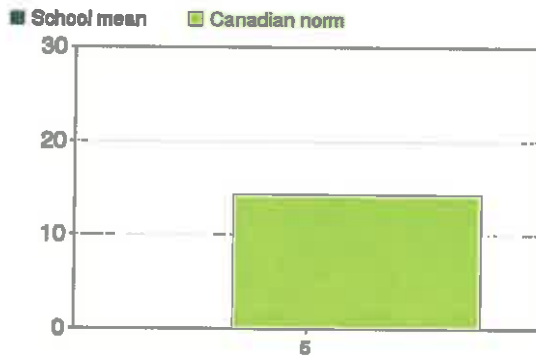


5. Early signs of disengagement

A small percentage of students display signs of disengagement during the primary school years. Some of these children exhibit intense anxiety or other psychological problems, which is sometimes characterised as "school phobia".⁵ For most children however, early disengagement is associated with learning and behavioural problems which are evident in kindergarten or even earlier. Early disengagement is also associated with family socio-economic factors, and some analysts attribute it to factors associated with living in poverty as well as parenting styles and levels of parental involvement in their children's education. However, the school's role is increasingly being recognised as important.

A composite measure of student engagement derived from the nine *OurSCHOOL* measures of engagement can be used to discern the prevalence of students displaying early signs of disengagement. Figure 5 shows the prevalence in Kingsclear Consolidated School by year.

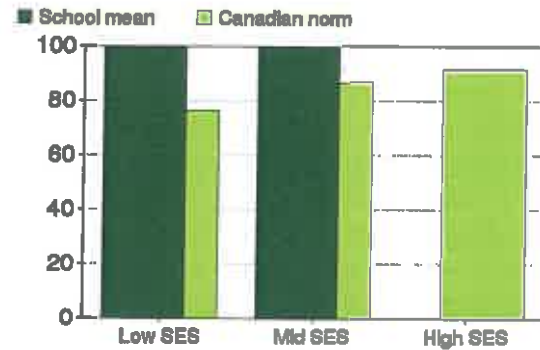
Figure 5: Percentage of students at Kingsclear Consolidated School displaying early signs of disengagement.



6. Equality of Engagement Outcomes

'Equality' refers to differences in social outcomes among sub-populations, such as differences between students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds. A measure of socioeconomic status (SES) was derived from students' reports of educational and cultural possessions in the home. Students were classified into three equal groups, which are referred to as low, middle, and high SES. Figure 6 shows the extent of inequalities among these socioeconomic groups in Kingsclear Consolidated School for the composite measure of engagement.

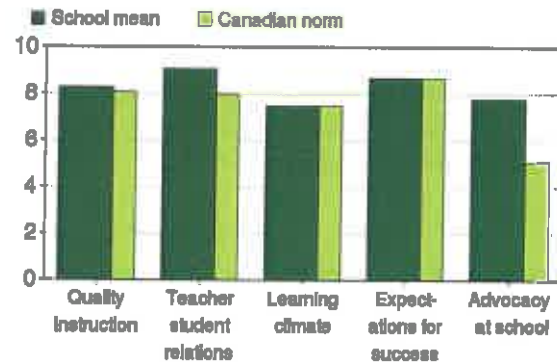
Figure 6: Extent of inequalities in student engagement among socioeconomic groups at Kingsclear Consolidated School



7. Drivers of Student Engagement

Research by The Learning Bar found that there were considerable differences among schools in their levels of engagement and only some of this variation was attributable to students' family backgrounds. Five school-level factors were consistently related to student engagement: quality instruction, teacher-student relations, classroom learning climate, teacher expectations for success, and student advocacy. Figure 7 shows the average scores on a ten-point scale for each factor for Kingsclear Consolidated School compared with national norms for students at the year levels assessed in this school.

Figure 7: School-level factors associated with student engagement at Kingsclear Consolidated School



8. What Schools Can Do

First and foremost, all students need an advocate – someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and to whom they can turn to for advice. School staff need to identify the students showing early signs of disengagement and regularly monitor their progress. Someone on staff needs to check in with each of these students regularly, in some cases every day. Improving student engagement cannot be seen as solely the role of support personnel, such as counsellors or psychologists; it needs to be viewed as a key role of classroom teachers.

A substantial number of disengaged students have poor literacy skills. The majority of these students did not learn to read well during the first three years of primary school and by the fourth year they feel inadequate as learners at school. They need an intervention aimed at improving their basic reading and math skills. Some of these students are disruptive in class and disrespectful with others. These students need short- and long-term plans for school success guided by school staff. Many students need help in developing positive friendships and resolving conflicts in constructive ways.

A number of students who are disengaged suffer anxiety. The school can play a role in reducing anxiety by supporting programs designed to improve students' emotional resilience, by tackling issues concerning bullying and school safety, and by building effective family-school partnerships. These measures can dramatically improve levels of social and institutional engagement.

Increasing the intellectual engagement of students is perhaps more difficult to achieve as it requires a marked change in classroom practice. Educators will need to challenge and alter some of the long-standing structural features of schools, such as teaching arrangements, approaches to instruction, school and class schedules, the ways students are grouped for instruction, and assessment strategies.

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References:

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