

Promoting Diversity and Respect in New Brunswick Schools



Annual Report on Bullying 2013-2014

Education and
Early Childhood Development

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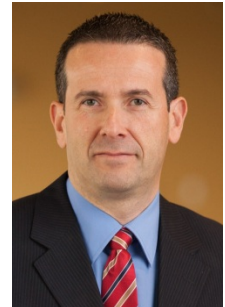
Minister's Message

I am very proud to present the first Annual Report on Bullying. This report, prescribed in the Education Act, presents the past five years of statistics available through the high school exit survey, as well as describing the programs available in the Anglophone and Francophone sectors.

As part of our government's commitment to making New Brunswick the best place to raise a family, we promised to ensure a positive learning environment for our students by reducing bullying. The right environment is crucial for achievement, and we want our students to get the education they deserve and the skills they need to support our province's economic growth and social progress.

Bullying prevention and intervention initiatives are now part of a new, multi-faceted approach to promote safe and welcoming environments for all students at public schools in New Brunswick. The diversity and respect co-ordinators will provide leadership at the provincial level to help schools and districts create a sense of belonging for all students, regardless of their personal identity and background, while focusing on bullying prevention and intervention initiatives; LGBTQ inclusive education; cultural education; comprehensive and developmental guidance; positive learning environment planning; and school mental health. This will ensure we address the root causes of bullying in our schools.

It's important to teach all children and youth about the value of diversity, the harmful effects of bullying, and the importance of respect for others in our society. This report will become the baseline from which the department will determine the focus areas of diversity and respect programs to ensure the targets for a positive learning environment are met.



Hon. Serge Rousselle, Q.C.
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

2013-2014 Annual Report on Bullying:

Promoting Diversity and Respect in New Brunswick Schools

Introduction

In December 2011, a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Positive Learning and Working Environment provided the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with its recommendations, which included enhanced legislation to strengthen the reporting and monitoring requirements through positive learning and working environment plans.

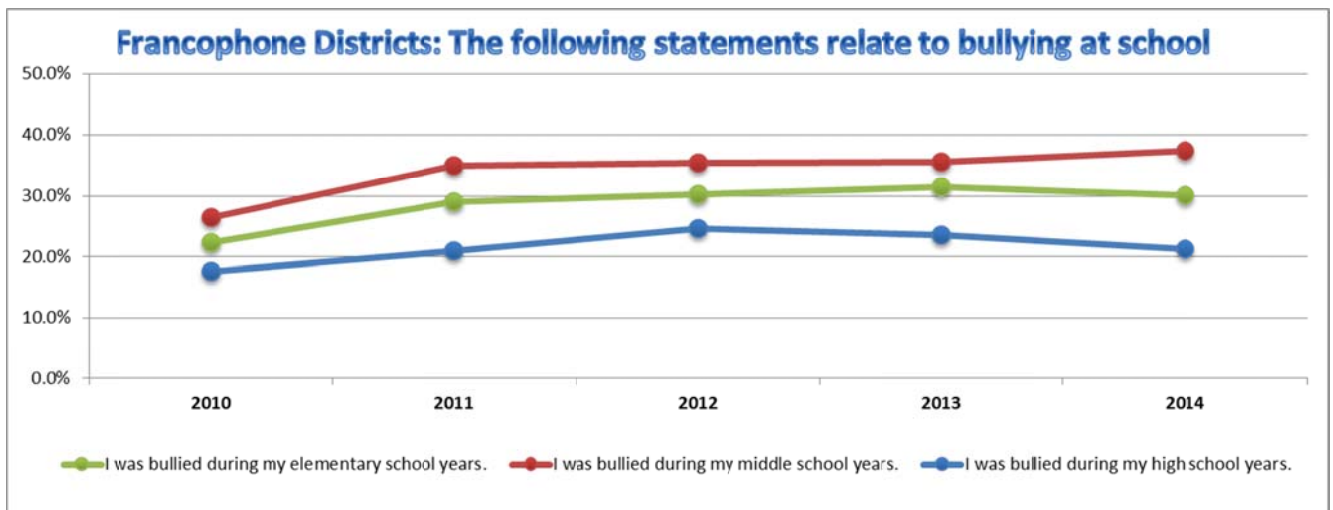
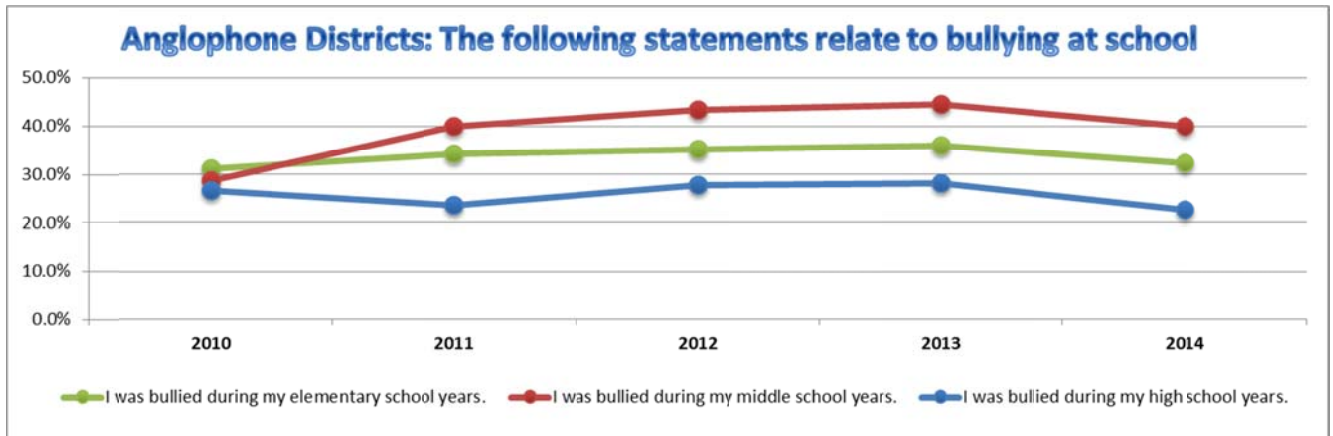
Amendments to the *Education Act* passed in the Legislative Assembly in May 2012.

Section 56.2 of the *Act* says, “The Minister shall lay an annual report on bullying in the New Brunswick public education system before the Legislative Assembly during the course of the regular session of the Legislature that follows the year for which the report is made.”

This is the first report to be tabled, and it outlines statistical information on bullying at school for the past five years, as well as outlining the efforts undertaken by the department and school districts to encourage a culture of greater respect and diversity in our schools. Future reports will include the District Education Councils’ reports on their positive learning and working environment plans at the school and district levels.

Trends over the Last Five Years

The following statistical information was collected from exit surveys completed by students scheduled to graduate. The statistics cover the school years 2009-2010 to 2013-2014.

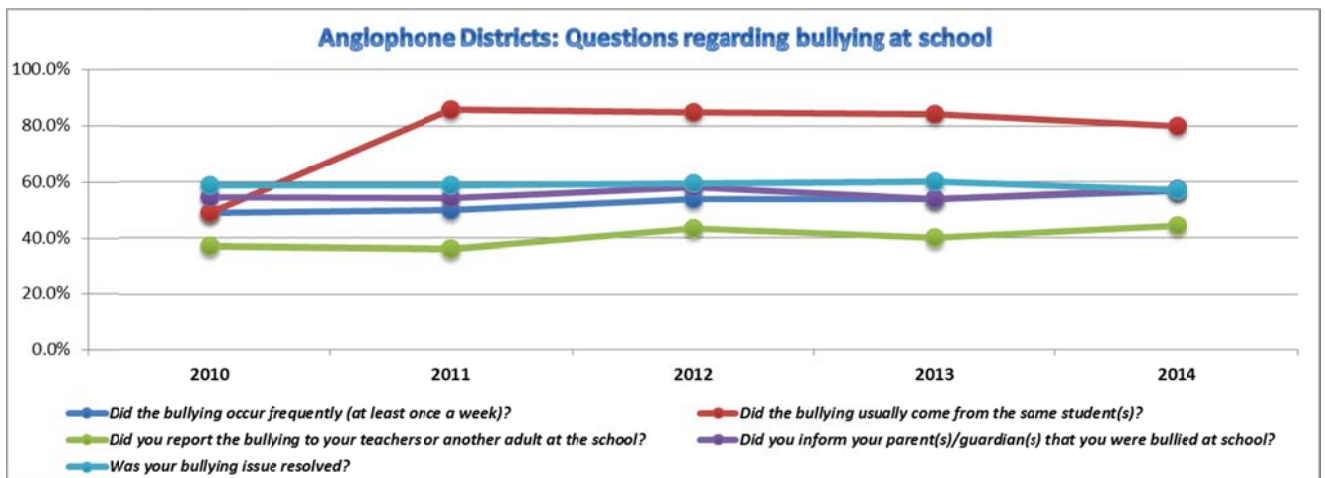


When students were asked if they had been bullied we observe an increase over 2012 and 2013 with some reported decreases in 2014. We also observe the students report the bullying takes place mostly during the middle school years (grades 6 to 8) and that the lowest reports of bullying are during the high school years (grades 9 to 12).

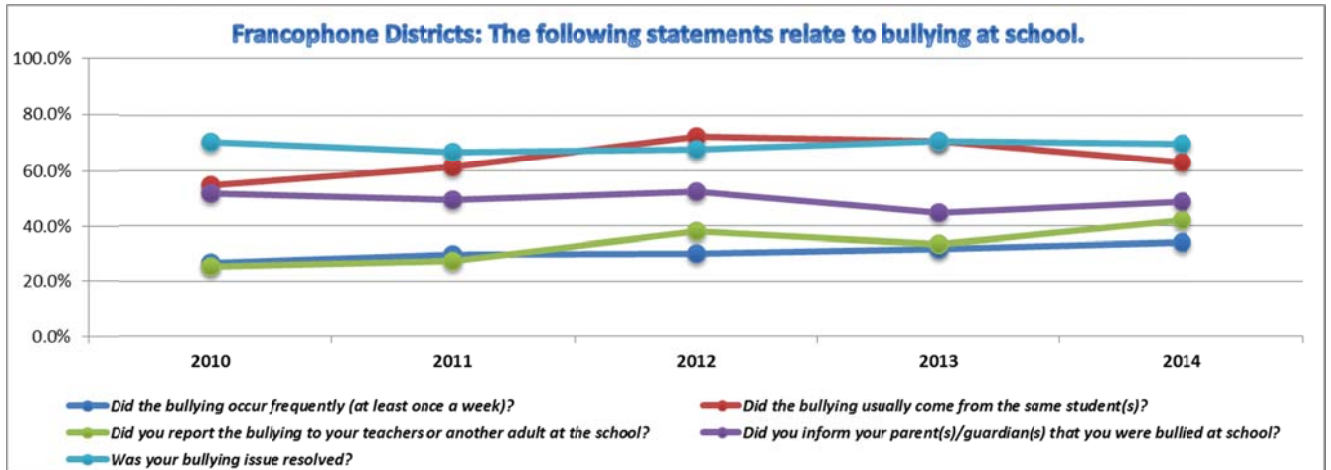
In December 2011, the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Positive Learning and Working Environment made recommendations to amend the *Education Act* to include definitions on “positive learning and working environment” and “serious misconduct”. Other amendments added the implementation of positive learning and working environment plans to the duties of teachers, principals, Superintendents and Parent School Support Committees (PSSC). The requirement to table this report was also

added, as was a requirement to submit an annual report on Positive Learning and Working Environment from the District Education Councils to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Committee also recommended that the Department establish a provincial anti-bullying coordinator for each sector. These positions were in place by February 2013. We observed a decrease in the reports of bullying from kindergarten to grade 12 the following year. In keeping with the definition of a positive learning and working environment, the duties associated with these positions have recently been broadened, and new positions have been created. The new positions, one in each linguistic sector, are now called Diversity and Respect Coordinators.



The percentages for the Anglophone and Francophone school districts reflect “yes” answers.



Future Statistics to be Collected

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is currently implementing a new Student Information System. This includes newly established data standards under Policy 703, *Positive Learning and Working Environment* and allows schools and districts to record incidents of behaviours not tolerated and incidents of serious misconduct. The Student Information System is a common tool for schools and districts to record and report data, and will create common and aligned reports across all seven school districts.

In this new system, *bullying* will be subdivided into the following four categories:

Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying, Social Bullying and Verbal Bullying

Each category will have the same descriptors:

- Harassment or bullying – general
- Harassment or bullying on the basis of disability
- Harassment or bullying on the basis of race, colour, or national origin
- Harassment or bullying on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation

The Anglophone School District West and the *District scolaire francophone nord-ouest* are implementing the new system and the roll-out to all school districts is anticipated by the end of the 2016-2017 school year. This standardized tool will facilitate collecting province-wide statistics on bullying that will help improve and target programs and activities.

Programs and Activities

This section outlines activities and programs in New Brunswick schools and school districts that support diversity and respect with the aim to reduce bullying.

November – Anti-Bullying week

December 17 – Anti-Bullying Day (or Blue Day)

February – Pink Shirt Day, Anti-Bullying Campaign

May 17 – International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

These events enhance awareness in schools and provide a forum and an opportunity to further promote diversity and respect. Students learn how to connect with others in respectful, positive, and healthy ways. When schools place an emphasis on bullying prevention, students develop skills such as empathy, social responsibility and citizenship. When students are mindfully taught to recognize and manage emotions, to make decisions effectively, and to behave ethically and responsibly, they are better equipped to engage in healthy relationships.

All schools across the province participated in the 3rd annual anti-bullying week

Policy 703 - Positive Learning and Working Environment

In December 2013, enhancements were made in Policy 703 - Positive Learning and Working Environment, to include language on diversity and respect.

... establishing a process for fostering positive learning and working environments that are inclusive, safe, respect human rights, support diversity and address discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity...

These enhancements also included definitions of gender identity and sexual orientation. In addition, numerous high schools have created sexual minority groups to support students and promote awareness.

Recommendations to the Office of Protocol on Flying Flags at Schools that Support Diversity, Respect and Culture

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Inclusive Education was asked to make recommendations for the flying of flags that support diversity. The following statement has been approved by the Office of Protocol:

With permission from the Office of Protocol, where additional flag staffs are available at provincial schools:

- flags representing broadly recognized national or international days that respect diversity and equality may be flown; and
- flags of countries or First Nations significant to the heritage of the people of the Province may be flown.

Definition of Bullying used During Training by the Diversity and Respect Coordinators

“Bullying is a learned behaviour that is intended to cause or should be known to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, or other harm to an individual or a group of individuals. There is a power imbalance, real or perceived, between the persons involved which impacts on the relationships within the positive learning environment of the school. It has a high likelihood of being repeated or has occurred multiple times. Bullying can take many forms, including physical, verbal and non-verbal, social or electronic (cyber). It also includes assisting or encouraging the behaviour in any way.”

This definition was developed in response to requests by students, parents and educators. Diversity and Respect Coordinators use this definition for training purposes to distinguish bullying behaviour versus disagreements or disputes.

Rights Respecting Schools – UNICEF

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative uses the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) as a basis for building an inclusive and respectful school culture.

This initiative is provided in collaboration with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Beyond the Hurt – Canadian Red Cross

The Canadian Red Cross' Beyond the Hurt program supports a school or organization-wide approach to preventing bullying and building empathy and respect.

The following are highlights from the Beyond the Hurt: Preventing Bullying and Harassment Report for 2013-2014:

- 122 trained Prevention Educators
- 1198 Youth Prevention Educators trained or retained from previous years
- 457 Beyond the Hurt presentations facilitated
- 13,532 students reported participating in Peer to Peer Bullying Prevention

Internet Child Exploitation – Memorandum of Understanding with Public Safety (cyberbullying)

The Internet creates opportunities for child predators to access our most vulnerable resource, our children. This phenomenon is known as Internet Child Exploitation (ICE).

In March 2014, the provincial government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP) to facilitate safe and responsible Internet use. Under this agreement, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will provide resources that will allow educators to meet cross-curricular personal safety outcomes. The Department will partner with CCCP to provide professional learning to district personnel who will support the implementation of these resources in schools.

Anglophone Sector

Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (PBIS)

This is an evidence-informed approach designed to establish the learning and teaching environment needed to achieve academic and social success for all students.

This approach identifies common behavioral expectations that are valued by the school community. These behavioral expectations are taught in order to create an atmosphere in which students know what is expected of them. Students are frequently and

systematically acknowledged for appropriate behavior. Undesired behavior is responded to swiftly and consistently in an appropriate manner.

Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important component of a student's educational experience. The approach establishes a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

Respect in Schools – Respect Group

This on-line program is designed to provide educators and support personnel with the tools they need to understand and respond effectively to incidents of bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect. Details on this program can be found on their website <http://respectinschool.com/>

Francophone Sector

The Francophone sector has created groups of teachers, teacher assistants and school administrators to combine efforts to prevent bullying. In addition, two personnel staff per school participated in a day of reflection on bullying facilitated by the Diversity and Respect Coordinator and the Positive Learning and Working Environment Coordinators.

Going Forward

As part of Policy 703 – Positive Learning and Working Environment, the Department is responsible to provide support to the school's plan through a variety of means, including provision of resource materials. The Department engaged *Egale Canada*, the only national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ) human rights through research, education and community engagement. An evidence-informed resource for each sector on the topic of sexual orientation and gender identity was produced. In next year's report we will provide more detail on the number of school personnel trained and the web resource.