

DO PARENTS TRY TO BULLY TEACHERS THROUGH CONFRONTATION?

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Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic  
Institute and State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

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April 30, 2008

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: aggression, bullying, confrontational, and workplace bullying

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace-the school. The topic of parent bullying is under-researched, thus, this study seeks to address and examine the gap in the research. The target population of 130 teachers was taken from a Mid-Atlantic State in suburban Excellence High School. Teachers were provided a survey questionnaire to investigate the extent to which confrontational parents try to bully teachers. Teachers (117) served as respondents and used survey methodology to record their responses. An exploratory, descriptive and confirmatory analysis was used to answer the research questions posed. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following five questions: (1) What types of parent bullying behaviors at school do teachers experience? In what form and how often? (2) What consideration has been given to leaving the teaching profession after a parent-bullying episode? (3) What types of parent bullying behaviors are seen as subtle or blatant by teachers? (4) What triggers initiate a parent-bullying incident? (5) Do teachers' experiences of bullying parents vary according to age, gender, ethnicity, grade level and teaching experience? Nine types of parent behaviors and the demographic variables of teachers were compared which included the teacher's age, gender, ethnicity, number of years of teaching experience, and the teachers' current teaching level were compared. Face-to-face survey administration was used to collect the data. Statistical procedures were conducted and included: One Way ANOVA, Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability, and Chi Square. Frequency and percentages were calculated to determine the statistical significance of the findings.

The findings indicated a statistical significance between physical assault and male teachers. Further, statistical significance was revealed between property vandalism and gender of teacher, ethnicity, and age variables. Teachers are more likely to be verbally abused by parents who try to confront teachers. Bullying incidents most often occurred on the Internet, classroom, or school office. Triggers that caused confrontation that indicated statistical significance were: (1)

student removal of a student from a sports team, (2) had homework issues, (3) showed low grades on a report card, (4) low scores on a test, and (5) low attendance rates. Teachers reported blatant, out in the open, and in your face behaviors to describe the bullying incident committed by parents. However, despite encountering incidents of bullying by parents, teachers did not consider leaving the profession. Almost half of the teachers surveyed reported experiencing some form of abuse directed toward them by a parent.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ first, for his guidance, divine intervention, unconditional love, and favor in my life for blessing me to complete this process. I thank him. It is because of his guidance I was able to persevere.

To my great-grandmother, Lizzie Massie, who constantly told me I was set apart for something special from God and how my life would not be like others. To my children, Norris, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, thank you for believing in me when others walked away. I am extremely grateful and thankful for all my children have done to encourage me to go on. To my daughter, Betsy, my granddaughter, Breanna and future grandchildren, I hope they will understand why I have had to travel this way alone and go through this process; hopefully, they will be proud of me, for with God nothing is impossible.

To my colleague and classmate, Dr. Cheryl Watkins, who continued to offer support to me through words, demonstrations of concern and by helping to keep me on the path to completion. I value her as motivator, appreciate the input, and for serving to cheer me on. Thank you for having faith in me.

Finally, to my sisters-in-Christ, first to Codie Wyatt for her humor and for sending me articles from the University of Louisville when I needed them most. I thank her for pointing me to the “prize”. To Diana Jackson and Maxine Walker who prayed with me along the way when I really needed it. Thank you. Their prayers helped to encourage me to go on. To others who had a kind word to say along the way, even to those who did not, and to those who attempted to distract me, thank you. You all played a role in driving me to completion and for that I am grateful. God bless all of you!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Dr. Travis Twiford, my committee chair, for all of his efforts to support me in this dissertation process. Although you are an expert in the field of school facilities, you accepted this endeavor of mine as a result of having two other persons who agreed to serve as my chair. (Both left faculty status at Virginia Tech). I am grateful to you. You are very knowledgeable and I have learned a great deal from you.

I thank Dr. Walt Mallory, my research advisor. Thank you for the time you extended to me by working during your lunch hours to answer my questions. I have learned much from you.

I thank Dr. Patricia Alexander, committee member, for her support and guidance during this endeavor to complete my dissertation process. She is quite accomplished in her mathematical expertise, school administration and consultant capabilities. She has vast knowledge in so many different areas. I have learned a great deal from you as well. I appreciate your continued support, guidance and assistance.

I would like to thank Dr. Richard Salmon, committee member, for his support, listening ear, and encouragement. With each of my visits to the Tech campus, Dr. Salmon, would always make time to talk with me about my endeavor, progress, and would motivate me repeatedly by stating he looked forward to seeing me complete the process and serving on my committee.

I am extremely appreciative for how God touched your hearts and for what you all have done in your efforts to help me. Thank you so very much.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
DEFINITIONS .....	2
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	5
Communication.....	5
Angry Parents.....	6
The Trauma of School Violence .....	7
Bullying and Victims .....	7
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	8
RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	8
RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY .....	8
Community Need.....	9
School Need.....	9
Family Need.....	9
LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS.....	10
Conceptual Model.....	10
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	13
<i>A Gap in the Research</i> .....	13
Contributions to the Field .....	13
Intervention.....	14
Relevance.....	14
<i>Teacher Retention</i> .....	16
<i>Statistics on Parent Behavior</i> .....	17
<b>CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<i>Analyzing and Synthesizing Research</i> .....	18
<i>Key Words</i> .....	18
<i>Parental Actions and Reactions</i> .....	19
<i>Context for the Inquiry</i> .....	19
Workplace Bullying Statistics.....	21
Parent Bullying in Schools.....	21
Events that Trigger Bullying.....	22
Workplace Bullying .....	22
Cost of Workplace Aggression .....	23
Parental Aggression .....	24
Mobbing.....	24
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	25
Opposing Views on Workplace Bullying .....	25
The Historical Context of Bullying and Current Status.....	25

<i>United States Law</i> .....	27
Early Workplace Bullying in America .....	28
Theoretical and Commentary Literature .....	29
Workplace Theoretical and Commentary Literature .....	29
Social Learning Theory.....	29
Causal Attribution Theory .....	30
Leading Pioneers in Workplace Bullying.....	30
Types of Workplace Bullying.....	31
Related Studies.....	34
Study Related to Parent Bullying.....	34
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	35
HYPOTHESES FOR THE STUDY: DO PARENTS TRY TO BULLY TEACHERS THROUGH CONFRONTATION? .....	35
<b>CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>Participants</i> .....	37
<i>Instrumentation</i> .....	38
<i>Field-Testing the Survey</i> .....	39
DATA COLLECTION.....	41
DATA ANALYSIS .....	42
<i>One-Way Analysis of Variance</i> .....	43
SUMMARY .....	44
<b>CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<i>Description of the Population</i> .....	45
ANALYSES AND RESULTS.....	46
A SUMMARY OF THE STATISTICAL PROCEDURES .....	46
RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	47
<i>General Summary of Open-Ended Responses</i> .....	80
<b>CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>83</b>
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY .....	83
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS.....	83
<i>Summary of Open-Ended Response Question</i> .....	92
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS .....	93
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	96
SUMMARY .....	96
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>APPENDIX A ARTICLE SUMMARY REVIEW.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>APPENDIX B RESEARCH LETTER.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX C POSTCARD AND COVER LETTER ANNOUNCEMENT .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDIX D TEACHER SURVEY.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>APPENDIX E SURVEY PERMISSION TO USE EMAIL .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>APPENDIX F COLLECTING DATA PERMISSION TO USE EMAIL.....</b>	<b>113</b>

<b>APPENDIX G CHART PERMISSION TO USE EMAIL.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>APPENDIX H SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FOR PILOT STUDY REVISIONS AND COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>APPENDIX I ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE UPCOMING SURVEY ADMINISTRATION .....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>APPENDIX J RESPONSE ITEM 10: OTHER LOCATIONS OF BULLYING INCIDENTS .....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>APPENDIX K RESPONSE ITEM 11: OTHER SITUATIONS THAT LED TO PARENT CONFRONTATION.....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>APPENDIX L OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEM 14.....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>APPENDIX M HUMAN SUBJECT TRAINING CERTIFICATE .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>APPENDIX N IRB AMENDMENT 1 APPROVAL.....</b>	<b>127</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Conceptual Model on Parents Bullying Behaviors toward Teachers .....	12
Table 2	Bullying in the Workplace a Survival Guide .....	15
Table 3	Demographics of Field Testing.....	40, 116
Table 4	Ethnicity Subgroups of Teachers During the 2005-2006 School Year.....	46
Table 5	Results of Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability.....	47
Table 6	Types of Parent-Bullying Behaviors.....	49
Table 7	Physical Assault by Gender of Teachers for the 2005-2006 School Year.....	51
Table 8	Chi Square Test for Physical Assault by Gender of Teachers .....	52
Table 9	Physical Assault by Years Taught of Teachers.....	53
Table 10	Chi Square Test for Physical Assault by Years Taught of Teachers .....	53
Table 11	Teacher's Property Vandalism by Ethnicity of Teachers .....	54
Table 12	Chi Square Test for Property Vandalism by Ethnicity of Teachers.....	55
Table 13	Property Vandalism by Age of Teachers .....	56
Table 14	Chi Square Test for Property Vandalism by Age of Teachers.....	57
Table 15	Property Vandalism by Years Taught of Teachers .....	58
Table 16	Chi Square Test for Property Vandalism by Years Taught of Teachers.....	59
Table 17	Where Incidences Occurred During the 2005-2006 School Year .....	60
Table 18	Internet as Location by Gender of Teachers .....	60
Table 19	Chi Square Test for Internet as Location by Gender of Teachers.....	61
Table 20	ANOVA Test for Internet by Gender of Teachers.....	61
Table 21	Gym as Location by Age of Teachers.....	62
Table 22	Chi Square Test for Gym as Location by Age of Teachers .....	62
Table 23	Gym as Location by Years Taught of Teacher .....	63
Table 24	Chi Square Test for Gym as Location by Years Taught of Teachers .....	64
Table 25	One Way ANOVA and Leaving the Profession by Gender of Teachers.....	64
Table 26	Frequency of Adjectives Used to Describe Parent Behaviors .....	65
Table 27	Frequency Rates of In Your Face Behaviors by Ethnicity of Teachers.....	66
Table 28	Chi Square Test for In Your Face by Ethnicity of Teachers.....	67
Table 29	Triggers that Initiate Parent Bullying Toward Teachers.....	68

Table 30	Triggers Causing Confrontation by Gender of Teacher .....	69
Table 31	Chi Square Test for Triggers by Gender.....	70
Table 32	ANOVA Test for Removed from a Sports Team by Gender of Teachers.....	71
Table 33	ANOVA Test for Student has Homework Issues by Gender of Teachers.....	72
Table 34	Low Grades on Report Card by Age of Teacher .....	72
Table 35	Chi Square Test for Low Grades by Age of Teachers .....	73
Table 36	Low Test Scores by Years Taught of Teachers .....	74
Table 37	Chi Square Test for Low Test Scores by Years Taught of Teachers.....	75
Table 38	ANOVA Test for Student has Low Attendance Rates by Gender of Teachers .....	76
Table 39	Low Attendance Rates by Years Taught of Teachers.....	77
Table 40	Chi Square Test for Low Attendance Rates by Years Taught of Teachers .....	77
Table 41	Demographic Variables for 2005-2006 School Year.....	78
Table 42	Age Ranges of Teachers for the 2005-2006 School Year.....	79
Table 43	Years Taught for Teachers of the 2005-2006 School Year .....	79
Table 44	Age of Teacher by Years Taught of Teacher.....	80
Table 45	Independent and Dependent Variables .....	117

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement is critical to the success of students. Achievement levels tend to rise when parents are directly and positively involved in their children's education. There is a direct connection between parental involvement in early elementary school and the achievement of students in reading coupled with lower retention rates when measured in kindergarten and again in eighth grade. Unfortunately, the lines of communication between parent and teacher may fracture and as a result, parents may attempt to aggress teachers. During and after these confrontational incidents between parent and teacher, parents may feel they must achieve some goal, while teachers may feel victimized. It is the ultimate responsibility of the parent and teacher to remain positive and work calmly to resolve differences, especially when the student is present (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999, p. 4)

Parents are encouraged and invited to become active members of the school community. No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) legislation encouraged parental involvement in school. When parent and teacher partnerships are established, the goal should be to create a working relationship between all parties communicating the message of student success first.

Parents and educators combined and collaboratively have the ability to communicate with youth the positive message of expectations for school success. Epstein (2002) encouraged parents and educators to partner in working toward successful endeavors for the children by instilling the message of thriving academically. Mutual parent-teacher relationships can play a role in fostering student learning. Open and effective communication along with proactive involvement can minimize misunderstandings and disagreements between parents and teachers. For many parents, a fundamental part of the parenting role is to be their child's strongest advocate with the teacher and school (Katz, 1996).

On those occasions when parents and teachers disagree about curriculum, assignments, peer relationships, homework, or teaching approaches, a pattern of open communication can be invaluable in resolving differences (Willis, 1995). Disruptive parent behaviors at school can be viewed as bullying. Parents cross the line and move into aggressive acts toward school personnel, the wrong message is sent to youth who are watching (McEwan, 1998).

The duration and aftermath of parental bullying can traumatize school operations. Unsatisfactory school relations with parents may produce negative effects on the mental and

physical health of children and negatively affect the school (Bowlby, 1969). The potential threat of violence in schools is real and the fear of victimization can be intense for teachers. Parental bullying disrupts a scheduled day and traumatizes both teacher and students. The ability to keep the lines of communication open between parents and family members with teaching staff helps to diminish barriers. Workplace bullying incidents reveal that teachers may be subjected to violent behaviors directed toward them by parents. Social support and intervention are needed from school administrators to help sustain new teachers. The prevention and intervention of bullying behaviors are necessary to contain and restrict bullying, while adding to a stable school climate. "Dealing with difficult and aggressive students and parents is a growing problem for teachers" (Jaksec, 2005).

### Definitions

Definitions of terms to be utilized in this research are provided to bring understanding of language and meaning to the terms used. These terms were woven throughout this research to help the reader give insight through the meanings.

Aggression is unprovoked abuse demonstrated through physical abuse (hitting and punching), verbal abuse (name-calling and threats), emotional abuse (ostracizing, humiliating, maliciously gossiping, and rating/ranking personal characteristics such as race or sexual orientation), sexual abuse (sexual assault and sexual harassment), or hazing and cyber-bullying (sending hurtful messages using the internet), or other digital forms of communication (United States Department of Education, 1998).

Bullies are those persons who exact dominance over or inflict pain upon others through physical, verbal, sexual and emotional abuse. They appear to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others; seem to have little empathy for their victims; and often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way (Banks, 1997).

Bullying is the intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behaviors, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning acts, committed by one or more children (persons) against another; it's an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse. It is physical or psychological intimidation that occurs directly or indirectly through teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing (Olweus, 1993; Banks, 1997; U. S. Department of Education, 2001).

Client Bullying includes employees who are bullied by those they serve. Often the client is claiming their perceived right to better service in an abusive, derogatory and often physically

violent manner. Client bullying can also include an employee bullying his/her clients (Field, 1999).

Confrontational is the deliberate maltreatment through the use of aggression and bullying. It is aggression, which is face-to-face verbal abuse that is seen as reactive or pro-active aggression (Olweus, 1993).

Covert Bullying is hidden, concealed, disguised bullying behaviors (Randall, 1997).

Crime is behavior that persons in power chose to prohibit or command over others. It is any behavior that is punishable by imprisonment, fine or both. It is acts carried out with an antisocial or evil intent (McKee, 2005).

Cyber-Bullying is initiating the use of technology for sending cruel, vicious, embarrassing and sometimes threatening messages to hurt someone. It is the creation of web sites that have conversations, stories, cartoons, pictures and jokes, which ridicule others. Engaging someone in instant messaging, tricking that person into revealing sensitive personal information, and forwarding that information to others are all examples of cyber bullying. It is the repeated acts of being tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by persons using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. Cyber-bullying occurs among and between youth. Once adults participate in perpetuating victimization, it becomes cyber harassment or cyber stalking (Beasley, 2006; Carrington, 2006).

Dominance is the demonstration of how one person exercises authority over others to rule or show prevailing actions against others to gain access to resources (Hawley, 1999).

Gang Bullying is a serial bully who acts as leader with a group of instigators. A common tactic of this type of bully is to tell everybody a different story usually about what others are alleged to have said about that person and encourage each person to think they are the only one with the correct story. Some gang members are gratified in joining the group and others are coerced into joining in, usually through fear of being the next target. Gang bullying is also called mobbing. It usually involves scapegoating and victimization (Douglas, 2001).

Improper Conduct is an activity or behavior by a person, such as bullying intimidation or abuse, at or arising out of the workplace that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury (Workplace Violence Institute, 2001).

Mobbing is a ganging up on someone using rumor, insinuation, discrediting, humiliation, isolation, and intimidation in a concentrated and direct manner. Mobbing is committed by two or more persons (Olweus, 1983; Leymann, Davenport, Schwartz & Elliot, 1999).

Overt Bullying is a threat or act of physical violence and theft or destruction aimed at an individual committed out in the open, blatant or observable (State Services Commission, New Zealand, 2002).

Parents are caretakers who are involved in a child's education and welfare. In today's changing society, many other adults assume the role as parent such as grandparent, aunts, uncles, stepparents, and guardians. The caretaker may be biological, social or a legal guardian. They carry the primary responsibility for the development, guidance and education of the child. Parents have custody and authority for giving care to a child (Epstein, 2002).

Parental Involvement is voluntary engagement into the planned school program, a supporting partner in the school family and community who communicates, volunteers, and collaborates, may fully partner in decision making, and remains engaged in their children's education in every facet of a child's development (National Middle School Association, 2000 & Epstein, 2002).

Pressure Bullying is where the stress of the moment causes behavior to deteriorate; the person becomes short-tempered, loud, and irritable. Expectations are imposed along with other external pressures to force victims to comply (Douglas, 2001).

Serial Bullying is where the source of all dysfunction can be traced to one individual who picks on one employee after another and destroys them. The serial bully watches from a safe distance. Serial bullies gain a great deal of satisfaction from encouraging and watching others engage in conflict, especially those who might otherwise pool negative information about them (Field, 1999).

Survey is a set of standard questions asked of a sample of people whose answers are collected and combined to represent the answers of an entire population (Reaves, 1992).

Threat of Violence is any threatening statement, activity or behavior by a person at or arising out of the workplace which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury (Workplace Violence Institute, 2002).

Trigger is an act or happening which incites, stimulates or influences an action or emotion, (Field, 1996),

Verbal Abuse is the use of profanity, shouting, and racial or ethnic slurs to berate a victim. It may consist of giving the target a disrespectful nickname or subjecting him to a constant stream of insults, threats or intimidation tactics like involving the targets manager or other superiors as a means of forcing the victim to comply (Field, 1999).

Victimization is a negative act resulting from aggression or oppression which is unprovoked; it is deliberately intended to cause harm, and is carried out repeatedly over time and involves an actual and/or perceived imbalance of power in which the aggressor or group of aggressors are physically or psychologically more powerful than the victim (Olweus, 1999).

Victims are typically anxious, insecure, cautious persons who suffer from low self-esteem, rarely defending themselves or retaliating when confronted. They tend to be physically weaker than their bullies (Olweus, 1993).

Violence is behavior by individuals that intentionally threatens and attempts to inflict physical harm on others arising out of the workplace causing injury to a worker or an attempt to do so (National Research Council Canada, 1993; Workplace Violence Institute, 2001).

Workplace Bullying is a pattern of brutalizing and dehumanizing a person at work (Olweus, 1999).

### Statement of the Problem

Educators often enjoy the support and encouragement that parents bring into the learning environment. Current legislation (NCLB, 2002) encouraged “parents to support and become visibly active partners in the educational process of their children.” When failed communication and negative parent behaviors are present, these may contribute to the problem of bullying and confrontational behaviors parents occasionally demonstrate when interacting with teachers. Teachers may be subjected to increasing levels of parent confrontation, threats, intimidation and physical assault. A review of the literature found that there have been no studies reported regarding parent behaviors of confrontation.

### *Communication*

Parental involvement is a three way partnership among the parent, teacher, and school. An opportunity exists to promote open, effective communication between home and school exists. In a study conducted by Vernberg & Medway (1981), to investigate teacher and parent

perceptions of school problems, the findings suggested that parents were more likely to hold teachers responsible for children's school performance and academic success. (p.29)

The teachers surveyed for the aforementioned study underestimated the actual degree of parental blame when things happened at school to cause parents to react unfavorably. Teachers in Vernberg & Medway's study cited home factors as the main reason for negative school outcomes. Both parent and teacher cited that they tend to shy away from parent-teacher-student conferences. Parents fear what they will learn about their children and teachers fear that parents will react negatively to unpleasant information. Parents might be upset if the teacher blames their child for what they view as a controllable characteristic. The parent may perceive that placing the blame on the child poses a threat from the teacher (Vernberg & Medway, 1981).

In some instances, there are interruptions in the communication between school and home. When this occurs, schools must handle the disturbing disconnect in the breakdown. Conducting effective communication from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and student success is absolutely necessary. Effective communication is central to promoting positive actions and building trust between school and home (Jordan et al., 2002). Teachers might be reluctant to communicate their perceptions to parents, in that a parent who feels personally violated or verbally attacked may complain to the principal, school board, other officials or other parents, thus placing the teacher's job in possible jeopardy (Vernberg & Medway, 1981).

Epstein (2002) and the U.S. Department of Education (2002) suggested that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. What parents say and do to help their children is vital to academic success more than anything else.

### *Angry Parents*

Teachers are called upon to defuse angry, hostile, aggressive, and/or difficult parents. When parents operate aggressively, they tend to become angry toward school staff. This behavior shows up in their exchanges with teachers, in school-related meetings, and especially when this leads to breaks in communication. Angry exchanges can be seen as an ordinary event; this can lead to and be a carry over into the classroom (McEwan, 1998).

A topic on the investigation of parents who try to bully teachers may be sensitive and controversial. The overall tone of this writing was not intended to be pessimistic or discouraging. There appears to be an increase with respect to the type of incident where parents become too

direct and confrontational with teachers. Angry parents comprise a relatively small population who, when frustrated, exhibit angry tempers. The increased stress and tension in the environment from such an episode influences and has the potential of immobilizing a school program. When parents are upset they exhibit behaviors that make their interactions with school personnel problematic (Jaksec, 2005).

### *The Trauma of School Violence*

Adult bullying, workplace bullying and parental aggression are serious challenges for schools. Solutions to challenges of school safety are being sought; however, some violent acts are not dealt with and go under the radar undetected and unreported (Jaksec, 2005). Hallowell (2003) confirmed that legislators, community leaders, and school officials are seeking solutions to school violence as it involves students, staff, parents, and community members. As lawmakers and policymakers seek solutions in keeping students and staff members safe, the school safety challenge does exist (Jaksec, 2005).

The trauma of school violence can have devastating effects on a school when decisions are made to respond inappropriately. The effects of school violence and bullying can be viewed as life threatening and irreversible by administrators and teachers (McEwan, 1998).

### *Bullying and Victims*

A destructive effect on the school community is seen when bullying occurs. Epstein (2002) viewed the appearance of a cultural dynamic between what goes on in the school and at home causing emotional abuse which affects the community. The experience of bullying is serious and it is exacerbated when adults are involved. Bullying is detrimental to the academic success and enjoyment of life for those who are impacted by its provocations. The common thread is that a bully seeks to control others through aggression. Bully targets are victimized as a result of their inability to overpower the bully (Banks, 1994).

Victims are categorized into two groups: high aggressive and low aggressive; these researchers identified the victim as either passive or provocative. Passive victims are insecure, anxious, appear to do little or nothing to provoke attacks, and are equally unable to defend themselves. Provocative victims are aggressive and attempt to retaliate or fight back against the bullies' that attacks (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Bullies are aware of their behaviors, their impact on the victims and the potential consequences for their actions (Sutton et al.,1999). The intent of

the bully is to cause fear and distress. By displaying dominance, showing control over the situation and being the enforcer and provoker of a challenge, is their goal. Bullying behaviors can be seen and demonstrated through children, youth and adults (Field, 1996).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace-the school. There exists a gap in the literature about the occurrence and frequency of parent bullying. This researcher found few published studies on parents who bully. Benefield (2006) stated that “despite a wealth of anecdotal evidence, there is currently very little research data available on the prevalence or impact of the various forms of physical and emotional abuse directed against staff in schools (p.1). The proposed study attempted to show the degree to which parents confront through bullying teachers at school. The following research questions guide this study:

#### Research Questions

1. What types of parent bullying behaviors at school do teachers experience? In what form and how often?
2. What consideration has been given to leaving the teaching profession after a parent-bullying episode?
3. What types of parent bullying behaviors are seen as subtle or blatant by teachers?
4. What triggers initiate the parent-bullying incident?
5. Do teachers’ experiences of bullying parents vary according to age, gender, ethnicity, grade level and teaching experience?

#### Rationale for the Study

Research in the area of parent bullying toward teachers is critically needed. Parent, as well as teacher perceptions, can be a valuable conduit for change (McEwan, 1998). For purposes of this study, teacher perceptions were examined to investigate workplace bullying. The topic of parental bullying aimed at school personnel has not received the same amount of attention as pupil to pupil, teacher to pupil or administrator to teacher bullying. Parental aggression toward school personnel is somewhat concealed (Jaksec, 2005). The incidence of more serious aggression toward teachers is not numerically large, but is nevertheless a cause for concern

(Swanton, 1989). Teachers may suffer at the hands of parents who enter schools to harass both students and teachers. Teaching as an occupation has come to be associated with violence from parents and schoolchildren. School violence points to community, school and family needs, which play a role in the dilemma of parental bullying (Leyden, 1999).

### *Community Need*

At every level, elementary school, middle school, high school and college, parental bullying can emerge. Many challenges exist for schools and communities when parents bully (Associated Secondary Teachers of Ireland, 2005). School personnel need to know how to calm distressed, angry, and volatile parents. Calming and disarming the emotionally charged parent who arrives on the doorstep of the classroom or the administrator's office is only the first step. Helping to solve the problems created by parent anger, fear, and distress is a school division challenge. Teachers need to be nurtured and cared for after incidents, which can be viewed as unnerving (McEwan, 1998).

### *School Need*

School violence is an unwelcomed event made up of a series of cruel behaviors. An extreme incident of school violence can be horrendous (McEwan, 1998). The number of occurrences has increased substantially over the last four decades. This demonstrates to people all over the world that it is the individual responsibility of every citizen to work toward combating the cycle of violence, especially in our schools (Jaksec, 2005). Some ways to prevent the propitiation of school violence is to study the history of past events, look for warning signs, and promote anti-violent resolutions. Events like Columbine have caused Americans to question what could be causing youth and adults to enter educational facilities and harm the inhabitants. Schools need to constantly revamp safety procedures (Hallowell, 2003).

### *Family Need*

Collaboration and cooperation between school and family connections are essential to the safety and academic success of students. Teachers tend to define parental involvement differently than parents. Teachers tend to view a parent's role solely as a support for academic achievement, while parents view it as a means of supporting the total well being of the child (social and moral development) Scribner et al., (1999). Parents have come to rely on schools.

School personnel and parents may conceptualize parent involvement activities and outcomes differently. There is a need to fully explore teacher and parent perspectives about what constitutes appropriate collaboration and what role each can and should play in a child's education (Izzo et al., 1999).

### Limitations and Assumptions

Educators (teachers and administrators) will self-report responses in this descriptive convenience study. Upon investigating empirical studies in this field, the research indicates this topic is under-addressed. Parental bullying has kept a low profile. However, the literature suggests that it is prevalent. Though valuable to the study of adult bullying, parent perceptions will not be examined in this study. As quiet as it is kept, bullying is violent behavior. The topic of parental aggression toward school personnel is somewhat obscure (Jaksec, 2005). Therefore, the definition of parental bullying behaviors in schools may vary from school division to school division in both public and private school settings. Rural, urban, and suburban schools may show variances as well. The time and season of the school year may have been a limiting factor regarding survey administration. Holidays, vacations and time constraints may impact research responses. The under-reporting of incidents by teachers is considered a serious barrier to improved understanding of parental aggression. The sample is a convenience study; it is not a true random sample (Swanton (1989). Generalizability is, therefore, limited. The next researcher may want to rephrase the demographic questions in order to bring clarity to the questions on age of the teacher last year and whether the teacher taught classes at the middle school level or how many multi-level classes at the high school level the teacher taught. Urdan (2005) described generalizability as “the ability to use the results of data collected from a sample to reach conclusions about the characteristics of the population, or any other cases not included in the sample.” (p. 6)

### *Conceptual Model*

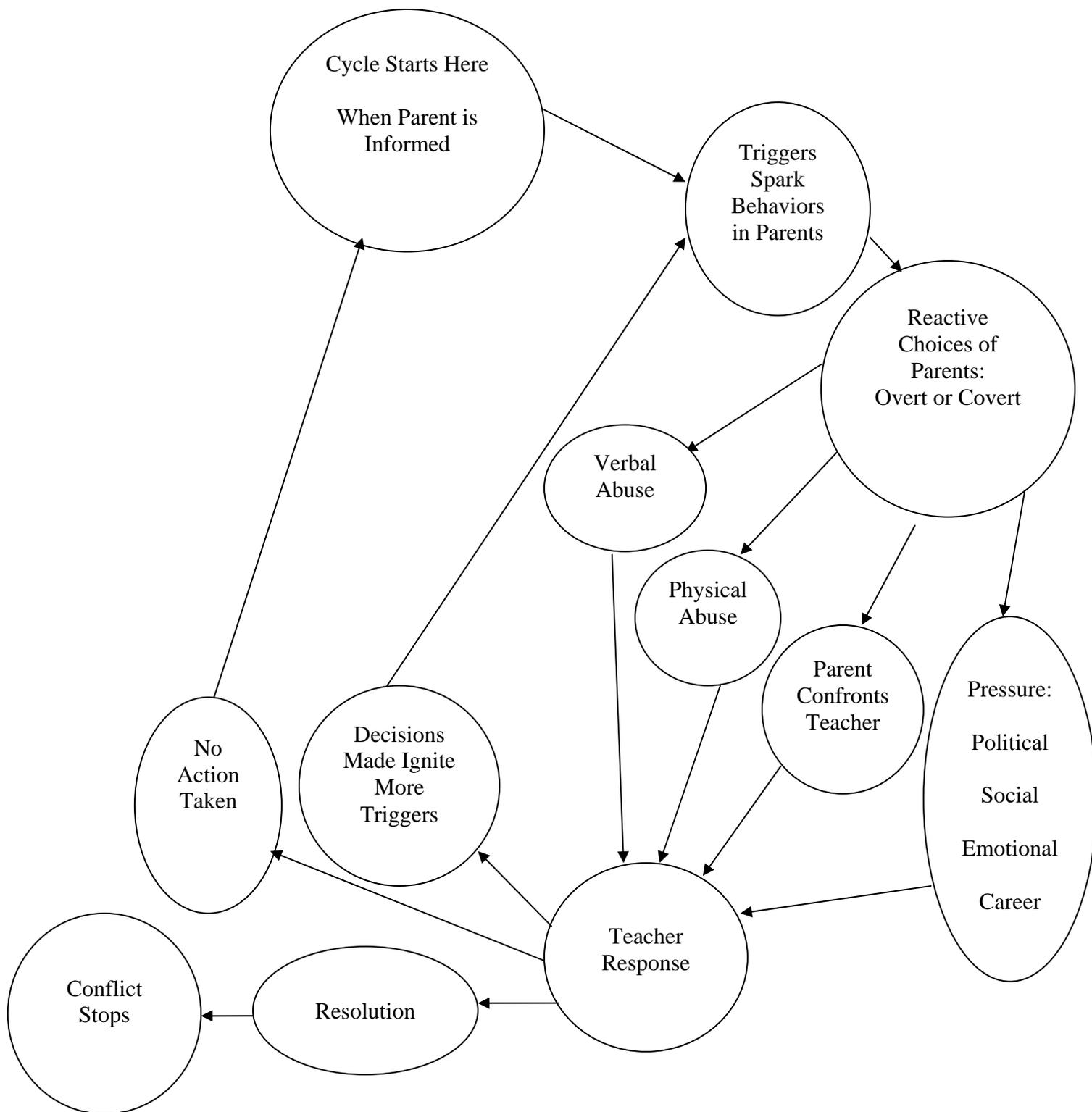
The Conceptual Model was used in research to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to a system analysis project. The model built from a set of concepts linked to a planned or existing system of methods, behaviors, functions, relationships, or objects. “A Conceptual Model is thought to be a relational model” as stated by Botha (1989). The Conceptual Model for parent bullying behaviors shows when a parent is informed this begins the

cycle of bullying as evidenced on the left side of the model. The trigger may be some action viewed by the parent as a violation against their child. Triggers may include suspension from school, low grades on a report card, and a child abuse report to officials or exclusion from a field trip. Both parent and teacher may initiate triggers. Reactive choices a bully may employ might include overt or covert actions on the part of the parent. Once the confrontation has taken place, the parent then applies pressure in either an implied or executed manner. Pressures may be considered as political, social, emotional, employment-related, or psychological. Bullying behaviors are sparked by a parent response to the perceived wrongdoing by the teacher. Moving in four directions is verbal and physical abuse, confrontation and pressures are applied by parents which move forward to teacher response. The teacher response may be evidenced when the teacher makes decisions which may ignite more triggers, no action is taken on the part of the teacher or a resolution is found which leads to the conflict ending.

As Benefield (2005) outlined “confrontational behaviors may include: name-calling, escalated voice tones, public intimidation, ridicule, physical assault, argumentative posture, threats, obscenities, accusations, and acts of vandalism. (p. 8) The teacher may be impacted negatively. A teacher response may be immediate, stressed, or prolonged intimidation. Through endeavors of the teacher, efforts may be made to resolve the issue(s). In the event the situation is resolved, the teacher and the parent are positively engaged and confrontation comes to an end. If there is no resolution, the parent may view the teacher response as another trigger and the situation then moves back around to triggers, therefore, starting the cycle over since the parent did not get what he or she desires. The experience then moves in a cycle. With the next incident, triggers initiate bullying behaviors of parents. Repeated acts initiated by parents or teachers are part of the bullying experience.

Table 1

*Conceptual Model on Parents Bullying Behaviors toward Teachers*



### Significance of the Study

Currently, information about parent aggression and bullying lies in studies from European countries and Australia; however, there is a gap in the literature in America. Problems associated with perceived increases in violence to the person within and around schools have formed a major focus of public attention on gangs, drugs and weapons related incidents. Such violence includes a range of participants: pupils, teachers, office workers and parents. It involves pupil-to-pupil, pupil to teacher, teacher to pupil, parent to teacher with assaults (Hewitt, 1998).

### *A Gap in the Research*

There is seemingly a lack of information on the contributions to the body of knowledge in the literature on bullying behaviors of parents toward teachers. Direct research into bullying has been an overlooked area for investigators, despite the fact that until very recently bullying has received a wake-up call for Americans. Bullying can be a silent activity; which can make research particularly difficult. The limited research that is available indicated a possibility in prevalence of parental bullying (Alfandary, 1999; Jaksec, 2005; Campbell, 2004; Briggs, Broadhurst, & Hawkins, 2004; Benefield, 2006; King and Alexander, 1996).

### *Contributions to the Field*

This study contributed to that body of knowledge by examination to determine if there were incidents of confrontation by parents, what types and how often do incidents occur. Examination into what triggers or situations influence and cause parents to confront teachers and what consideration do teachers give to leaving the profession after a confrontational episode. Bullying by parents is a societal problem; this study might provide educators with a lens to take a closer look at teacher attrition, burnout and workplace safety. This will aid educators in initiating a greater understanding of the dilemma and dynamics of parent bullying in the school environment. By identifying the factors that could be seen to moderate the impact of local environment on behavior in schools and by taking the study of violence in schools beyond the issue of bullying, a better understanding of the full social nature of violence in schools, parent roles and teacher perceptions can provide evidence or future study. This would shed light on the most and least successful management practices employed in schools in dealing with violence and provide a generalisable overview of best practice (Hewitt, 1998)

### *Intervention*

This study addressed an investigation into the frequency of confrontational behaviors parents direct toward teachers and insight into parental bullying behaviors from the teacher's perspective. The need for intervention practices, a proactive posture, and educating staff on bullying and victimization exists in schools. School management may need to set in place prearranged safety plans. Estevez et al. (2005) reported "triggers and factors by both parent and teacher as contributing to the breakdown in communication between families and schools." This can provide a framework for setting in place safeguards to help prevent misunderstandings and miscommunications.

### *Relevance*

Parent bullying is a relevant social issue which warrants the scrutiny of educators and others. Bullying is an act of violence demonstrated in adult problems which can be seen in relationship to assaults, vandalism, hooliganism, and domestic violence. Dissatisfied parents may react at school from what they perceive as some wrongdoing on the part of the teacher aimed toward their child. Parental bullying behaviors and the frequency of those behaviors may indicate the extent and severity of victimized teachers upon a school program (Pearce, 1991).

Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins (2004) viewed how serious the concern is for threats, parent violence toward teachers, the lack of teacher support and its effect on teachers. These have resulted in persons avoiding or leaving the profession because of the victimization in the classroom. Current research on teacher attrition shows that 30 to 50 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Stanford, 2001). A list of factors contributing to reasons why teachers leave teaching include: parental violence toward them, substance abuse, weapons, negative student peer relations, cognitive deficits, salary, previous victimization, and a lack of parental involvement as indicators of threats to their safety. Job-related health concerns are also issues for teachers (Smith & Smith, 2006).

Table 2

*Bullying in the Workplace: A Survival Guide*

## The Effects of Bullying

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Psychological</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>
Headaches/Migraines	Anxiety	Becoming irritable
Sweating/Shaking	Panic attacks	Becoming withdrawn
Nausea/Sickness	Depression	Changing in personality
Digestive Disorders	Poor concentration	Tearfulness
Sleep Disturbances	Memory loss	Substance misuse
Increased/Loss of appetite	PTS Syndrome (Post Traumatic Stress)	Obsessiveness
Exhaustion	Suicidal thoughts	Retaliation
Aches/Pains	Shame/Guilt	
High Blood Pressure	Stress breakdown	
Frequent Illness	Self harm	
Sweating	Suicide	
Palpitations	Low Self-Esteem	
Poor Eyesight	Embarrassment	

Reed & McHenry, (2004).

The major impact that bullying has on individuals is health related. Workplace bullying can have serious, even a devastating impact on the targeted individual. These may be described as physical, psychological and behavioral. Reed & McHenry (2004) developed and categorized a guide to better understand the effects of bullying. They examined the physical, psychological and behavioral effects of bullying:

Reed & McHenry (2004) described what the effects are that bullying behaviors may have in the workplace, (see Table 2). Physical effects included stress headaches, high blood pressure, and digestive problems, to name a few. Psychological effects included shame, guilt, depression, poor concentration or worse, Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). PTS left untreated may cause an individual to react violently against either the bully or anyone who happens to be in the vicinity. Behavioral effects may include irritability, withdrawal, personality changes, retaliation, and substance misuse or abuse (Reed & Mc Henry, 2004).

According to the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) Survey (1999), the most common effects among those who had experienced bullying included:

- Tearfulness 50%
- Anger 41%
- Stress 40%
- Loss of Concentration 37%
- Disturbed Sleep 32%
- Deterioration in Work 26%
- Forgetfulness 23%
- Low Self-Esteem 18%
- Headaches 16%
- Loss of Energy 12%
- Thoughts of Retirement 11%
- Depression 10%

The respondents in this study identified a range of physical symptoms they experienced.

All of these effects have a direct impact upon school managerial and corporate costs, effective service to parents, and teacher retention. Where bullying existed, the whole school atmosphere can be affected resulting in a climate of fear, intimidation, and low morale. Personal and family life can be disrupted and livelihood could ultimately be affected through enforced resignation from employment (ASTI, 1999).

#### *Teacher Retention*

Parent bullying directed at teachers may be linked to teacher retention or the lack thereof in schools. The bullying of teachers is an issue which must be given a high priority by the management and staff of each school. In their survey, more than 800 secondary teachers revealed that virtually all (99%) had some dealing with an aggressive parent and or student. Of those participating, 37% of the teachers had suffered from loss of concentration as a result of the aggression. The survey further revealed that parents often assaulted teachers who spoke out against a violent child (ASTU, 1999). School authorities should make it clear that bullying behavior directed against teachers by parents will not be tolerated regardless of the source or nature. This could be addressed in the school safety policy or parent handbook. Schools, as suggested by ASTI (1999), should “promote a culture of respect and encourage those teachers

who experience bullying behavior to bring this to the attention of the appropriate authorities so that action can be taken. The impact of workplace bullying on individuals affects the emotional and psychological health to the point that teachers leave the field of education.” (p. 3)

#### *Statistics on Parent Behavior*

The ASTI survey (1999) revealed that teachers had experienced bullying by parents. Sixty-eight percent of respondents stated they had experienced verbal abuse; 50% stated they had been deliberately excluded by another person at school; 26% reported that they had been the target of personally offensive graffiti, abusive work related telephone calls or malicious damage to their property; 14% indicated that an immediate family member had experienced abuse or harassment as a direct result of the respondents school workplace; 85% of respondents reported they had experienced positive reinforcement and praise from a parent at some point in their career. Only 14% of schools had in place a support system to deal with incidents of adult bullying; 83% reported that the atmosphere in their school was harmonious or moderate and 16% described the school atmosphere as not acceptable or tense. (p.3)

This chapter looked at the phenomenon of parent confrontation, listed definitions to bring a broader understanding of the bullying experience, and offered a conceptual model which illustrated how bullying at school can be a cycle of abuse that ultimately erodes the school climate.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As noted in Chapter I, this researcher was a victim of bullying. In order to better understand the experience, this researcher sought out literature on parents who come to school angry. Unfortunately, there were little or no empirical studies to be found. There were, however, lots of news and magazine articles available. These sad, yet interesting, stories told of parents who went to school belligerent. Parents in these stories would verbally explode and go home in a tirade. Even sadder, in a few of these incidences teachers and other school personnel were fatally wounded by upset parents (Arizona Daily Wildcat, 1999).

#### *Analyzing and Synthesizing Research*

This section will analyze and synthesize studies, which have been selected to provide insight into attempted parent bullying of teachers. This analysis focuses on empirical studies that examine violence, threats, and intimidation of teachers and teachers who have had attempted bullying episodes by parents. The research for this literature review was conducted using computer searches of various ERIC databases, and other search engines, visits to Virginia Tech's Newman Library in Blacksburg, University of Maryland, University of Louisville, Mary Washington University, and Northern Virginia Community College Libraries, Virginia Department of Education websites, dissertation abstracts, U. S. Department of Education's Government Publications, reading books, commentaries and reviews on the subject of parent bullying and teacher workplace violence. Phone calls and emails were sent to Drs. Namie and Namie of the Workplace Bullying Institute in Washington State. Along with these, references within articles read were investigated.

#### *Key Words*

Key words and search terms used in locating relevant studies include: aggression, bullying, bullying interventions, workplace bullying, mobbing, school violence, parent bullying, intimidation, confrontation, and victimization. The parameters for studies covered the time period from 1996 to 2005. Major focus areas of the studies included in this review are as follows:

- To investigate incidents of assaults on teachers in the workplace
- To identify what kinds of bullying and harassment teachers face

- To define the problem of workplace bullying
- To examine the nature of the abusive behaviors teachers experience from parents

In selecting these studies, consideration was given to those speaking directly to barriers which impact workplace safety for teachers and impact bullying by parents toward teachers. Studies suggested teachers are victimized. The most dominant needs are those, which echo further study in this phenomenon. Teachers need to collaborate with their colleagues and pay particular attention to differences in parent behaviors, especially those who try to bully. More importantly, teachers need to pay attention to parent actions and how parents interact with adults. A need for interventions and coping strategies for victims exist. Strategies are needed to help bullying parents change their behaviors. The development of civility policies help support and set in place procedures and strategies for interventions against bullying in schools, at school board meetings, and at the community level (Jaksec, 2005).

#### *Parental Actions and Reactions*

The parent's emotional state can range from tearful, sobbing, grief, moving to escalating to loud outbursts of anger. These actions may be perceived as guilt, shame or overprotection. The parent's engagement moves into denial, enabling, or fabrication to protect their child(ren). Parents are their child's first teacher. The law, NCLB, recognizes that parents are their children's first and most important teacher and for a child to be successful in school, parents and families need to be actively involved in their children's learning. They need to become involved early and stay involved throughout their school years (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Children learn aggressive behaviors from their social environment of which parents are central members (Bandura, 1973). Young people witness parents' actions and reactions. Children learn behaviors as a means to achieve their goals, needs, and wants (Klassen, 2003). The major focus of this literature review was to examine findings based on issues related to parents who try to bully teachers.

#### *Context for the Inquiry*

There is a tendency for people to behave unrealistically and aggressively when angered in order to obtain and meet their own personal goals by any means necessary. Some resort to humiliation, manipulation, stalking, psychological torture, and coercive persuasion that are aimed at a victim or target. The purpose is to get the target to cave in and give the bully what

he/she wants at any expense. Believe it or not, it happens at school between parents and teachers. The teacher's workplace is center stage for potential threats to work safety from a parent who may be confrontational, disgruntled, angry or difficult. According to Kieseker & Marchant (1999), "workplace bullying is becoming recognized as an important problem in the workplace." (p.62) Researchers have linked childhood bullying behaviors to adult bullying behaviors, aggression, self-esteem, confidence, violent behaviors and intimidation (Smith & Madsen, 1996). Bullying is a learned behavior. These actions could have conditioned the bully to behave the way he or she does. Some of the research suggests that bullying starts in the home, continues at school, and on to the university. Childhood bullies become adult bullies. It becomes an issue at work and has a major impact when the individual starts his or her own family (Kieseker & Marchant, 1999). Bullying in schools among children has been well researched. Bullying behaviors in parents is under researched.

There are enormous costs, which are associated with workplace bullying as cited by Kieseker & Marchant (1999), which include:

- financial;
- psychological;
- legal;
- staff turnover;
- absenteeism;
- early retirement;
- health related;
- economic;
- social and more. (p. 66)

Often monetary settlements are the defining lines to ending bullying in a workplace between parties. Over fifty million dollars was paid to two former Wal Mart employees as a result of litigation proceedings related to workplace bullying (Wall Street Journal, 1995).

Workplace bullying is serious when it involves parents who try to bully teachers at school. The teacher's workplace, when thought not to be a safe place is a scary concept. Workplace bullying at school has become an issue of concern for educators, policy makers, unions, school officials and government (Field, 1999).

### *Workplace Bullying Statistics*

The Bureau of Labor Statistics report that since 1994, workplace homicides have decreased annually, except for the year 2000, which showed a minor increase from the previous year (Bureau of Statistics, 2001). The most recent data available indicates over a 30% decline in workplace homicides over the past 10 years. The U. S. Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Justice (DOJ, 2000), annually publish *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, which details episodes of school violence, including school related deaths (homicides and suicides, rape, fighting, battery, injuries, robbery, and theft). This report does not speak of, neither does it include, parent-bullying behaviors.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association survey (2006), reported that Canadian educators witnessed a parent verbally abusing a teacher 36% of the time, up from 29%. In the same survey, 23% of educators report they have witnessed a parent physically assaulting and intimidating a teacher, up 14% from 2001. In 2005, teachers (82%) reported they feel safe, down from 93% in 2001. Teachers and education workers (30%) reported a parent or guardian had bullied them. Forty-eight percent of educators report witnessing a violent incident directed at teachers in schools involving injuries, property damage or weapons. Ontario teachers (55%) reported having been bullied by a superior, colleague, parent or student. Statistics shows that bullying is three times as prevalent as illegal discrimination and at least 1,600 times as prevalent as workplace violence. One in six persons experienced bullying at work. (p. 5-6)

### *Parent Bullying in Schools*

Teachers take steps to guard the learning environment. Parents may react when teachers set those steps or practices in place. Parents may react to those practices especially when internalized as actions not favorable for their child. When this happens, violence can be perpetrated against students, teachers and school staff. It can range from intentional vendettas to accidental killings of bystanders on the part of students, parents or intruders (Volokh & Snell, 1997).

Most research on adult bullying behavior has been carried out in workplace studies involving mental health workers (Stein et al, 2002), prison workers (Vartia & Hyyti, 2002), civil servants (Lee, 2002), and nurses (Quine, 2001). There had been a scarcity in research studies with teachers as victims of bullying by adults, specifically, by parents (Campbell, 2004).

There were a number of studies on students bullying teachers and bullying of students by teachers. When confrontational situations arise between parents and teachers, there should be safeguards in place to protect the teacher, as well as innocent on-lookers. Emotional scars are the result of bullying behaviors. The main worries in adults have been shown to be a fear of negative social outcomes and embarrassment. Most adults worry about being embarrassed, not being accepted, and not being understood ( Lovibond & Rapee, 1993). Verbal and physical assaults can be emotionally devastating for educators. When adults and parents bully at school, teachers and other school personnel feel the intrusion. Teachers felt hostility in their school/workplace. Teachers suffer at the hands of parents who enter schools filled with hostility and anger. Certain triggers sparked responses and reactions from parents, (Swanton 1989).

#### *Events that Trigger Bullying*

Numerous events may spark a bullying episode that negatively impacts a teacher. Jealousy and envy of one's talents, abilities, circumstances or possessions are strong motivators of bullying. In the school setting, triggers may include any event that challenges decisions teachers have made. A workplace bullying event specific to the business sector may start after one of these events: a new manager is appointed; gaining recognition for your achievements, challenging the status quo; blowing the whistle on incompetence; breaches of procedures; being good at your job; being popular with clients, pupils, parents, customers or patients; having a well-defined set of values; an unwillingness to compromise; or refusing to become a corporate clone and drone (Field, 1999). There are many triggers which upset parents. Parent bullies try to use pressure(s) against teacher targets to get what they want. As a result, these pressures may initiate negative responses from the bully's target or victim.

#### *Workplace Bullying*

Bullying was particularly prevalent in the following sectors: prison service (16.2%), telecommunications (16.2%), teaching (15.6%) and the dance profession (14.1%). Some workplaces and occupations, like taxi cab drivers, health care workers, teachers, social workers and police/prison workers are at greater risk of experiencing violence directed toward them. These sectors were believed to be the most at-risk populations for bullying (Hoel & Cooper, 2001). More elementary teachers than secondary teachers have been bullied by parents (Matsui 2006).

Bullying can take place on public transportation, at church, in traffic, or in any other interaction where people come into contact with others. Bullying at work takes place when someone, repeatedly over a period of time, is exposed to negative acts from one or several others in a situation where he or she for different reasons may have difficulties defending him or herself against these actions (Henson et al., 2006). Bullying may be presented in different forms. One main objective in bullying is the inequality in power between the target and the perpetrator. Direct bullying is aggressive acts that are aimed directly at the target by teasing, scolding, spreading rumors, slander, and threats. Indirect bullying may take the form of social isolation, rejection, withdrawal of necessary information or acts that create difficulties and barriers which prevent or impede the targets from doing their work (Henson et al., 2006)

Workplace bullying for school is just as traumatic as it is for businesses. Violence to school workers is often extreme and frightening (Briggs et al., 2004). As a result of this research, inquiry into the implementation of civility policies was explored. pointed out that there has been an increase in the establishment and enforcement of civility policies in school districts in the United States (Jaksec, 2005). These policies emphasize that any threatening behaviors on the part of members of the public, stakeholders or any party, including school personnel, will not be tolerated and are sometimes punishable. The hope is to create more relaxed conversations among teachers, parents, and students (Delisio, 2001). Policymakers recognize the escalating challenges school personnel face each day in dealing with parents who become frustrated or act in an overly aggressive manner.

#### *Cost of Workplace Aggression*

Violence and aggressive acts cause immediate and often long-term disruption to interpersonal relationships. The work environment and the organization of work to be carried out suffer. Employers' bear direct cost for lost work, absenteeism, and improved security measures. Indirect cost includes reduced efficiency and productivity, loss in product quality, loss of company image and a reduction in the number of clients. The total costs of workplace violence to employers amounted to more than \$4 billion in 1992, according to a survey conducted by the National Safe Workplace Institute (Chappell & Di Martino, 1998)

Wage loss claims from acts of violence and force have increased by 88% since 1985 in Canada. In Germany, the direct cost of psychological violence in an enterprise of 1,000 workers

has been calculated at \$112,000 per year, along with \$56,000 of indirect costs (Chappell & Di Martino, 1998).

### *Parental Aggression*

Bullying behaviors of parents may be seen in a number of forms, including physical and verbal abuse. Threats can be made through gestures. Crossing and intruding upon boundaries and personal space can be viewed as a means of intimidation. Jaksec (2005) conducted research to determine the frequency at which educators experience parental aggression. Sixty percent experienced profanity or shouting directed at them by parents on at least two occasions during the school year. Seventy percent experienced false accusations leveled against them by parents during the school year, while 79% experienced three or more occasions reported receiving parental threats to contact other authorities regarding their situation.

Bullying is a real threat in schools. Threats were made by parents to communicate with their attorneys, school board members, and the mayor's office when decisions made were not yielding to their demands (Jaksec, 2005). The issue of confrontational, angry, and hostile parents who bully at school needs to be addressed by researchers. For any school personnel who are victimized by a parent, repercussions should follow to protect victims. These interactions result in an inconvenient disruption of a school day and/or threaten the employee's safety. Parental aggression is a problem not to be ignored (Jaksec, 2005)

### *Mobbing*

Mobbing is a form of gang violence in the workplace. According to Olweus et al., (1983) mobbing is a ganging up on someone by using rumor, innuendo, discrediting, humiliation, isolation and intimidation in a concentrated and direct manner. In 1984, Dr. Heinz Leymann, a Swedish psychiatrist, referred to workplace bullying as mobbing. Leymann (1984) viewed mobbing as hostile and unethical communications, which is directed in a systematic way by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual who, due to mobbing, is pushed into a helpless and defenseless position, being held there by means of continuing mobbing activities. Mobbing focuses on the breaking point where the psychological situation begins to result in psychiatrically or psychosomatically pathological conditions. Mobbing has affected around four percent of the Swedish workforce and that mobbing will victimize one in four persons for at least six months during their working careers. Mobbing has serious consequences, as an estimated ten

to twenty percent of individuals subjected to mobbing will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Mobbing causes about 10% to 20% of the suicides reported in Sweden per year (Leymann, 1984, p. 175)

### Purpose of the Study

This researcher's interest in this particular topic is to examine the prevalence of parents who try to bully teachers. The primary purpose of this paper is to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace-the school. The literature review provided: (a) a lens for viewing an investigation of the existing literature and assess in order to determine if research in the area of bullying is available and assessable; (b) a framework for understanding and examining the cycle of teacher victimization; and (c) examination of instruments for investigating the methodology used to assess the existing findings in literature.

### *Opposing Views on Workplace Bullying*

Denenberg & Braverman (1999) and Ishmael & Alemoru (1999) elaborated on how there is virtually no evidence that when asked about violence by any of our interviewees and respondents, none of them considered reporting instances of bullying and harassment within the workforce from colleagues or clients. They reported that bullying was only a small proportion of all events reported by the interviewees. This contradicts the view that bullying and harassment within the workplace or that there is the source of violence and menace on the job. They cited that no overt or covert bullying behavior was reported in these studies.

### *The Historical Context of Bullying and Current Status*

Bullying happens to children, youth and adults. Research suggests that childhood bullies become adult bullies. As it continues in adult life, it may impact heavily on the workplace of the bully; workplace of the victim and on the social life of the bully (Kiesecker & Marchant, 1999). Hoover & Hazler (1991) explained the bullying progression on how toddlers bite, grab, and kick. They pull, push, and snatch. Kindergarteners refuse to share. They exclude others from play, and take toys against the will of others. Young children take playmates' belongings. They tease; pull hair, twist arms, and fight. They make fun of, take lunch money, and scare classmates into submission. Adolescents hang the phone up on others, spread gossip, and label with ugly names. They sexually harass and reject their peers. College students haze, sexually violate, and form

cliques. College students join gangs like secret societies (fraternities and sororities) and exclude those they have defined as unacceptable. Hazing may be seen as a rite of passage in some colleges (Thwing, 1906). The bullying pattern is established from youth and moves full throttle into the workplace. Those in the workplace form political interest groups, overlook, and sexually harass. They intimidate supervisors and those equal in status to them and snub noses at those who do not think their way. When actions escalate to the point of harming others, laws are in place to protect victims, bystanders and the innocent. When adults are at odds with one another, established rules of conduct, laws, and penalties prohibiting aggression and bullying in the workplace are often established to combat escalated incivility (Field, 1996).

In the early to mid 1980's, Leymann established the world's first Work Trauma clinic in Sweden. He documented the trauma that can result from sustained psychological terrorization in the workplace. He used the term mobbing to describe bullying in the workplace. The escalation of the bullying process occurs through mobbing. Four distinct stages take place: (1) the situation begins with a conflict that triggers a critical incident; (2) different negative acts take place like bullying and stigmatizing; (3) frustration elicits by the environment through scapegoating or the situation is projected onto an individual, who then becomes a victim of workplace bullying and; (4) finally, expulsion, the victim is compelled to react by leaving the workplace (Leymann, 1996).

Pre-dating Leymann was Brodsky. Based in America, she wrote a book entitled *The Harassed Worker* in 1976. However, this literature only gained importance years later when interest in workplace bullying began to spread ( Beswick, 2006).

Adams, a British journalist, brought to the attention in the United Kingdom and the public domain workplace bullying. She coined the term workplace bullying in 1992. Adams produced radio documentaries discussing workplace bullying. She associated bullying to adulthood misery (Namie, 2003). In 1992, Adams wrote *Bullying at Work: How to Confront and Overcome It* (Beswick et al., 2006).

It is likely that bullying at work has been happening for many years. Examination into the topic and experience of workplace bullying is fairly new to researchers. Throughout the 1990's, interest and research in workplace bullying began to spread (Beswick et al., 2006). There is growing interest and literature on the subject from researchers originating primarily from European countries, the United States, Canada, and Australia.

*United States Law*

In the United States, laws have also been enacted to help protect employees in the workplace. These include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, cited Yamada (2002). These three laws have proven somewhat useful in resolving workplace problems. These legislative statutes provide judicial protection for those violated in the workplace. The Civil Rights Act, also known as the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, is the cornerstone on which the law stands (Yamada (2002). Protection of public employees against discrimination is provided through two principal sources: (1) the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and (2) the federal statutes that are generally referred to as the Civil Rights Act (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). This means that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment would protect individuals from bullying and that protection includes from the school place to the workplace and beyond. The Eleventh Amendment protects persons against age discrimination, occupational practices, family and medical leave, discrimination against persons with disabilities, equal pay, gender discrimination, diversity and affirmative action in the workplace (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). The Supreme Court has ruled against workplace hostility. In 1993, the Supreme Court in *Harris v. Forklift Systems* found that a hostile or abusive environment is determined by examining a number of factors and the frequency with which they have occurred. These included the severity of the conduct, whether it was physically threatening or humiliating, and whether it interfered with the employee's work performance (Alexander & Alexander, 2005).

Regarding legislation for discrimination against persons with disabilities, the Federal Civil Rights statute helps to form the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA was enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities who have been violated. More than 43 million Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities and are without general recourse for discrimination based on these disabilities (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). ADA protects all aspects of society including transportation, the workplace, public accommodations, telecommunications and other areas. Yamada (2000) suggested that the ADA can potentially serve as a response to workplace bullying where the offending behavior creates or exacerbates a recognized disability.

The federal OSHA Act (1970), according to Yamada (2000), was enacted to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, every working man and woman in America safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources. He further states that OSHA's general duty clause states each employer shall furnish to each employee employment and a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to its employees. The most extreme effects of workplace bullying are high blood pressure, heart attacks, and the likely potential of serious physical harm. Its underlying regulations lead one to conclude that the entire regulatory framework has been designed to respond to physical hazards in the workplace (Yamada, 2000, p.421)

Eight states in America have lobbied for additional legislation to protect victims in the workplace. Unfortunately, none of this additional legislation has yet to be passed.

#### *Early Workplace Bullying in America*

Hallowell (2003) offered an example of workplace bullying in a school. In a scenario captured in the news, at the beginning of a violent period, American schools experienced violence as early as the 1920's. Though not initiated by a parent, it was, however, adult bullying in the workplace. The violent event took place in an American school. An adult male intruder entered an elementary school in Bath, Michigan. He murdered 45 persons while wounding 58 with bombs and a gun. Many of those murdered were young children. The superintendent of the school was shot dead by the same man who set off dynamite. This was one of the first major school violence incidents in the United States. This incident symbolizes the beginning of the violent trend that has continued into the twenty-first century in schools. (. 3)

Congress mandated the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002), which is designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools. Title IV (Safe Schools and Drug Free Act) of NCLB provides support for programs which prevent violence in and around schools; prevent illegal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco by young people; and foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that supports academic achievement (U. S. Department of Education, 2003). The support and encouragement of parental involvement are found in sections of Title I, Part A, (Improving Basic Programs of NCLB). Title I alerts parents to important information on student performance and provided a framework for improving academic achievement for students. A message of encouraging parental involvement is stated in the law.

Sections 1111(d), 1114, 1118 (b) (2) (B) (ii), and 1120 (a) of Title I pertains specifically to parental involvement in both public and private schools. Within these sections are requirements for local educational agencies (LEA) and schools, to provide full opportunities for the participation of parental involvement.

Title IV, Part A of NCLB, known as Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Act, mandates schools to provide support for programs. Without a safe and orderly learning environment, teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn. Students and school personnel need a secure environment, free from the dangers and distractions of violence, drug use, and lack of discipline in order to ensure that all children achieve to their full potential (NCLB, 2002).

#### *Theoretical and Commentary Literature*

Researchers have made significant contributions to the study of bullying. This section will discuss relevant theories, issues and methodological problems associated with bullying in the workplace. Workplace bullying has been studied since 1984.

#### *Workplace Theoretical and Commentary Literature*

Douglas (2001) and Cannon (1932) suggested a social learning theory, human stress responses, and causal attribution theory on workplace bullying. Douglas describes the dynamics of workplace bullying. Her views are an important contribution to the body of knowledge on adult and workplace bullying. Cannon offers his theory on how humans react to stressful situations.

#### *Social Learning Theory*

As we grow up we absorb social beliefs and values that are part of our family (Douglas, 2001). The behavior of both bullies and the victims are sometimes explained in terms of the social learning theory of aggression (Bandura, 1973). According to this theory, bullying could be seen as a variant of repeated aggression and be understood as a learned set of behavior, primarily stimulated by external sources of modeling. Douglas (2001) explained the social learning theory as being brought up in a family where there was constant bickering and fighting. This is then viewed as the norm and probably reactions would come in one of two ways. The choice to join in and behave in like manner (known as fight) or, if the temperament were less aggressive, the choice would be to withdraw and not engage (known as flight).

Cannon (1932) suggested that the human stress response has been characterized as fight or flight and has been represented as an essential mechanism in the survival process. Whether a person fights or flees in response to sympathetic arousal is thought to depend on the nature of the stressor. If the person sizes up or threatens a predator, then attack is likely. In circumstances in which the threat is perceived to be more formidable, flight is more probable. (p. 11)

The child who is accustomed to behaving badly and getting his or her own way will use similar tactics as an adult, whereas, the child who behaves passively and is used to being terrorized will not have the skills to fight back. If we take these responses into our adult lives one can see the potential for bully and victim behaviors emerging (Douglas, 2001).

### *Causal Attribution Theory*

The interpretation of events impacts how persons react to the situations around them. To believe that someone is deliberately trying to hurt them causes reactions to be more forceful. When there is the existence of a hidden agenda and a possible misinterpretation of events, and jumping to conclusions or reacting inappropriately, bullies tend to operate in these areas. They misjudge motives and intents. Bullies plot ways in which they can undermine a victim. Bullies have distorted thinking about what they believe (Douglas, 2001, p.19).

### *Leading Pioneers in Workplace Bullying*

Hare (2006) is author of *Without Conscience* and the creator of the Standard tool for diagnosing Psychopathy, the *Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCL-R)*. He is one of the leading researchers in America who has examined workplace bullying. Hare (2006) wrote in his book that bullies react aggressively in response to provocation or perceived insults or slights. It is unclear whether their acts of bullying give them pleasure. This seems to be the most effective way they have learned to get what they want from others. Similar to manipulators, however, psychopathic bullies do not feel remorse, guilt or empathy. They lack insight into their own behavior. They seem unwilling or unable to moderate it, even when it is to their own advantage. Not being able to understand the harm they do to themselves (let alone their victims), psychopathic bullies are particularly dangerous. (p.97)

Namie, (2003) co-founder of the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), an education research and advocacy organization ([www.bullyinginstitute.org](http://www.bullyinginstitute.org)) and co-author of the book *Bully at Work* (WBI, 2003). He is a pioneer in the contributions of understanding workplace bullying

in America. He and his wife, Ruth Namie, are social psychologists and consultants. The pronounced effect of bullying by adults is health related. High blood pressure, heart conditions and post-traumatic stress disorder are among health concerns. A new issue to bullying in the workplace called prolonged duress stress disorder was identified by Dr. Namie (2003). There is a number of workplace bullying behaviors which may produce health-related sicknesses.

### *Types of Workplace Bullying*

Teachers may be victimized in the workplace repeatedly by some form of bullying. This may occur when mother and/or father or both interact with the teacher. Douglas (2001) contributed to the body of knowledge by writing *Bullying in the Workplace: An Organizational Toolkit*. Her publication directly addressed types of people who bully and how to better understand the problem. She stated that bullying in the workplace is often subtle and covert, as well as aggressive and overt; bullying can take many forms. Her contributions to the study of workplace bullying include types of pressure bullying, client bullying, serial bullying, and gang bullying as related to the study of bullying. (p.12)

*Pressure bulling.* Teachers may experience stress related to their jobs. Job stress and pressure are common in the workplace. According to Douglas (2001) pressure bullying is usually a reaction to a set of circumstances brought on by school related activities when time, temper and tension are brought on by reactions of another person. When stress of the moment causes behavior to deteriorate; the person affected becomes short-tempered, irritable and may shout or swear at others. Pressure bullying subsides when the pressure is removed. Behavioral acts, which are committed behind the scenes, subtly or in secret, are considered covert bullying. Covert bullying is more difficult to spot as they are performed secretly and undercover. Covert bullies operate behind your back. They are masters at spreading rumors, dropping bits of poison here and there and generally setting people up. Randall (1997) described covert or introverted bullying as:

- deliberately overloading an employee with work and imposing impossible deadlines;
- sabotaging an employee's work by withholding information required to fulfill tasks;
- constantly changing guidelines;
- hiding or removing documents or equipment;
- isolating or ignoring on a constant basis and;

- failing to provide appropriate resources and training.

*Client bullying.* Teachers are service providers. Parents are clients who attempt to bully educators who serve them. Douglas (2001) expressed that client-bullying can happen to teachers when students and parents at school in the teacher's workplace assault them. Field (1999) stated that it is not acceptable for anyone to be abused in the name of customer service. Often the client is claiming their perceived right to better service in an abusive, derogatory and often physically and/or verbal manner. In the event of a parent (client) bullying a teacher (in the workplace), this type of violence is seen as psychological and emotional. It may not result in physical or aggressive forms of violence. Nevertheless, it is bullying.

*Serial bullying.* Most cases of bullying involve serial bullying, even at school. Field's (1999) examination of serial bullying revealed that serial bullying is embittered by an abusive upbringing, seething with resentment, irritated by others' failure, to fulfill his or her superior sense of entitlement. Their overt behavior is fuelled by anger resulting from rejection. The serial bully displays an obsessive, compulsive and self-gratifying urge to displace their uncontrolled aggression onto others. Many organizations (especially public service) have a serial bully. The serial bully is one person's divisive disorder and dysfunctional behavior, which can permeate the entire organization like a cancer. (p. 22-23)

According to Douglas (2001), the intentions of serial bullying are to carry out threats by pairs of clients, parents or customers of like intentions. One verbally abuses while another watches and listens to what is going on. It is the watcher who is the more dangerous of the two as they have usually been the instigator. The instigator makes the bullets for a watcher to fire. Most people know at least one person in their life with the profile of the serial bully. In addition, most people do not recognize this person as a socialized psychopath or sociopath, according to Field (1999). Field continues to state that the serial bully is the greatest single threat to the effectiveness of organizations, the profitability of industry, employee longevity, performance of the economy, and the prosperity of society.

The impact of the serial bully can limit the effectiveness of teacher performance. Further, Field (1999) acknowledged that serial bullies are attention-seekers, the wannabe, guru and deceiver. This person has a Jekyll and Hyde nature. The serial bully watches from a safe distance. According to Douglas (2001), serial bully's gain a great deal of gratification from encouraging and watching others engage in conflict, especially those who might otherwise feed

negative information back to the group. The serial bully appears to lack insight into his/her behavior.

*Gang bullying.* There are a few school-related experiences, which call for large numbers of parents to attend. These include Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, school programs or school board meetings. Excellent platforms for bullies, these venues can be heavily attended. Douglas (2001) affirmed that gang bullying is serial bullying carried out with a group of people. Gang bullying can occur anywhere, even in school, where groups of parents and community members gather. This seems to be a flourishing climate for bullying. If the bully of the group is an extrovert, he/she is likely to be leading from the front, shouting, screaming and easily identifiable. Overt bullying occurs in your face. This is usually how extrovert persons operate. Overt bullying is much easier to identify. Persons who operate overtly are more verbal and loud. The State Service Commission of New Zealand (2002) provided a brief description for overt bullying. Overt bullying consists of a group of behaviors that are carried out in the open. These are blatant and in the face of the victim or target of the abuse:

- threats;
- intimidation;
- tower or stand-over tactics;
- coercion;
- verbally abusive or degrading language or gestures;
- shouting, yelling or screaming;
- unexplained rages;
- unjustified criticism, insults, nit-picking and fault-finding
- constant humiliation;
- belittling remarks;
- unjustified threats and
- punishment imposed without reasonable justification.

Douglas (2001) stated that gang bullies have a ringleader; others are followers. Some of the followers will do so willingly because they enjoy the power and status they gain and protection afforded them from group affiliation. Others join the group because they want to ensure that they are not the next victims. This is a survival tactic. Hoel & Cooper (2002) cited that half the people in the gang are happy for the opportunity to behave badly; they gain gratification from the

feeling of power and control and enjoy the patronage, protection and reward from the serial bully. Gang bullying or group bullying is often called mobbing and usually involves scapegoating and victimization. (p. 13)

### *Related Studies*

An examination of related studies in Appendix A revealed that researchers used a variety of methodological approaches in examining issues of bullying behaviors and interventions. One such study is specific to teacher unions. All but two of the research methods used self-report questionnaires (surveys) (King & Alexander, 1996; Jaksec, 2005; Benefield, 2005; Briggs, Broadhurst, & Hawkins, 2004). In addition to survey instruments and tools, interviews were also used (Middleton-Moa & Zawadski, 2002; and Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). All of the studies sampled included teacher victimization through bullying (King & Alexander, 1996; Jaksec, 2005; Benefield, 2005; Briggs, Broadhurst, & Hawkins, 2004; Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002; and Mikkelesen & Einarsen, 2002). One study was geared toward workplace bullying of teachers and nurses (Mikkelesen & Einarsen, 2002). Two studies were specific to aggression at work and in schools (King & Alexander, 1996 and Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). One study required principals to participate in completing a questionnaire on confrontational, difficult and threatening parents (Jaksec, 2005). One study tied the early pioneering work of workplace bullying to researchers Leymann (1984) and Adams (1992) in its study (Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002). Five studies examined aggression at school by parents (Benefield, 2005; Mikkelesen & Einarsen, 2002; Middleton-Moz & Zawadski, 2002; King & Alexander, 1996, and Jaksec, 2005). One study examined the investigation of assaults on teachers by union affiliation (King & Alexander, 1996).

### *Study Related to Parent Bullying*

Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins (2004) used survey methodology in their study similar to the instrumentation that is being posed for this study. In their study, frequencies and percentages were calculated for professions that had experienced incidences of violence, threats and intimidation in the workplace. These included professions in the areas of social worker, teacher, police, nurse, counselor, and others. Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins (2004) cited the majority of respondents (91%) had experienced intimidating behavior in the course of their child being in their care. Many had experienced threats of violence (72%) and ongoing harassment (41%). A

smaller group of respondents 24% had experienced actual physical assault. For many respondents (63%) incidents occurred both when they were with others and when they were alone. Almost three-quarters of respondents reported that nothing in their training had prepared them for exposure to threats and violence in the workplace. (p.3)

### Conclusions and Implications

The guiding question of this literature review is Do parents try to bully teachers through confrontation? Precisely, what is known in the behavioral science of bullying behaviors that parents try to confront teachers with at school? This phenomenon covers a vast range of areas including the characteristics of bullying, bullying intervention strategies, and frequency in which teachers are faced with confrontations. One issue remaining unclear is the amount of time that educators in schools deal with upset, difficult and angry parents.

With insufficient studies in the area of parent bullying and the need for interventions at the various school levels, there is a need to determine how many parents reacted counterproductively. Benefield (2005) stated that despite a wealth of anecdotal evidence, there is currently very little research data available on the prevalence or impact of the various forms of physical and emotional violence directed against staff in schools. The implication is that there is a need for more research. Educators in public, private, and alternative schools along with juvenile facility schools need to know if there is a connection and progression in violent behaviors. Olweus (1999) stated the workplace abuse could be defined as a pattern of brutalizing and dehumanizing a person at work. Therefore, threads of bullying behaviors are woven from childhood to adulthood. It is important that communication, collaboration and continuity of service through educational intervention are afforded this behaviorally challenged group of parents. Teacher perceptions of parental bullying will prove beneficial to future research and the success of reculturating school communities to prevent bullying.

#### Hypotheses for the Study: Do Parents Try to Bully Teachers Through Confrontation?

The purpose of this research was to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace, i.e., the school. The Hypotheses provided outline this researcher's statement of predictions:

1. There will be a statistically significant relationship between gender and type of behavior, location where incidence(s) occurred, triggers which cause incidences, and incident rate of parents who confront teachers.
2. There will be a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and type of behavior, location where incidence(s) occurred, triggers which cause incidences, what happened after an incident(s), what adjective is used most to describe parent behaviors and incident rate of parents who confront teachers.
3. There will be a statistically significant relationship between age and type of behavior, location where incidence(s) occurred, triggers which cause incidences and incident rate of parents who confront teachers.
4. There will be a statistically significant relationship between years taught and type of behavior, location of the incident, and triggers which cause incidences and incident rate of parents who confront teachers.
5. There will be a statistically significant relationship between demographics and consideration of teachers leaving the teaching profession after a parent-bullying episode.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

Presented in this chapter are methodologies and procedures that were used to investigate the research question, do parents try to bully teachers through confrontation? The purpose of this quantitative study was to (a) examine what type of parental bullying behaviors at school do teachers experience and how often; (b) determine what consideration has been given to leaving the profession after a parent bullying episode; (c) determine what types of parent bullying behaviors are seen as subtle or blatant by teachers; (d) determine what triggers initiate the parent bullying incident; and (e) determine how teachers' experiences by bullying parents vary according to age, gender, ethnicity, grade level and teaching experience.

Data were collected from educators in a large sized urban-suburban (2,603 students) school district in a Mid-Atlantic state using a survey (see Appendix D). A survey is a set of standard questions asked of a sample of people, whose answers are collected and combined to represent the answers of an entire population (Reaves, 1992). Bartlett et al. (2001) asserted that "a common goal of survey research is to collect data representative of a population." It is affirmed that surveys are frequently conducted for the purpose of making descriptive assertions about some population that is discovering the distribution of certain traits or attributes (Babbie, 1997). These procedures and methodologies were used to investigate the research questions as well as a description of the participants, instrumentation and design for a questionnaire, the pilot and the data analysis procedures. This chapter included the procedures and methodology, a description of the sample, instrumentation, and data analyses.

#### *Participants*

Data for the study were collected from teachers who served as participants employed with Excellence City Public Schools (ECPS) in grades 9-12. A somewhat culturally and ethnically diverse community, Excellence City is made up of 72.91% of Whites; less than 10% of Blacks; 11.03% of Hispanics; less than four percent of mixed or multiple races; about 13.07% of Asian & Pacific Islanders and; about one percent of American Indians (City of Excellence, 2006).

Educational attainment in Excellence for parents 25 years and over was as follows: high school graduates 87%; bachelor's degree or higher 54.3%; and graduate professional degree

25%. The jobless rate revealed fewer than three percent were unemployed (City of Excellence, 2006). In the fall of 2005, the average daily public school membership in Excellence was 164,295 pupils. The ethnicity breakdown was seen as 50.2% Whites; 11% Blacks; 16% Hispanics; 17.4% Asians and Pacific Islanders show less than six percent; less than five percent are multiracial; and less than one percent Native American (State Education Agency, 2005). Excellence City Public Schools was one of the largest public employers in Excellence City hiring 21,859 school staff. There are 13,781 teachers in Excellence Public Schools with elementary teachers comprising 8,020 positions and secondary teacher comprising 5,761 positions (State Education Agency, 2005).

For purposes of this study, participants were secondary level grade 9-12 educators in Excellence. Selected administrators provided the survey face-to-face to 130 teachers from Excellence during staff meetings. The Excellence High School Principal was contacted by mail requesting permission to survey teachers in Excellence (Appendix B). Both Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Excellence City Public School's approval were needed prior to full administration of the survey.

#### *Instrumentation*

The rationale for using a quantitative model was in the ability of a survey to measure and investigate attitudes and rate behaviors, (Bartlett et al., 2001). This concept was used by the research to develop a survey instrument to assess confrontational behaviors in parents. Another rationale for a quantitative study was to examine these rates at which teachers experienced challenges from parents and examine the measurement of those rates. A forced choice survey was used to collect descriptive, self-reported data from teachers. This was an exploratory study with limited generalizability. The total sample size was 130. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), at least 97 respondents were needed to obtain sufficient power for statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The search for an existing survey to be used in this study did not yield a satisfactory instrument. Therefore, concepts from the literature review were used to develop the survey for this study (Benfield, 2005; Briggs et al., 2004 and Field, 1999). These studies identified types of bullying behaviors, frequency and the percentage of teachers reporting incidents.

The survey was divided into four parts. Part I of the survey contained only scales with items focusing on types of behaviors and the number of times a bullying incident may be

construed as occurring. It employed a scale to measure the number of incidents teachers perceived as confrontational. Scales are summated in a series of items to which the subject responds (Miller & Salkind, 2002). This part of the survey employed frequency of occurrences (with 5 being the highest equal to 5 or more occurrences) to measure the number of incidents teachers perceived as confrontational. The respondents indicated the frequency with which he or she experienced each type of behavior by circling a number. The purpose of examining these items was to assess the number of times teachers were confronted and in what manner they were confronted.

Part II measured data by having participants respond to the frequency and types of triggers, locations, and results of parent behaviors. The overall purpose of addressing these questions was to assess the of number of times incidents occurred, where the incidents occurred, what situations led to the confrontation, what happened after the parent vented and what adjectives could be used to describe the incident. These items were designed to assess the frequency of each event leading to the confrontational behavior.

Part III employed an open-ended format for the purpose of allowing the participants to describe particular episodes they had experienced. This allowed for a better understanding of the bullying experience. By asking the questions this researcher's intent was to examine common themes as they emerged; data were recorded in narrative form and placed into a scale as part of the data set. This item was designed specifically to find commonalities in the responses given by the teachers.

Part IV measured varying effects demographics may have in bullying behaviors in regard to gender, ethnicity, age, teaching level, and number of years of teaching experience. In addition to examining these items, the frequency at which they occurred was assessed.

#### *Field-Testing the Survey*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace: i.e., the school. A group of 40 educators was requested to participate in the field test (see Table 3). This specific group of educators consisted of former classroom teachers who were likely to have experiences similar to the sample with parents as the intended population. Feedback was requested of educators regarding the overall presentation of the survey. Changes, additions and deletions were made to the survey based on the field test.

Table 3

*Demographics of Field Testing*

Demographic	Total		Percentage
Gender	36		
Male	12	12	34.2
Female	24	24	63.2
Age			
21-30	3	3	8.3
31-40	13	13	36.1
41-50	13	13	36.1
51-60	6	6	16.7
Ethnicity			
Black	13	13	36.1
White	23	23	63.9
Asian	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	0
Other	1	1	2.8
Level			
Elementary	7	7	19.4
Middle	9	9	25.0
High	9	9	25.0
Alternative	9	9	25.0
Years of Experience			
0-3 years	1	1	2.8
4-7 years	4	4	11.1
8-11 years	6	6	16.7
12 or more years	25	25	69.4

Field testing is important in establishing the content validity of an instrument and to improve questions, format, and scales (Creswell, 2003). The findings from the field tested survey were used to refine and make changes to the survey. The purpose was to clarify and present materials easily. By making improvements to the format and scale, other aspects of the field test included bringing clarity to the directions and the questions. Participants were asked to add, change or delete questions as needed. The presentation and overall format of the survey, the ease of response in answering the questions, the existence of possible bullying behaviors by parents, and length of time required to complete the survey was examined by the educators Locke et al.,(2000). Whether it is to demonstrate the reliability of scores produced by the proposed instrumentation, practicality of procedures, availability of volunteers, variability of observed

events as a basis for power tests, subjects' capabilities, or investigators skills, a pilot study is the best possible basis for making wise decisions in designing research (Babbie, 1997).

Exploratory questions in the field study were used to determine the bases for the study, grounded in the research by exposing the gap, and need for the study (Martin, 2006). The survey was used with the participants to measure the frequency and type of bullying behaviors. Survey methodology was selected for data collection because it could be used to systematically obtain and explore substantial information from a population (Babbie, 1997). An exploratory analysis was conducted prior to conducting the study. A summary of responses from the field study was recorded and adjustments were made as indicated from the survey (Appendix H). The purpose of field-testing the survey was to bring clarity to the instrument by eliminating words and phrases that were not clear to the reader. It was difficult to imagine any proposal that could not be improved upon by the reporting of actual preliminary work of a pilot study (Locke et al., 2000). The field tested survey allowed for working out any deficiencies in the survey instrument.

#### Data Collection

The principal of Excellence High School announced to the teaching staff the upcoming distribution of the survey. Participants also received a flyer (pre-notice) notifying them of the survey (see Appendix I). Dillman (1978) asserted the pre-notice was important since an introduction was needed. It also served to alert the participants of the upcoming survey. Therefore, notifying participants a few days prior to the face-to-face administration and arrival of the surveys helped to better prepare teachers to answer the survey. Assurances were made to participants that no identifying information would be used about the respondents and no information was released to anyone outside of the study. Afterward, a two-step administration process took place. (1) A request to the principal of Excellence High School was necessary to obtain permission for the study. Dillman (1978) further states, a face-to-face survey collection yields a high response rate of responses in sampling. This procedure ensured that all teachers had an equal chance of being included in the sample. (2) The next step was to administer the survey to participants after a staff meeting where a large percentage of staff members were likely to attend (see Appendix D).

The survey, a 20-item document, took approximately seven minutes to complete. Dillman (1978) suggested five main advantages of face-to-face surveys:

- high response rate is an indicator of representiveness of the sample;

- provision of structured responses;
- each participant of the population has an equal opportunity of being included in the sample;
- provision of visual presentation of the questions and;
- flexible time constraints for respondents

Babbie (1997) advised researchers to take steps to protect respondent's interests, well-being, and concerns for the protection of their identity. Anonymity was used to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

In April, 2007, the Virginia Tech Initial Review Application was completed and filed with the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (VIRB) for research involving human subjects (see Appendix M). In addition to filing for permission with Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB), permission (see Appendix N) was sought from Excellence City Public Schools. Approval was granted by VIRB on May 8, 2007 and approval was granted by Excellence City High Schools on May 3, 2007. Data were collected on May 15, 2007.

#### Data Analysis

For each returned survey, a unique identification number was assigned to the survey response. After collecting data, Microsoft EXCEL was used to tally responses. The tallies of all responses were then exported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0 for Windows. SPSS is one of the most popular statistical packages that can perform highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions (Punch, 1998). Confrontational behaviors and other variables were examined primarily by using the descriptive statistics in SPSS. For purposes of this study, SPSS was used to determine measures of central tendency and variability. Explanations of variables were recorded (Appendix I) with variable names, categories (independent and dependent) of variables, names and levels of measurement of the variables, and the value of the variables.

As indicated in the research, a scale was designed to yield a single numerical score that represented the construct of interest (Trochim, 2005). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, scales were constructed to identify behaviors, locations, triggers, resolutions and subtle and overt behaviors exhibited by parents toward teachers. The review of the survey instrument point out the survey was comprised of seven scales and one open-ended question. The first part of the

survey was comprised of one scale used to gather information based on the type of behavior. Respondents marked items (0-5) with 5 being the highest value indicating the number of times bullying incidents occurred with a school year. The second part of the survey was comprised of four scales used to gather information on the locations, situations leading to triggers, and results of the bullying incident and adjectives which described behaviors. Respondents were asked to check all of the behaviors that applied to their experience(s). The third part of the survey was comprised of one open-ended response item addressing a situational occurrence. The participants were asked to report about an episode they experienced with a parent. The fourth and last part of the survey was comprised of five items and used to gather demographic information such as gender, ethnicity, age, grade level taught, and number of years of teaching experience.

Descriptive statistics were reported on all variables in the survey. Further, Cronbach's alpha test for reliability was used to assess internal consistency for Part I of the survey. A Cronbach's alpha was determined for measure underlying constructs in Part I of the survey to measure underlying constructs.

Additionally, frequencies were reported for Parts II, Par III (Question 15), and Part IV. The frequency distribution was used to determine mode for each type of behaviors, locations, behaviors (adjectives), triggers, and results of parent behaviors. Additionally, a frequency distribution was used to represent whether teachers considered leaving the teaching profession and presenting demographic data. The demographic data provided measurements from nominal level data. It was asserted that listing all response categories and then adding up the number of cases that fell into each category created a frequency distribution table (Singleton et al., 1993).

#### *One-Way Analysis of Variance*

After the frequency distribution was calculated, a One -Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted on Part I of the survey. ANOVA was used in the survey instrument to examine comparisons of variables on types of behaviors, locations of bullying incidences, situations that caused bullying, what happened after the parent vented, and consideration given to leaving the profession by age. The purpose of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was to determine whether any significant difference existed between more than two group means. Each survey item was calculated separately. Further, Babbie, (1997) asserted that the variance of the distribution was a measurement of the extent to which the behaviors in a set of values are clustered close to the mean or vary very high or low from it. The ANOVA consisted of obtaining

independent estimates from population subgroups. The ANOVA provided data on the statistical significance of the relationship by examining the ratio among and between variances as reported by the F ratio (Trochim, 2005).

Chi Square was used on Part I (Type of Behavior), Part II (Locations, Behaviors, Triggers, and Results of Parent Behaviors), and Part IV (Demographics). To report a significant relationship the percentage of expected cell counts should not be higher than 20% or less than five per cell (SPSS, 2005). The purpose for running the Chi Square (Urdan, 2005) is a statistic used to compare observed and expected frequencies in sample data. Therefore, the Chi Square test was conducted to determine whether the type of behaviors, locations, behaviors, triggers, and results of parent behaviors were influenced by demographics more than would have been by chance.

### Summary

This study was designed to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace: i.e., the school. Found in the latter pages of Chapter Two was the hypotheses of this study. This chapter contains a description of the participants, instrumentation, field testing, data collection, and data analysis. Five research questions were posed in this quantitative, descriptive, and exploratory study. Statistical analyses were conducted to determine measures of central of tendencies and variability. In addition, a One-Way ANOVA was used to determine group differences through statistical calculations. Also, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the constructed scale. Further, Chi Square tests were used to measure the significance of differences between observed and expected differences. By using a survey questionnaire instrument, teacher responses were collected and the data were analyzed. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The results provided insight into the bullying experience, challenges for physical education and sports personnel, workplace aggression, and teacher victimization. Educators can better examine the need for civility policies. Results from this study can be used as a tool by policy makers in decision making. School board members, principals, counselors, teachers and support staff can evaluate school safety and, hopefully, improve the level of communication between parents and teachers.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the information from the analyses of data collected. The data collected were from a study investigating bullying behaviors by parents toward teachers (at school). The sections of this chapter include: (a) a description of the population (b) analyses and findings presented by research questions, and (c) a summary of statistical procedures.

#### *Description of the Population*

Excellence City High School, located in a Mid-Atlantic state, granted permission to conduct survey research. The principal received flyers for the teachers, which announced the upcoming survey (Dillman, 1976). In a face-to-face survey administration, 130 surveys were distributed to teachers at Excellence City High School. Teachers separated themselves among various tables. At the end of the face-to-face administration, the researcher collected 117 surveys. The data were entered into Microsoft EXCEL.

Table 4 revealed during the previous school year that more Whites than other ethnicity subgroups participated in the survey administration. Of the ethnicities reporting, frequencies reflected the sample was not significantly diverse. Of those surveyed, 36 (30.7%) were males and 81 (69.2%) were females.

The ages of the teachers ranged from 23-66 years. Teachers initially received notice by flyer on April 24, 2007, which the principal approved. On the day of the survey administration, May 15, 2007, five teachers were out on medical, military or maternity leave; seven teachers left school early or during the staff meeting; and one teacher was engaged in a conference with a parent and did not participate. Out of the intended sample, 117 (90%) out of 130 surveys were collected.

Table 4

*Ethnicity Subgroups of Teachers during the 2005-2006 School Year*

Ethnicity	<i>f</i>	Percentages
Whites	101	86.3
Blacks	6	5.1
Hispanic	4	3.4
Asians	3	2.5
Mixed	2	1.7
Pacific Islander	1	.9
Total	117	

## Analyses and Results

The survey instrument consisted of 20 questions presented in four parts. Part I was a frequency scale (0-5) measuring nine types of behaviors. Respondents circled the number of times they experienced each kind of behavior in the 2005-2006 school year. This provided the opportunity to measure the number of incidents respondents experienced confrontational behaviors from parents. In Part II, respondents provided Yes/No responses to locations where abuse occurred, types of triggers experienced, what happened after the parent vented, and adjectives used to describe behaviors. Part III allowed respondents to share an experience encountered through parent bullying and to indicate whether they considered leaving the teaching profession after a parent bullying episode. Part IV provided for the demographic information of the teachers.

## A Summary of the Statistical Procedures

The Cronbach's Alpha test to establish reliability was used to assess internal consistencies. This test established reliability for survey questions one (1) through nine (9) of Part I on the survey. The test served as an unbiased estimator of reliability for each variable found in Part I of the survey. Table 5 reported a Cronbach's Alpha score of .874 in the survey. This particular test was used to indicate the extent to which the set of questions measured

variables listed in Part I of the survey instrument as verbal abuse, verbally threatened, name-calling, ridiculed in front of students, ridiculed in front of other adults, publicly challenged, physically intimidated, physically assaulted, and property vandalism. The Cronbach's Alpha test scores generally increased when the correlation between the numbers of items increased. A reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most Social Science Research (Trochim, 2005), therefore, with a coefficient of .874, one can say the reliability is significantly reliable.

Table 5

*Results of Cronbach's Alpha Test for Reliability*

Variable	Scale Mean	Cronbach's Alpha Score
Verbal Abuse	3.15	.853
Verbal Threats	3.78	.844
Name calling	3.77	.844
Ridicule with Students	4.01	.861
Ridicule with Adults	3.77	.843
Publically Challenged	3.66	.860
Physically Challenged	4.14	.864
Physical Assault	4.26	.875
Property Vandalism	4.21	.889
<i>n</i> =9	Cronbach's Alpha	.874

## Research Questions

**Question 1: What types of parent bullying behaviors at school do teachers experience? In what form and how often?** Table 6 indicated the type of parent bullying behaviors teachers experienced. Teachers responded they had encountered aggressive confrontational behaviors from parents. The purpose for these questions was to access what percentage of teachers had experienced confrontational behaviors by parents, in what form and

how often. During the previous school year, 49.5% of the respondents indicated they had experienced bullying by a parent. Part I was numbered one (1) through nine (9) on the survey instrument (see Appendix D). Further, Table 6 lists the data and results of those descriptive statistics reported during the previous school year. There were 13 respondents (11.1%) who indicated they had experienced verbal abuse by a parent in three episodes. Five respondents (4.3%) indicated episodes of verbal abuse by a parent four times in the school year. Five respondents (4.3%) indicated episodes of verbal abuse by a parent five or more times. A total of sixty-seven respondents (57.2%) were victims of verbal abuse from parents. This level of abuse by parents, directed toward teachers, inflicted the use of profanity, obscenity, and swearing when communicating anger to the teacher.

Eight respondents (6.8%) indicated they experienced one incident of verbally threatening behaviors from a parent. Five respondents (4.2%) indicated they experienced verbally threatening behaviors from a parent in two episodes. Four respondents (3.4%) indicated they experienced verbally threatening behaviors from a parent in three episodes. Four respondents (3.4%) indicated they experienced verbally threatening behaviors from a parent in four episodes. Four respondents (3.4%) indicated they experienced verbally threatening behaviors from a parent five or more times. This level of abuse addressed parents who terrorized teachers by scaring, browbeating, bullying, terrorizing, or bulldozing the victim.

Thirteen respondents (11.1%) indicated they had experienced name calling once by a parent. Five respondents (4.2%) indicated they had experienced name calling two times by a parent. Four respondents (3.4%) indicated they had been the victim of name calling by a parent three times. This level of belittling behavior addressed parents who call teachers names, insulted teachers, defied teachers by using adjectives with negative connotations to describe teachers and/or any name other than the teacher's sir name when communicating with the teacher.

Table 6

*Types of Parent-Bullying Behaviors*

	Frequency Percentages	0 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5+ %
Types of Behaviors							
Verbal Abuse	50	32	12	13	5	5	
	42.7	27	10.2	11.1	4.3	4.3	
Verbally Threatened	92	8	5	4	4	4	
	78.6	6.8	4.2	3.4	3.4	3.4	
Name Calling	88	13	5	4	3	4	
	75.2	11.1	4.2	3.4	2.5	3.4	
Ridiculed in Front of Students	96	12	3	4	1	1	
	82.0	10.2	2.5	3.4	.9	.9	
Ridiculed in Front of Adults	90	9	6	6	2	4	
	76.9	7.6	5.1	5.1	1.7	3.4	
Publicly Challenged	80	14	10	0	1	3	
	68.3	11.9	8.5	7.6	.9	2.5	
Physically Intimidated	106	5	1	1	0	0	
	90.5	4.2	2.5	1.7	.9	0.0	
Physically Assaulted	112	3	1	1	0	0	
	95.7	2.5	.9	.9	0.0	0.0	
Your Property Target of Vandalism	109	5	1	1	1	0	
	93.1	4.2	.9	.9	.9	0.0	

*n*=117

The next category, ridiculed in front of students, revealed 96 respondents (82.0%) who indicated they experienced no incident of ridicule in front of students. This level of defiance

addressed distressed parents, who confronted teachers in the presence of students on the school campus or in public venues. These results may indicate that this is not a concern for the teachers at this time.

Nine respondents (7.6%) indicated they had experienced one incident of ridicule in front of other adults by a parent. Six respondents (5.1%) indicated episodes of ridicule in front of other adults by a parent two times. Six respondents (5.1%) indicated episodes of ridicule in front of other adults by a parent three times. This level of degradation addressed parents who embarrassed teachers in the presence of other parents, school staff, and those who provided services to the school or at sports activities where an audience may likely view episodes.

Fourteen respondents (11.9%) indicated that a parent had publicly challenged them once. Ten respondents (8.5%) indicated that a parent had publicly challenged them twice. Nine respondents (7.6%) indicated that a parent had publicly challenged them three times. Further, 37 respondents (31.6%) indicated parents had challenged teachers publicly. This level of abuse addressed aggressive parents who outwardly made demonstrations of anger toward teachers by being oppositional, using strong arguing tactics, making demands, and calling into question teachers out in public venues.

Only five respondents (4.2%) indicated that a parent had publicly intimidated them once. Three respondents (2.5%) indicated that a parent publicly intimidated them twice. This level of demonstrated revolt addressed upset parents who resisted teachers by using stand over tactics, face-to-face and toe to toe posturing, frightening, balling up fist and demonstrating a scowled look on the face of the parent in view of others.

Three respondents (2.5%) indicated episodes of physical assault by a parent one time. One respondent each (.9%) indicated an incident of physical assault by parent two and three times. No respondents indicated physical assault four or five (or more times). This level of aggressive offense addressed irate parents who physically attacked teachers; engage teachers by striking, hitting, pushing, slapping, using hands on actions, punching, kicking, posturing, and grabbing the teacher.

Under the category, your property a target of vandalism (property vandalism), only five respondents (4.2%) indicated they experienced property vandalism one time each. There were no respondents indicating property vandalism five or more times. This level of destructive attack

addressed confrontational parents who destroyed or spoiled any personal property belonging to the teacher; i.e., any item in the classroom, car, or property of the teacher's family.

Table 7 reported the results between physical assaults and frequencies and percentages of males and females. Eighty-one (69.2%) females responded to this survey item. One respondent (.9%) indicated four episodes of physical assault by confrontational parent(s). On the other hand, 36 (30.7%) males responded to this survey item. Three males (2.5%) indicated one incident of

Table 7

*Physical Assault by Gender of Teachers for the 2005-2006 School Year*

Physical Assault	Male	Female	<i>f</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
0	32	80	112	95.1
1	3	0	3	2.5
3	1	0	1	.9
4	0	1	1	.9
Total	36	81	117	

assault. One male respondent (.9%) indicated three incidents of physical assault. The modal scores of 112 and one indicated more respondents reported no incidents of physical assault and two respondents indicated one incident of frequencies. These results indicate that males were more likely to experience physical assault than females.

Table 8 showed results of a Chi Square test to investigate the relationship between physical assaults by gender (male), during the previous school year, teachers self-reported incidents of confrontational behaviors by parents. The purpose of conducting this test was to determine whether physical assault demonstrated a relationship with gender. A cross tabulation was conducted to calculate the number of males and females who were physically assaulted and the number of episodes they experienced. Consequently, the results of a Chi Square test reports in Table 8 revealed a statistically significant relationship of  $\chi^2 (1, n=36) = .021, p < .05$  for males who were physically assaulted by confrontational parents.

Table 8

*Chi Square Test for Physical Assault by Gender of Teachers*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	9.698	3	.021
<i>p</i> =.05			

Therefore, this researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. A total of four (3.4%) males responded by reporting physical assault with one and three incidents. Also, one female (1.2%) responded by reporting four incidents of physical assault. The purpose of this question was to assess what type of behavior when compared to gender showed parents abusing teachers. Specifically, these results indicated males had been victimized significantly more frequently by a confrontational parent in a physical assault than females.

Table 9 reported three (2.5%) respondents who indicated having experienced confrontation once during the previous school year. Three teachers, with 28 years of experience teaching, reported physical assaults. Next, one respondent (.9%) with 27 years of teaching experience indicated experiencing three episodes of physical assault. Finally, one respondent (.9%), with nine years of teaching experience, indicated having experienced four episodes of physical assault. The frequencies modal score was 28 years with three respondents indicating one incident each. The purpose for this survey question was to assess whether physical assault when compared to the number of years of teaching experience indicate confrontational behaviors toward teachers. These results revealed that teachers with fewer numbers of years of teaching experience were involved in more episodes of physical assault than teachers who had worked a greater number of years. The number of teachers with more numbers of years of teaching experienced less physical assault than those with less experience in the number of years of teaching experience.

Table 9

*Physical Assault by Years Taught of Teachers*

Physical Assault	Years Taught	<i>f</i>	Percentages
0		112	95.1
1	28	3	2.5
3	27	1	.9
4	9	1	.9

*n*=117

Table 10 showed, during the previous school year, the results of a Chi Square test to investigate the relationship between physical assaults and the number of years of teaching experience of self-reported responses of teachers. This test revealed a score of  $\chi^2 (1, n=3) = .016$ ,  $p < .05$ . The p-value indicated statistical significance regarding physical assault influenced by the number of years of teaching experience. Therefore, this researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The purpose of examining these data were to assess whether physical assault and the number of years of teaching experience revealed parent behaviors of confronting teachers.

Table 10

*Chi Square Test for Physical Assault by Years Taught of Teachers*

	Value	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Chi Square	138.531	105	.016
<i>p</i> = .05			

Table 11 showed, during the previous school year, when the teacher's property was vandalized and ethnicity variables were compared, one Asian respondent experienced

Table 11

*Teacher's Property Vandalism by Ethnicity of Teachers*

Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Mixed	Total
Vandalism	2	5	4	1	95	2	109
Percentages	1.7	4.2	3.4	.9	81.1	1.7	
<hr/>							
Incidences 0							
1	0	1	0	0	4	0	5
	0.0	16.6	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	.9	0.0	
3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
5	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	.9	0.0	
Totals	3	6	4	1	101	2	117
Percentages of Incidences	33.3	16.6	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.0	

three episodes (33.3%) of parent confrontation involving property vandalism. Also, the results indicated one Black respondent experienced one incident (16.6%) of property vandalism. Additionally, a total of six White respondents (6.0%) experienced property vandalism. Four of the six (3.9%) White respondents experienced one episode of property vandalism. Further, one White respondent (.9%) experienced two episodes of property vandalism and one White respondent (.9%) experienced five episodes of property vandalism by a parent who was confrontational. In other words, 11 incidents of property vandalism involved six teachers who were White. The results indicated, ethnically, based on the percentages, Asian teachers were more likely to experience being targeted and vandalized than other ethnic subgroups, followed by Blacks and then Whites. Of the eight respondents reporting property vandalism, three (2.5%)

were male and five (4.2%) were female. Females were more likely to be victimized by property vandalism.

Table 12 presented, during the previous school year, the results of a Chi Square test to investigate property vandalism compared to ethnicity of self-reported responses of teachers.

Table 12

*Chi Square Test for Property Vandalism by Ethnicity of Teachers*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	41.256	20	.003
<i>p</i> =.05			

The results revealed a statistically significant relationship. This test revealed a score of  $\chi^2 (1, n=6) = .003, p < .05$ . This indicated a level of statistical significance regarding Whites who experienced property vandalism by confrontational parents. This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. These results indicated that White teachers were more likely to experience property vandalism by a parent who was confrontational toward them. The purpose of examining these data were to assess whether property vandalism when compared to ethnicity showed a demonstrated relationship with parents who confront teachers. These results indicated property vandalism and ethnicity significantly increased for White teachers by parents who were confrontational toward teachers.

Table 13 reported, during the previous school year, two (1.7%) respondents both age 52 experienced one episode of confrontational behaviors by a parent. Three (3.4%) respondents' ages 35, 46, and 51 all experienced one episode of property vandalism. One (.9%) respondent age 51 indicated he/she experienced two episodes of property vandalism by a parent. One respondent (.9%) age 25 indicated experiencing property vandalism three times by a parent. One respondent (.9%) age 23 indicated they experienced property vandalism four times by a confrontational parent. The frequency scores showed ages 51 and 52 as multimodal in measuring property vandalism and age. These results showed property vandalism when compared to age indicated that younger teachers are more likely victimized at higher rates.

Table 13

*Property Vandalism by Age of Teachers*

Vandalism	Age	<i>f</i>	Percentages	Total Incidences
0		109	93.1	0
1	52	2	1.7	2
1	51	1	.9	1
1	46	1	.9	1
1	35	1	.9	1
2	51	1	.9	2
3	25	1	.9	3
4	23	1	.9	4
Total		117		

Table 14 indicated during the previous school year, the results of a Chi Square Test to investigate the relationship between the variable property vandalism and age. When compared, property vandalism and age measured a statistically significant relationship of self-reported responses by teachers. A Chi Square test revealed results of  $\chi^2 (1, n=6) = .001, p < .005$ . This indicated a level of statistical significance regarding property vandalism and age of the teacher. This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The purpose of examining these data were to assess whether property vandalism and age showed parents confronting and abusing teachers. Teachers were more likely to experience an increased rate in the number of episodes of bullying through property vandalism more frequently by teachers with fewer numbers of years of experience.

Table 14

*Chi Square Test for Property Vandalism by Age of Teachers*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	250.609	152	.001
<i>p</i> =.05			

Table 15 showed during the previous school year, eight (6.8%) the respondents experienced property vandalism when compared to the number of years of teaching experience. Specifically, five (4.2%) of the eight respondents (with seven, 10, 14, 28, and 30 years of teaching experience) reported one episode of property vandalism by a parent who victimized the teacher. These results indicated as the number of years of teaching experience increased, the respondents were more likely to experience an incident of vandalism directed toward a teacher by a parent. Next, one respondent (.9%) with 27 years of teaching experience, reported two episodes of property vandalism. Another respondent (.9%), with 22 years of teaching experience was victimized in three episodes of property vandalism. Finally, one respondent (.9%) with 21 years of teaching experience was involved in four incidents of property vandalism. These findings suggested that as a teachers experience increased, the more likely teachers would encounter at least one episode of victimization. It also showed that younger teachers experienced higher incidents of property vandalism.

Table 15

*Property Vandalism by Years Taught of Teachers*

Vandalism Incidences	Years Taught	<i>f</i>	Percentages
0		109	93.1
1	7	1	.9
1	10	1	.9
1	14	1	.9
1	28	1	.9
1	30	1	.9
2	27	1	.9
3	22	1	.9
4	21	1	.9

*n*=117

Table 16 reported, during the previous school year, the results of a Chi Square test to investigate the relationship between property vandalism and the number of years of teaching experience in self-reported responses of teachers. The analyses examined the comparisons may have had on bullying behaviors. The results of a Chi Square Test revealed  $\chi^2 (1, n=8) = .001$ ,  $p < .005$  which showed a statistically significant relationship between these variables. This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. As teacher work experience increased, the more likely teachers experienced an incident of property vandalism. In addition, as teacher's episodes were on the rise, the more likely teachers would experience increased rates of vandalism for teachers with fewer years of teaching experience.

Table 16

Chi Square Test for Property Vandalism by Years Taught of Teachers

	Value	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Chi Square	225.728	140	.001
<i>p</i> =.05			

These findings indicated a relationship between property vandalism and the number of years of teaching experience by confrontational parents. The purpose of examining these data were to assess whether property vandalism and the number of years of teaching experience were significant in bullying teachers.

Table 17 represented the description of the location where a parent was likely to confront a teacher, during the previous school year. First, 29 respondents (24.7%) reported the Internet when compared to the gender (female) of teachers as a location where parents violated. Secondly, 20 respondents (17.0%) indicated victimization in the classroom by a parent. Thirdly, the school office was reported by 17 (14.5%) respondents as another likely location where a teacher might be victimized. Finally, the hallway as indicated by 15 respondents (12.8%) as the next likely place where a teacher might be victimized by a confrontational parent. The modal score reported was Internet use ( $n=29$ ).

Table 17

*Where Incidences Occurred During the 2005-2006 School Year*

Location at School	Males	Females	<i>f</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Classroom	6	14	20	17.0
Hallway	4	11	15	12.8
Parking lot	4	5	9	7.6
Cafeteria	4	2	6	5.1
Internet	4	25	29	24.7
Gym	3	0	3	2.5
Sports Activity	3	2	5	4.2
School Office	4	13	17	14.5
Other	7	6	13	11.1
<i>n=117</i>				

Table 18 showed the use of the Internet as a location when compared to the gender of teacher (female) confronted by parents, during the previous school year. Four (3.4%) male teachers indicated victimization one time each by a parent(s). Twenty-five female teachers (21.3%) responded parents confronted them through the use of the Internet. The data reported females were victimized more on the Internet than males.

Table 18

*Internet as Location by Gender of Teachers*

Internet Incidences	Male	Percentages	Females	Percentages
0	32	27.3	56	47.8
1	4	3.4	25	21.3
Total	36		81	

*p*= .05

Table 19 revealed that respondents indicated the use of the Internet was a location for episodes of victimization. The analyses showed a Chi Square score of  $\chi^2(1, n=25) = .022, p < .05$  which revealed a statistically significant relationship between Internet and gender (female).

Table 19

*Chi Square Test for Internet as Location by Gender of Teachers*

Internet Incidences	Gender	Value	df	Sig.
0				
1	Female	5.216	1	.022

$p = .05$

This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The purpose of asking this question on the survey was to assess whether gender and location, specifically, the Internet as a location revealed a statistically significant relationship when compared.

Table 20 showed the results of an ANOVA analyses conducted to assess statistical significance of whether the Internet when compared to gender was viewed as a location for abuse, during the previous school year. Females were more likely to be confronted on the Internet than males. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed a score of  $F(1, 115) = 5.366, p < .022$  which was statistically significant at the .05 level. The Internet is an isolated location where parents are free to communicate through bullying, intimidation and threatening teachers in an unrestricted, open venue.

Table 20

*ANOVA Test for Internet by Gender of Teachers*

Internet	Sum of Sq	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.972	1	.972	5.366	.022
Within Groups	20.840	115	.048		
Total	21.812	116			

$p = .05$

Table 21 reported the gym as another location where parents are likely to confront teachers. The data revealed that as teacher's ages increased, respectively, 32, 36, and 64 years of age, they all experienced one incident each of abuse when the gym was the location of the incident. As teacher's ages increased, victimization continued.

Table 21

*Gym as Location by Age of Teachers*

Gym Incidences	Age	<i>f</i>	Percentages
0		114	97.4
1	32	1	.9
1	36	1	.9
1	64	1	.9
<i>n</i> =117			

Table 22 reported three (2.5%) respondents' ages 32, 36, and 64 revealed they experienced a confrontational parent in the gym. A Chi Square test was used to investigate the relationship between the gym and age of self-reported responses of teachers, during the previous school year. The results of a Chi Square test revealed  $\chi^2(1, n=3) = .001, p < .05$  a statistically significant relationship between the gym and age. This researcher failed to reject the null

Table 22

## Chi Square Test for Gym as Location by Age of Teachers

Classroom Incidences	Age	Value	<i>df</i>	Sig.
0		96.987	38	.001
1	32			
1	36			
1	64			
<i>p</i> = .05				

hypothesis. The purpose of this question was to assess whether the gym as a location and the age of the teachers was significant in confrontational behaviors of parents. Teachers, ages 32, 36, and 64, reported the experience of victimization by confrontational parents in the gym. The results showed that as ages increased the more likely teachers would continue to experience threatening behaviors toward them by confrontational parents.

Table 23 showed the frequencies and percentages of the gym as a location when compared to the number of years of teaching experience. Data revealed that teachers were bullied in three incidents by parent demonstrations of confrontational behaviors toward teachers. Each of the three teachers (2.5%) reported one incident each of victimization by parents with eight, nine, and 31 years of teaching experience.

Table 23

## Gym as Location by Years Taught of Teacher

Gym Incidences	Years Taught	<i>f</i>	Percentages
0		114	97.4
1	8	1	.9
1	9	1	.9
1	31	1	.9
<i>n</i> =117			

These findings indicated that as the teacher's number of years of teaching experience increased, confrontation continued. Greater numbers of years of teaching experience had no influence over parents' decision when victimization was considered.

Table 24 represented results of a Chi Square test to investigate the relationship between the gym as a location and the number of years of teaching experience through self-reported teacher responses to confrontational behaviors by parents, during the previous school year. The analyses reveal  $\chi^2(1, n=3) = .045, p < .05$  statistical significance. This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The results suggested that as the number of years of teaching experience increased, the incident rate continued to increase in the gym. The purpose of this question was to assess whether the gym, when compared to the number of years of teaching experience, was a trigger

for parents who confront teachers. When the gym was compared to the teacher's experience, as the number of years of teaching experience increased, teachers were more likely to continue to suffer episodes of abuse from parents.

Table 24

Chi Square Test for Gym as Location by Years Taught of Teachers

Gym Incidences	Age	Value	<i>df</i>	Sig.
0		50.289	35	.045
1	32			
1	36			
1	64			

$p = .05$

**Question 2: What consideration has been given to leaving the teaching profession after a parent-bullying episode?** Table 25 reported, during the previous school year, in a One-Way ANOVA test, results conducted on all demographic items (except on the Open Ended Response item) to examine whether respondents considered leaving the profession after a parent bullying episode. The ANOVA analyses showed there were no statistically significant findings  $F = (1, 115) = 20.222$ ,  $p < 1.00$  between differences by gender, age, ethnicity, grade level and years taught when compared to teachers who had considered leaving the profession after a

Table 25

One Way ANOVA and Leaving the Profession by Gender of Teachers

Leaving Profession	Sums of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>f</i>	Sig.
Within Groups	20.222	115	.176		
Total	20.222	116			

$p = .05$

bullying incident. There also no significant differences found when compared with demographic variables. This researcher rejected the null hypothesis. The purpose of conducting this test was to examine whether items in Part IV of the survey, specifically, the demographic data, assessed by revealing a teachers consideration of leaving the teaching profession after a confrontational episode by an angry parent.

**Question 3: What types of parent bullying behaviors are seen as subtle or blatant toward teachers?** Table 26 showed a description of adjectives used to define the behaviors of parents who confronted teachers, during the previous school year. Teachers checked all of the adjectives that expressed how teachers perceived parent confrontation. There were 189 responses to item 13 of the survey. The highest percentages of adjectives teachers used to convey parent bullying behaviors was 31.6% ( $n=37$ ) blatant actions. The modal score revealed blatant ( $n= 37$ ) behaviors. Thirty (25.6%) respondents indicated parents operated out in the open when bullying teachers. These parents demonstrated little or no fear in being seen or heard in a public venue.

Table 26

*Frequency of Adjectives Used to Describe Parent Behaviors*

Adjective for Parent Behaviors	<i>f</i>	Percentages
Subtle	19	16.2
Blatant	37	31.6
Out in the Open	30	25.6
Behind your back	21	17.9
Overt	14	11.9
In Secret	8	6.8
Covert	9	7.6
In your Face	28	23.9
None	9	4

The next likely adjective used to report behaviors of parents was in your face postures. Twenty-eight respondents (23.9%) indicated parents bullied them directly and confrontationally through in your face activity. In your face parent behaviors are viewed as face to face with defiance directed toward a victim.

Overall, results revealed blatant, out in the open and in your face adjectives are terms used by teachers to report how parents defy teachers. Blatant behaviors are loud, clamorous or belligerent acts parents demonstrated in front of their victims, the teachers. Out in the open behaviors occur with an audience without regard given to the victim. In your face behaviors are acts done in the teachers view and face to face.

Table 27 reported, during the previous school year, in your face episodes when compared to ethnicity showed that 22 (18.8%) White teachers experienced disputes with parents who were direct, demonstrating in your face behaviors. The results indicated that four Hispanic (100%) teachers were confronted by parents through victimization. Two Black (33.3%) teachers indicated that parents confronted them through bullying. Also twenty-two (21.7%) White teachers reported in your face behaviors by teachers. These results indicated that Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites were likely to be victimized by a parent through in your face behaviors.

Table 27

*Frequency Rates of In Your Face Behaviors by Ethnicity of Teachers*

Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Mixed
Percentages	%	%	%	%	%	%
Incidences						
0	3	6	4	1	101	2
1	0	2	4	0	22	0
	0.0	33.3	100.0	0.0	21.7	0
<i>n=117</i>						

Also, Hispanics are more likely to be victimized than other ethnicities. The purpose of this question was to find out which specific ethnic subgroup suffered victimization and how teachers

described those episodes by using adjectives to represent encountered behaviors with a confrontational parent.

In Table 28, a Chi Square test was performed to investigate the relationship between in your face behaviors and ethnicity through self-reported teacher responses of confrontational behaviors by angry parents toward teachers. The number of ethnicities shows a relationship between in your face behaviors and ethnicities. The analyses reported in your face episodes with ethnicity subgroups demonstrated a statistically significant relationship. The analyses revealed  $\chi^2(1, n=28) = .010, p < .05$ ; thus, this researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Based on percentages, Hispanic teachers (100.0%) were more likely to experience in your face behaviors by confrontational parents, followed by Blacks (33.3%) and then by Whites (21.7%). The purpose of this question was to assess what triggers the in your face adjective had when

Table 28

*Chi Square Test for In Your Face by Ethnicity of Teachers*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	15.150	5	.010
<i>p = .5</i>			

demographics specifically, the ethnicity variables indicated respondents felt confrontational parents can best be described. The results from in your face behaviors by ethnicity showed a statistically significant relationship.

**Question 4: What triggers initiate the parent-bullying incident?** Table 29 showed a description of situations/triggers which lead to parent confrontation during the previous school year. There were a total of 155 responses reported by teachers who may have selected more than one response from the survey list of triggers provided. Teachers selected scenarios that described what caused parents to become confrontational with teachers. Of the 155 respondents, the largest number of triggers, 31 (26.4%) indicated parents confronted teachers when students had low grades on report the card. The next highest number of responses revealed that 24 (20.5%) respondents indicated student discipline referrals caused parents to react and become upset. This resulted in parent confrontation and the victimization of a teacher. The modal score revealed that when a student has low grades on report card ( $n=31$ ) parents reacted. Teachers viewed low

grades on report cards, student discipline referrals, and low test scores as triggers which caused confrontations directed toward teachers by parents.

Table 29

*Triggers that Initiate Parent Bullying Toward Teachers*

Situations	<i>f</i>	Percentages
You did not respond to email	13	11.1
You failed to call parent	11	9.4
Student discipline referral	24	20.5
Student suspension from school	8	6.8
Student has low test scores	22	18.8
Student removed from sports team	5	4.2
Student has low grades on report card	31	26.4
Student has homework issues	20	17.0
Student loss bus privileges	00	0.0
Student unauthorized cell phone use	5	4.2
Student has low attendance	9	7.6
Student breach of Internet use	3	2.5
Child Abuse referral	1	.9
Other	3	2.5
<i>n</i> =155		

Table 30 revealed, during the previous school year, triggers or situations which may have led to possible reasons why parent confrontations occurred with teachers. The purpose of this survey question was to assess those variables which may trigger responses from confrontational parents when compared to the gender of the teacher. The results showed when students are

removed from a sports teams, had homework issues, and had low attendance rates parents reacted by confronting teachers by both genders.

Table 30

*Triggers Causing Confrontation by Gender of Teacher*

Triggers	Incidences	Male	Female	<i>f</i>	Percentages
Removed from Sports Team	0	31	81	112	95.7
	1	5	0	0	16.1
Homework Issues	0	36	61	97	82.5
	1	0	20	20	32.7
Low Attendance Rates	0	36	72	108	92.3
	1	0	9	9	12.5

*p*= .05

First, five (16.1%) male teachers' experienced one incident of confrontational behaviors by a parent when students are removed from a sports team. This finding is more likely the result of more male teachers who serve dually as teacher and coach of a sports team. No females teachers reported an incident of confrontation by parents concerning removal from a sports team.

Next, the data showed 20 (32.7%) female teachers who experienced one incident of confrontational behaviors by a parent. Confrontational behaviors were directed toward female teachers when parents reacted to homework issues. No male teachers reported an incident of confrontation by parents concerning homework issues.

Finally, the data showed nine (12.5%) female teachers who experienced one incident of confrontational behaviors by an angry parent when low attendance rates were reported to parents. There were no reported incidents of confrontation by a parent concerning low attendance rates from males teachers. It is more likely that female teachers were confronted by parents when academic challenges and concerns were a factor rather than sports related incidents with male

teachers. Since more females participated in the study, more females than males reported incidents; therefore, this finding may be viewed as somewhat skewed.

Table 31 revealed the results of a Chi Square test that was performed to investigate the relationship between triggers and gender of a teacher through self-reported experiences toward teachers, during the previous school year. The analyses reveal triggers that showed a statistically significant relationship in removed from sports team by gender.

First, the report indicated a significance of  $\chi^2(1, n=5) = .001, p < .05$  when removed from a sports team and male gender were compared. The results showed that male teachers were confronted more so than females (although more females participated in the study) when students are removed from sports team. This group of male teachers may have been serving in dual roles as coaches and teacher. This finding may also suggest that more males possibly serve as coaches than females.

Table 31  
Chi Square Test for Triggers by Gender

Triggers	Value	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Removed from Sports Team			
Chi Square	11.752	1	.001
Homework Issues			
Chi Square	10.752	1	.001
Low Attendance rates			
Chi Square	4.333	1	.037
<i>p</i> = .05			

Next, the Chi Square test showed a statistical significance in revealing  $\chi^2(1, n=20) = .001, p < .05$  when students experience homework issues by gender (female) of teachers.

Confrontational behaviors were shown by parents after a student had homework issues directed toward female teachers.

Finally, the data showed nine (7.6%) female teachers who experienced one incident of

confrontational behaviors by a parent when low attendance rates and gender (female teachers) were compared. The Chi-Square test revealed a statistical significance of  $\chi^2 (1, n=9) = .037$ ,  $p < .05$  on low attendance rates by gender (female teacher). The results indicated that female teachers who report low attendance rates are more likely to experience bullying by confrontational parents. All three of these triggers offer insight into reasons more likely to have caused parents to demonstrate inappropriate, negative and abusive behaviors aimed toward teachers.

Table 32 showed the results of an ANOVA analyses conducted to assess statistical significance of removed from a sports team when compared to gender of the teacher. Students who were removed from sports teams were more likely to have been done so by a male teacher. This is more likely since more males tend to coach in sports activities than females. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed a statistically significant score of  $F = (1, 115) = 12.841$ ,  $p < .001$ . The results further indicated that when students are removed from a sports team and when the gender of the teacher is male, parents are more likely to confront teachers.

Table 32

*ANOVA Test for Removed from a Sports Team by Gender of Teachers*

Off Team	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.481	1	.481	12.841	.001
Within Groups	4.306	115	.037		
Total	4.786	116			

Table 33 showed the results of an ANOVA analyses calculated to assess statistical significance when a student has homework issues compared to gender, during the previous school year. Female teachers were more likely to be confronted by parents than males concerning homework issues. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed  $F = (1, 115) = 11.602$ ,  $p = .001$  which was statistically significant.

Table 33

*ANOVA Test for Student has Homework Issues by Gender of Teachers*

Homework Issues	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.519	1	.481	11.602	.001
Within Groups	15.062	115	.037		
Total	16.581	116			

Table 34 showed low grades on report cards of students and age of respondents were compared. Four (3.4%) of the teachers responded having experienced two incidents of confrontational behaviors by a parent. As the ages of the four respondents (3.4%) increased (42, 43, 50, and 51 years of age), the frequency of incidents were measured at two incidents each for these ages. Another aspect of the data were seen at ages 26 and 28, which revealed three

Table 34

*Low Grades on Report Card by Age of Teacher*

Low Grades	Age	f	Percentages
Incidences			
0		99	84.6
1	42	2	1.7
1	43	2	1.7
1	50	2	1.7
1	51	2	1.7
1	26	3	1.7
1	28	3	1.7
1	45	4	1.7
<i>n=117</i>			

incidents each for both ages of the teachers. There were four incidents measured at age 45. The results indicated that as the ages of the respondents increased, the number of incidents increased. The frequency rates revealed two and three incidents are reported as multimodal scores in the frequency of scores.

Table 35 showed the results of a Chi Square test performed to investigate the relationship between low grades on a report card and age of self-reported teachers responses of aggressive confrontational behaviors by angry parents toward teachers. The analyses revealed a demonstrated relationship of  $\chi^2 (1, n=4) = .033, p < .05$ . This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The purpose of this survey question was to assess at what age teachers experience most confrontational behaviors when low grades on a report card are the trigger. The results indicated that older teachers were more likely to be confronted by parents when low grades on a report card and the age of the teacher are compared.

Table 35

*Chi Square Test for Low Grades by Age of Teachers*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	55.527	38	.033
<i>p = .05</i>			

Table 36 showed low test scores, during the previous school year when compared to the number of years of teaching years experience. First, the data showed 12 (10.2%) respondents ranging from the least to the greatest number of years of teaching experience with four, six, seven, nine, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 31, and 33 years of experience encountered one incident of a parent bullying episodes each. The data showed five (4.2%) teachers who taught for five, eight, 20, 22, and 32 years experienced parent confrontation directed toward them by victimization twice each by a parent. There were 17 incidents of parent confrontation experienced by teachers from the previous year. The data suggested that as the number of years of teaching experience increased, the number of incidents increased as well. Teachers were more likely to experience an angry confrontational parent trying to bully them when low test scores and the number of years of teaching experience increased. Teachers with higher numbers of years of teaching experience had a greater chance of victimization when low test scores were a trigger. Teachers with higher

numbers of years of teaching experience were victimized by parents when low test scores was the trigger.

Table 36

*Low Test Scores by Years Taught of Teachers*

Triggers Low Test Scores Incidences	Years Taught	<i>f</i>	Percentages
0		95	81.1
1	4	1	.9
1	6	1	.9
1	7	1	.9
1	9	1	.9
1	12	1	.9
1	16	1	.9
1	17	1	.9
1	18	1	.9
1	19	1	.9
1	25	1	.9
1	31	1	.9
1	33	1	.9
2	5	2	1.7
2	8	2	1.7
2	20	2	1.7
2	22	2	1.7
2	32	2	1.7
Total		117	

First, the data showed 12 (10.2%) respondents ranging from the least to the greatest number of years of teaching experience with four, six, seven, nine, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 31, and 33 years of experience. They encountered one incident of a parent bullying episode. After that, the data showed five (4.2%) teachers who taught for five, eight, 20, 22, and 32 years experienced parent confrontation directed toward them by victimization twice each by a parent.

There were 17 incidents of parent confrontation experienced by teachers from the previous year. The data revealed that as the number of years of teaching experience increased, the number of incidents increased as well. Teachers were more likely to experience an angry confrontational parent trying to bully them when low test scores and the number of years of teaching experience were compared. This showed that teachers had a greater chance of victimization with the increase of teacher's work experience when low test scores were a factor.

Table 37 revealed the results from a Chi Square test to investigate the relationship between low test scores and the number of years of teaching experience of self-reported by teacher responses. The analyses revealed a statistical significance of  $\chi^2 (1, n=8) = .04, p < .05$ . This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. When low test scores were measured by the number of years of teaching experience, parents were more likely to confront teachers. The findings revealed that as the number of years of teaching experience increased, incidents were likely to increase with triggered confrontation.

Table 37

*Chi Square Test for Low Test Scores by Years Taught of Teachers*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	50.286	35	.040
<i>p = .05</i>			

Table 38 showed the results of an ANOVA analyses conducted to assess statistical significance of a student with low attendance rates by gender of the teacher, during the previous school year. Female teachers were more likely than males to be confronted by a parent when low attendance rates were a trigger. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed  $F = (1, 115) = 4.423, p < .038$  which was statistically significant between groups. It is more likely that low attendance rates when compared to females victimized by parent confrontation.

Table 38

ANOVA Test for Student has Low Attendance Rates by Gender of Teachers

Homework Issues	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	.308	1	.308	4.423	.038
Within Groups	8.000	115	.070		
Total	8.308	116			

*p*= .05

Table 39 revealed that when low attendance rates were compared to the number of years of teaching experience, teachers reported victimization. Teachers with seven, nine, 19, 22, 24, 28, 32, and 33 years of teaching experience when compared to low test scores revealed that parents bully teachers. The first seven (rank ordered seven to 32 years of experience) of these responses listed having experienced one incident of parent confrontation by a parent. One teacher (.9%) with 33 years of teaching experience indicated two incidents were experienced when a parent confronted the teacher. The data showed two (1.7%) teachers who taught for 33 years each experienced one incident of being confronted by a parent. The results indicated that as the number of years of teaching experience increased, the rate of the incidents increased as well.

Table 40 revealed results from a Chi Square test to measure a relationship between low attendance rates and the number of years of teaching experience. The results revealed the statistical significance of  $\chi^2(1, n=2) = .03, p < .05$ . This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The purpose of this survey question was to assess how low attendance rates when compared to the number of years of teaching experience measure teacher responses of parents were more likely to confront teachers. The results indicated that when compared to low attendance rates, teachers with increasing numbers of years of teaching experience were victimized.

Table 39

*Low Attendance Rates by Years Taught of Teachers*

Low Attendance Rates Incidences	Years Taught	<i>f</i>	Percentages
0		108	92.3
1	7	1	.9
1	9	1	.9
1	19	1	.9
1	22	1	.9
1	24	1	.9
1	28	1	.9
1	32	1	.9
1	33	2	1.7

*n*=117

Table 40

*Chi Square Test for Low Attendance Rates by Years Taught of Teachers*

	Value	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Chi Square	51.278	35	.037

*p*= .05

**Question 5: Do teachers' experiences of bullying parent vary according to gender, ethnicity, age, grade level and teaching experience?** Table 41 revealed a statistical significance of  $\chi^2 (1, n=8) = .04, p < .05$ . This researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. When low test scores were measured by the number of years of teaching experience, parents were more likely to confront teachers. There were 36 (30.7%) male respondents and 81 (69.2%) female

Table 41  
*Demographic Variables for 2005-2006 School Year*

Variable	<i>f</i>	Percentages
Gender		
Male	36	30.7
Female	81	69.2
Total	117	
Ethnicity		
Asian	3	2.5
Black	6	5.1
Hispanic	4	3.4
Pacific Islander	1	.9
White	101	86.3
Other	2	1.7
Total	117	

respondents. Ethnically, the respondents were not very diverse. There were 101 (86.3%) White teachers participating in the study. The remaining six ethnicities or 16 respondents, (13.6%) were not well represented in the sample population. This result may have skewed the findings. The data showed that gender, ethnicity, age, and years taught revealed statistical significance. Grade level taught did not reveal a statistical significance.

Table 42 represented the description of the ages of the respondents during the 2005-2006 school year when measured by frequency and percentages. First, the data showed the majority of respondents 37 (31.6%) were in the age ranges of 42-51 years old. At Excellence High School, 39 respondents (33.3%) between the age ranges of 52-62 years old and older. Third, there were 23 (19.6%) respondents in the age ranges of 21-31 who made up the third highest ranked age group of the teachers.

Table 42

*Age Ranges of Teachers for the 2005-2006 School Year*

Age Ranges	<i>f</i>	Percentages
21-31	23	19.6
32-41	18	15.3
42-51	37	31.6
52-61	35	29.9
Over 62	4	3.4
Total	117	

Table 43 showed the frequencies and percentages of the number of years of teaching experience of the respondents for the 2005-2006 school year. First, 40 respondents (34.1%) reported the number of years of teaching experience in the range of 1-12 years who reported having experienced abuse by the number of years of teaching experience in the range of 13-22 years. Thirdly, there were 31 (26.4%) respondents who reported the number of years of teaching experience in the range of 23-32 years. parents. Secondly, there were 39 respondents (33.3%) who reported.

Table 43

*Years Taught for Teachers of the 2005-2006 School Year*

Years Taught	<i>f</i>	Percentages
1-12	40	34.1
13-22	39	33.3
23-32	31	26.4
33-42	7	6.0
Total	117	

Table 44 showed the minimum age of teachers during the previous school was reported as 23 years, while the maximum age of teachers was 66 years. The average age for the 117 respondents reporting was 44.9 years and the *SD* was 12.2. The minimum number of years of teaching experience by the teachers was one year, while the maximum number of years of teaching experience was 42 years. The *mean* number of years of teaching experience was 16.0 (*SD*= 10.1).

Table 44

*Age of Teacher by Years Taught of Teacher*

	Minimum	Maximum	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	23	66	44.5	12.2
Years Taught	1	42	16.0	10.1

Grade levels were represented as 75 (64.1%) respondents who taught ninth grade; 71 (60.6%) taught 10<sup>th</sup> grade; 72 (61.5%) taught 11<sup>th</sup> grade; and 67 (57.2%) taught 12<sup>th</sup> grade. There were no statistically significance variables to support a relationship between confrontational parent abuses aimed toward teachers in a specific grade level during the previous school year. The data revealed that teachers taught multiple level classes. The data did not suggest that teachers taught at the elementary school or middle school levels or in another school division. The data did not suggest that teachers experienced confrontation by parents in a specific grade level. While the researcher was able to calculate the frequency of grades taught, percentages were not calculated since teachers taught multiple grades. The data did not suggest that parents responded statistically significantly after venting their frustration after a confrontational episode toward teachers.

*General Summary of Open-Ended Responses*

Item 14, of Part III in the survey, was an open-ended response item with the following question: Describe anything else that would help educators better understand the experience of parent bullying. The data showed 42 (42/117) teachers responding to the open-ended response question. Appendix L contains a complete list of all respondents' comments.

Some key words and phrases used to describe incidences or episodes experienced where a parent tried to bully the teacher were as follows: parent refused, parent blamed teacher, nasty, yelled, parent ranted, parent vented on email, and touching bases. Touching bases was an opportunity for parent and teacher to conference informally in person, by phone, or email, to keep parent informed of student's progress.

Four themes emerged from the open-ended response question suggesting parents confronted and bullied teachers when angered during the previous school year. According to the respondents, parents demonstrated a range of behaviors that suggested (a) parents demonstrated blatant behaviors, (b) parents justified inappropriate student behaviors, (c) parents verbally abused teachers, (e) parents use the Internet to confront teachers, and (d) teachers complimented parents. There were three Black females, one Hispanic male, two Hispanic females, nine White males, 26 White females, and one ethnic group declared as Mixed that responded to the open ended response question.

Adjectives used to help describe how parents confronted teachers were reported as blatant and in-your-face verbal abuse. First, of the forty-two respondents, sixteen respondents reported this experience as how a parent tried to bully them verbally. Teacher descriptions included parent's use of profanity, screaming, yelling, angrily storming out of the room, ranting, name-calling, and verbally challenging teachers through emails and leaving messages.

Secondly, teacher's responded by describing parents who feel a sense of entitlement to whatever asked and whatever should be granted or given to their child or to them upon demand. Four teachers noted, "Parents are quick to accuse teachers for their students' problems". Teachers reported, "Parent implied teachers are incompetent and their child would have fewer problems if the teachers did their job differently". One respondent noted a "Parent tried to get the teacher to change a referral although the child had violated".

In the open-ended response question, the use of electronic Internet (e-mail) was the second highest number of incidents teachers responded to as bullying. Specifically, thirteen respondents commented on how parents used e-mail as another method of attacking teachers. Teachers noted they experienced this especially when teachers did not return their emails to parents in a timely manner. One teacher responded by noting, "Parents feel free to attack teachers via email with little or no consequences to them". The use of language, tone, verbal abuse and number of emails all played a role in how parents cyber-bully. Eleven responded they

felt humiliated by the parent emails. Teachers felt these are just as effective as screaming in your face. One teacher responded, “When e-mails do not work, the parents then resorted to calling teachers late nights”. Thirdly, teachers responded, “Parents justified and advocated for their child, even when the child was wrong”. The respondents cited 11 incidents where parents made excuses for their child. About half of the teachers responded to how parents refused to hold their own child accountable for his/her behaviors, challenges, issues or lack of effort; rather (as noted in the responses) the parent blamed the teacher for the child’s troubles. One respondent described how a parent called the teacher names, adding, the teacher was the source of all of his daughter’s problems. One respondent noted a parent cited their child was indeed spoiled, and further, the parents acknowledged that fact, however, still insisted the teacher give in to the demand.

Lastly, two teachers responded that parents work well with teachers. One respondent noted, “Parents are always polite”, while the other respondent noted, “Parents of immigrant families were respectful.” Both of these responses gave credit to parents who work with teachers.

Finally, a most interesting aspect of the content analyses was what the four emerging themes revealed. The findings showed that parents verbally abused teachers. Further, teachers felt parents are blatant, in-your-face, supportive of their children (even when they are wrong), and gave credit to parents who work with teachers. Overall, the content analyses confirmed and supported the data collected from the quantitative portions of the survey: (a) teachers are verbally abused most often by parents; (b) some actions of the student triggered a reaction from the parent who advocates for their child; and (c) parents demonstrated blatant and in your face confrontational behaviors toward teachers

This chapter discussed a description of the population, analyses and findings presented by research questions, and a summary of statistical procedures. Chapter 5, Conclusion, includes the discussion of findings, implications and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter begins with a summary of this study. The chapter is divided into four parts: (a) a brief summary of the study, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion section to look at the implications of the study, and (d) conclusions drawn from the study with recommendations for future research.

#### Summary of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the level of parent bullying directed toward teachers in their workplace during the 2005-2006 school year. A gap exists in the literature regarding parent confrontation directed toward teachers. This study concentrated on determining: (a) the types of bullying behaviors and the number of times bullying episodes occurred; (b) the location where bullying behaviors occurred; (c) the triggers that initiated a bullying incident; (d) how teachers described a bullying incident; (e) how teachers viewed the experience of being bullied; (f) whether teachers considered leaving the profession after being bullied; (g) and, how the demographic variables of: gender, ethnicity, age, the number of years of teaching experience, and grades taught were influenced by parent bullying. These questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics that included measures to calculate central tendencies, frequency distribution, Chi Square, and Cronbach's Alpha.

#### Summary of the Findings

There were five questions which guided this study: Do Parents Try to Bully Teachers Through Confrontation? A Teacher's Survey form (see Appendix D) was developed and used to gather data on respondents' perception of parent bullying; included were demographic questions to gather data on gender, age, ethnicity, grade level taught, and years of teaching experience (see Table 4). Information obtained from the Teacher's Survey was scored on a six-point Likert type scale and the data were analyzed on SPSS 15.0 to measure frequencies and percentages.

The first part of the survey was formatted in scale form, which had a possible range of 0-45 points and was analyzed by each demographic variable: gender, ethnicity, age, grade level, and the number of years of teaching experience. There were nine questions in Part I of the survey. The possible points assigned to these nine questions were from 0-5. Therefore, a total

score could range from 0 if all of the questions were answered on the low end of the scale and up to 45 points if all nine questions on the survey were answered on the high end of the scale. Teachers were asked to circle the number of times they had experienced each kind of behavior during the previous school year. The type of behaviors teachers were asked to respond to consisted of verbal abuse, verbally threatened, name calling, ridiculed in front of students, ridiculed in front of other adults, publicly challenged, physically intimidated, physically assaulted, and has your property been the target of vandalism. By using Chi Square and One-Way ANOVA statistical significance was determined in calculating and measuring differences within and between subgroups of the sample. Cronbach's Alpha's reliability rating on the survey was .874 (see Table 5). According to Trochim (2005), a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher score is considered good, as pointed out in Chapter 4, the rating for this survey was much higher.

This study produced a number of findings surrounding the teacher's experiences with parent bullying in the workplace. Discussion of these data and speculation on possible explanations for the results are included in this chapter.

#### Question 1

What types of parent bullying behaviors do teachers experience at school? How often do they experience these behaviors? In what form and how often?

#### Finding #1

There were 49.5% of teachers who experienced some form of abuse by a parent in the 2005-2006 school year. The data in Table 6 showed that 58 out of 117 teachers indicated they had received abuse by a parent. This means that approximately half of those surveyed experienced victimization in the workplace as a result of bullying through confrontation by parents during the 2005-2006 school year. The abuse included verbal abuse, verbally threatening teacher, name calling, ridiculed in front of students, ridiculed in front of other adults, publicly challenged, physically intimidated, physically assaulted and has your property been the target of vandalism as shown in Part I of the survey (see Appendix D). Parents communicated their frustrations by displaying confrontation as a result of some trigger which caused an encounter(s) that was face to face directed toward teachers at school. This finding is similar to Benefield's (2005) results.

Benefield's (2005) study confirmed that "consistently, most bullying and harassment reported by teachers was first from students, then by management, and lastly, by parents.

Most bullying is infrequent, however, memorable and intense. There were 42.1% of the teachers who experienced bullying by a parent sometime during the year. This result is congruent with this study's finding.”

(p. 6)

#### Finding #2

The most frequent incidents of abuse were verbal abuse, publicly challenged, and name calling behaviors by parents. Based on the data from 117 respondents, nearly half of the respondents (49.5%) agreed that they had experienced bullying behaviors by a parent. Under type of behavior demonstrated by parents toward teachers, respondents reported verbal abuse (57.2%); verbally threatened (21.3%); name calling (24.6%); ridiculed in front of students (17.9%); ridiculed in front of other adults (23.0%); publicly challenged (31.6%); publicly intimidated (9.4%); physically assaulted (4.2%); and that their property was a target of vandalism (6.8%) identified methods parents use to bully teachers (see Table 6) . These types of behaviors yielded no statistically significant relationship between verbal abuse, verbally threatened, name calling, ridiculed in front of students, ridiculed in front of other adults, publicly challenged, and physically intimidated when measured with the demographic variables: gender, ethnicity, age, the number of years of teaching experience, and grade level taught.

Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins' (2004) study stated to the contrary, that “the majority of respondents (91%) had experienced intimidating behavior in the course of their jobs.

Many (72%) had experienced verbal abuse and threats by forceful and unwanted behaviors, and ongoing harassment (41%). A smaller group of respondents (24%) had experienced physical assault after trying to resolve differences” (p. 3).

#### Finding #3

Male teachers' based on the number of years of teaching experience are more likely to be physically assaulted. A statistically significant relationship was found in physical assault by gender (males), a Chi Square test revealed a statistically significant relationship ( $p=.021$  (see Table 8). Physical assaults by the number of years of teaching experience (9, 27, and 28 years) showed a statistically significant relationship in the data resulting in  $p=.016$  (see Table 10) from a Chi Square test. The results also showed that incidents rates were increased with younger teachers. Data showed that physical assaults by White teachers were a reoccurring event when parents confronted teachers. Therefore, it is suggested that older, more experienced, White male

teachers, even those who serve in dual roles as coaches, are also more likely to feel the brunt of drastic victimization from parents who are hostile and confrontational toward teachers. Changes within our society may be a contributing factor as to how parents view those in authoritative roles, like teachers. Within job markets and in the economy, the workforce (made up of parents) may feel devalued, disempowered or nonessential by situations they have little or no control over. Those who fall into these categories as parents come to school upset by some trigger; they react and may feel that a situation affecting their child is an area they do have some control over. It appears that parents confront teachers when triggered by some incident related to a student's behavior. There were twice as many females who responded as males in the study. Only one female reported physical assault occurring in four incidences of abuse by a confrontational parent (see Table 7).

This finding concurs with Benefield's (2005); Briggs, Broadhurst, & Hawkins' (2004); and Jaksec's (2006) studies which reported:

eleven percent of teachers surveyed, males have been physically abused on one or more occasions more than women. Further, more female teachers reported bullying from all sources than males, and female teachers can expect to experience more bullying than males, at least an average of 94 incidents within a year, as compared with 81 incidents from male teachers. This pattern remained consistent when looking at bullying from management, other staff and parents. However, male teachers reported a slightly higher average incident rate of bullying from students than women teachers (48.6% over 47.8% for women). Women teachers also reported more bullying at most frequency levels from weekly to yearly incidences." (p. 10-11) However, constant bullying (at least once or twice a day) was reported slightly more often by male teachers (12.7% over 11.5%).

"Males were statistically more likely than females to have experienced physical assault by angry, out of control parents. (p. 3)

#### Finding #4

White teachers, with increasing ages, and the number of years (more or less) of teaching experience were more likely to experience at least one episode of property vandalism, based on percentages (in Table 11), Asians (33.3%) are more likely to have experienced property vandalism more than other ethnic subgroups. This was followed by Blacks (16.6%) and by Whites (6%). There were a total of eight incidents. Of this group, regarding gender, there were

three (8.3%) of males and five (6.1%) of females confronted. Additionally, a statistically significant relationship regarding property vandalism by ethnicity revealed  $p = .003$  (see Table 12). When property vandalism, during the previous school year, was measured by age, there was a statistically significant ( $p = .01$ ) relationship in age (see Table 14). On the other hand, (see Table 13) the results indicated that teachers were more likely to experience greater numbers of incidents when the number of years of experience was on the rise regarding victimization through parent confrontation. When property vandalism and the number of years of teaching experience were measured, there was a  $p = .001$  statistically significant relationship (see Table 16). These findings suggest that as the number of years of teaching experience increased, the more likely teachers would encounter victimization as teacher work experience increased, the more likely teachers experienced an incident of property vandalism. In addition, it also showed that as the number of property vandalism rates rose teachers were younger. Upon entering the teaching profession, most teachers gave little or no thought to job hazards like vandalism.

Briggs, Broadhurst, & Hawkins' (2004) study pointed out that "nothing in teachers' training had prepared them for exposure to threats, vandalism, and violence in the workplace. Teachers suffer by having their classrooms trashed, cars keyed, and other property and family members' property damaged." (p. 3)

#### Finding #5

The Internet, classroom, and school office were the most frequent locations where abuse took place. The main location (see Table 17) where parents bully teachers was on the Internet (24.7%). Teachers revealed the classroom (17.0) was another location (see Table 18) where parent bullying occurred. The school office (14.5%) was another likely place where a teacher was bullied (see Table 17). The occurrence of confrontational behaviors also appears to take place in the gym. The results showed a statistical significance of  $p = .045$  (see Table 21 and Table 24). The gym was a venue for publicly challenging male teachers by a parent in full view of students, educators, other parents and administrators. Male teachers were likely to be confronted by a parent in the gym. The gym and Internet are both open areas, have public access and not heavily monitored. Many people can view incidents of public displays of anger and confrontation in these locations.

### Finding #6

Females were more likely to be confronted on the Internet and in the classroom by parents. The use of Internet as a location has turned into an instrument of use for fighting and revenge by parents. Teachers showed on both quantitative and qualitative measurements that teachers are confronted on the Internet because of some trigger that angered a parent. Parents use the Internet to voice their views without being inhibited. Female teachers experienced episodes where a parent confronted the teacher in the classroom (see Table 17). A Chi Square test and an ANOVA test revealed the Internet as a location where female teachers were most likely to have experienced being confronted by a parent  $p=.022$  both test showed statistical significance (see Table 21 and Table 22). Teachers were confronted in the gym when compared to age of the teacher with a statistical significance of  $p= .001$ .

Briggs, Broadhurst and Hawkins' (2004) study confirmed that "many respondents provided details about events and behaviors that took place in their work environment. Incidents also occurred in shopping centers, on the way to and from work, in teacher's homes and neighborhood and at the school of their children. Some teachers contended that they were stalked by parents, and others experienced with property damage." (p. 4)

### Question 2

What consideration has been given to leaving the teaching profession after a parent bullying episode?

### Finding #7

Teachers gave no consideration to leaving the teaching profession as a result of confrontational episodes. There were no statistically significant differences measured in (see Table 25) giving consideration to leaving the teaching profession after a parent bullying episode when measured with demographics: gender, ethnicity, age, grade level taught and years of teaching experience. Although this study did not find a relationship in giving consideration to leaving the teaching profession ( $p=1.00$ ) after a parent bullying episode, it should be noted that 26 (22.2%) teachers indicated they had considered leaving the profession after a bullying incident. This suggests the level of intensity suffered by teachers because of victimization does influence the desire of teachers to continue in their chosen profession. It is likely a teacher's commitment level to the profession may be strong and not impaired by an incident with a confrontational parent.

Briggs, Broadhurst and Hawkins' (2004) study is consistent with findings reported: "teachers reported more frequently, than other professionals, they regularly felt emotionally and physically exhausted or "burnt out' after intimidation, threats, assault, and other acts of violence are aimed toward them by parents and caregivers. Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents reported experiencing feelings of burnout at school. Burnout can lead to psychosomatic complaints, depression, long-term stress effects, absenteeism, and job turnover. The cost to economy systems is great." (p. 2)

### Question 3

What types of parent bullying behaviors are seen as subtle or blatant toward teachers?

#### Finding #8

Teachers described parent confrontational behaviors as blatant, out in the open, and in your face. Based on percentages, Hispanics are more likely to be confronted by parents (100%), Blacks were confronted (33.3%), and Whites were confronted (21.7%) by parents. Measured by frequencies and percentages, the highest percentages of adjectives described by teachers were blatant behaviors, which yielded 37 (31.6%) respondents who identified bullying as blatant. Out in the open (25.6%) behaviors were the second highest identified form of bullying and in your face behaviors (23.9%) were the third highest (see Table 27) rated abuse. Teachers indicated in your face episodes by ethnicity on a Chi Square test showed statistical significance at  $p=.010$  (see Table 28). There were a total of 28 incidents. Of this group, there were eight (22.2%) males and 20 (24.6%) females confronted.

Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins' (2004) study validated "constant face-to-face contact with clients as a major work stressor in professional burnout."

### Question 4

What triggers initiate the parent bullying incident?

#### Finding #9

Triggers that initiate a parent bullying incident most frequently are low grades on a report card, student discipline referral, and low test scores. Teachers reported the highest frequencies and percentages for low grades on a report card (26.4%), student discipline referrals (20.5%), and low test scores (18.8%). All of these trigger parent bullying incidents with teachers (see Table 29).

Parents are often pleasant at school and in school activities, however, about

one-fourth of the interactions of parents with teachers are caused by some stimulus involving a child who ignites turbulent encounters which can be hostile and disgruntled (Jaksec, 2005).

#### Finding #10

Male teachers are more likely to be abused by a confrontational parent when a student is removed from a sports team. Chi Square results indicated a statistical significance of  $p = .001$  (see Table 31) for incidences where a student had been removed from a sports team by a male teacher. ANOVA findings revealed a  $p = .001$  statistical significance (see Table 32) for a student being removed from a sports team. This finding is neither similar nor different from previous studies since there is a gap in the literature.

One factor that may have influenced this finding is that more females participated in this study. In future studies, where more females participate, the results may more than likely show males rather than females again are being confronted by parents when a student is removed from a sports team, especially since more males tend to coach sports teams.

#### Finding #11

Female teachers are more likely to be confronted by a parent when homework issues challenge a student and low attendance rates are reported to parents. Statistically significant relationships were revealed (see Table 31 and Table 32) between students who had homework issues by gender  $p = .001$  (with female teachers) when measured by an ANOVA test. A Chi Square test revealed a statistically significant difference of  $p = .037$  between relationships with low attendance rates by female (see Table 31) teachers. An ANOVA compared differences among and between variables students who had low attendance rate and gender, results revealed  $p = .038$  (see Table 38); student has low grades on report card and age,  $p = .033$ , (see Table 35) and student has low scores on test and the number of years of teaching experience,  $p = .040$  (see Table 37 and Table 40). Further, ANOVA results revealed a statistical significance of  $p = .03$  for low attendance rates and females (see Table 38).

The results of this finding may have been influenced since there were more than twice as many females than males participating in this study. Future studies where gender is measured, may yield differences in the results when sample sizes of males and females are similar.

Overall, across gender differences, teachers feel the pressure of high stakes testing, accountability stress, and are academically driven to demonstrate high passing rates. The high stakes testing process can unnerve and drive a parent over the edge when expectations are perceived as too high. Mix these conditions of student and/or teacher anxiety about assessments with a confrontational parent and the results may equate to an episode between a parent and teacher that was triggered.

#### Question 5

Do teachers' experiences of bullying parents vary according to age, gender, ethnicity, grade level, and teaching experience?

#### Finding #12

Gender, age, ethnicity, and the number of years of teaching experience indicated significance in the numbers of incidents of parental confrontation. Most of the teachers who participated in the study were White females. Frequencies and percentages measured all of the demographic variables. Specifically, there were 36 (30.7%) male participants and 81 (69.2%) female participants (see Table 41). The data showed that there are more female teachers than male teachers which may have influenced the differences and findings in the study. Ethnicity was represented as three (2.5%) Asians, six (5.1%) Blacks, four (3.4%) Hispanics, one (0.8%) Pacific Islander, 101 (86.3%) Whites and two (1.7%) Mixed-culture ethnicity subgroups as identified by the respondents (see Table 41).

The highest percentage of years taught fall in the 1-12 years range, followed by the 13-22 years range. The least number of years experience fall in the 33-42 years range with 7 teachers in this experience range. The majority of Excellence High School teachers have 1 to 23 years of teaching experience (see Table 43).

The finding is consistent with Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins' (2004) study which showed "a Chi Square analyses of teachers who worked for more than five years were more likely to have had complaints made to superiors against them ( $x^2=6.59$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.01$ ), have experienced physical assault ( $x^2=5.064$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.02$ ), experienced ongoing harassment ( $x^2=11.64$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and to have experienced a threat to their professional reputation ( $x^2=9.507$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.001$ )." (p. 3-4)

There were 75 teachers who taught 9<sup>th</sup> grade; 71 teachers taught 10<sup>th</sup> grade; 72 teachers taught 11<sup>th</sup> grade; and 67 teachers taught the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. There was no statistically significant data when measured to show relationships with other variables where confrontational parents abuse teachers in a specific grade level. Teachers indicated teaching more than one grade level. No assessment was made to determine whether teachers taught at another school building in Excellence City Public Schools.

The minimum age of teachers was 23 years; the maximum age was 66 years (see Table 44). The *Mean* age of teachers was 44.9 years ( $M= .45$ ); the Median age was 47.0; the Mode was 50 years. There were fewer young teachers at Excellence High School. The minimum number of years of teaching experience was one year, while the maximum number of years of teaching experience was 42 years. The *Mean* years taught was 16.0 years ( $M= 16.0$ ) and ( $SD=10.1$ ) for the 117 teachers (see Table 34). Most teachers ages fell in the 42-61 age range (61.5%). Four teachers were over age 61.

Benefield's (2005) study confirms that "teachers are bullied by parents in the age range of 40-49 years old." (p. 12) Teacher's in this age range identified behaviors that were abusive toward them from parents. Additionally, Benefield's study concurs "the small size of the 60 age group may suggest these findings can be seen as indicative of teachers leaving the profession. The combined age's range of 42-61 and 52-62 revealed a total of 72 teachers (61.5%) make up the majority of teachers at Excellence High School (see Table 42) and also make up the highest numbers of teachers who report parent bullying by teacher's age." (p.4)

#### *Summary of Open-Ended Response Question*

Item 14 of the survey asked teachers to think of a particular episode experienced last year (2005-2006) where a parent tried to victimize the teacher by bullying. Teachers described verbal abuse from parents as a likely form of confrontation. Additionally, teachers feel parents are blatant, out in the open, and in-your-face when it comes to incidences of confrontation. On the other hand, teachers were complimentary of parents. Overall, the content analyses confirmed and supported the data that were collected from the quantitative research questions in the survey.

King & Alexander's (1996) study affirms "the potential of violence, intimidation, mistreatment by members of the public, especially on public contact jobs, is avoidable. Violent acts on the job may be both predictable and preventable." (p. 316)

### Implications for Practitioners

Educators may gain knowledge about the teacher's workplace and the parent bullying experience by looking at the data drawn from this study. The following implications have been discerned based on the data reported in Chapter 4:

- The creation of a reporting system should be developed and monitored at the state and local levels to observe incidents of bullying and abuse occurring against teachers by parents. This would bring more accountability to schools in reporting incidents of parent bullying. A monitoring system would show evidence of the types of parent behaviors, location of the incident, and causes for those behaviors. State and local officials must evaluate the challenges facing teachers. With teacher needs clearly identified, officials can allocate the necessary resources to assist teachers in improving workplace safety.
- Educators, community leaders and legislators should push for Internet regulations and guidelines and make the availability of filters on computers and other technology for educators and ancillary staff necessary to block cyber bullying through verbal abuse, profanity and obscene language. Since communicating a threat on the Internet is a Class D felony, this information should be passed on to parents. Laws about communicating a threat should be more strongly enforced since threats are warnings of some imminent punishment or danger. Further, the attempt to convey intimidation of a public official, this is also a threat.
- As part of a school program, train parents and teachers together on prevention and intervention of bullying; create a Parent Code of Conduct Handbook which firmly sets limits, include the message of no tolerance for bullying staff, cyber bullying, communicate the message that any form of abuse directed toward school staff is serious, how to strengthen home/school partnerships, offer definitions of various terms that describe the experience of bullying, include reminders on school policies and procedures as it relates to hot button issues that trigger incidences like homework, attendance, test and quiz requirements, bus privileges', cell phone use, discipline referrals, removal from extracurricular activities, grades and returning phone calls. This would give parents a second opportunity to become orientated to

the school's/teacher's expectations. Principals and administrators must set the tone and school climate by creating an environment that is free of bullying incidents.

- Civility Policies are needed in school divisions to proactively help protect educators who are confronted by parents. Civility Policies would guide interpersonal communication and respectful language between the school and home. With district wide policies on anti-bullying established and in place, civility policies would bring to all meetings (to include school board to classrooms or any other venue parents use to communicate with teachers), respect, order and calmness. This would improve the level of respect and how educators are treated by parents.
- School divisions would benefit by having in place a counseling component in school programs for parents and teachers to receive mediation, intervention and de-escalation strategies as support prior to and after victimization takes place, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, and teaching experience or grade level taught. Principals must recognize the role of the guidance counselor and their overall success of working with teachers and parents when a bullying episode occurs. A number of innovative initiatives are needed for situations of bullying in schools to include mediators, peer support groups, surveys and anti-bullying programs (Benfield, 2005).
- School divisions may want to offer minimal coverage or monetary funds toward damages (this can be an incentive for sign on for teachers also) for teachers who are victimized at school or at school related activities.
- Principals, counselors, and administrators must commit to district wide training in the recognition of teacher burnout when induced by parent bullying and how to reach for teachers who have consider leaving the profession as a result of victimization. Principals must be opened to recognize staff needs, including parent behaviors of bullying, so that the message is clear, schools will not allow parents to violate teachers. Training is a school-wide initiative. Principals must work to cultivate ensuring staff training, ongoing prevention, and the school community awareness of parent bullying.
- Offer Parent Night sessions, specifically, for parents and teachers to communicate and role play challenges (real or perceived) of blatant, in your face behaviors while

problem solving for alternatives to better resolve differences. This could prove to be therapeutic for parent and teacher, especially in role reversals.

- Provide teachers, principals, and ancillary staff support, a comprehensive training, regular meetings, and staff development to address coping strategies, and communication skills on parent bullying to combat verbal abuse and other threatening behaviors. It is critical to train staff about bullying, its impact, and the effect on school staff members. It is clear in the research that school ancillary staff, cleaners, groundsman, office staff, and educators all are members of the staff welfare committee which meets every month to discuss any issues regarding violence (Benefield, 2005).
- Provide fitness training to combat work related stress from bullying with a self defense component to help prevent physical assaults of teachers. The principal's role is to ensure that all staff members are safe. The prevention and intervention of bullying, abuse, and physical assaults can help to alleviate work related stress and burnout but implementing an on-site fitness program for the staff.
- Develop and implement a teacher's support group for those who have been victimized by parents and encourage teachers to report those incidences. Principals and administrators would foster recovery, stability and calmness to teachers who have been victimized. Principals, who foster concern and care among staff members, no doubt are more effective as leaders.
- Provide systematic school wide and district wide training on the entire phenomenon of the bullying experience as it relates to students, administrators, parents, visitors in a building, intruders, ancillary staff members, and upper management through the eyes of the perpetrator, victim, and bystander. A division wide bullying prevention program to address teacher need is vital to workplace safety. Time is needed after this training in order to positively penetrate a school culture and influence behaviors and attitudes of educators, parents, administrators, students and the school community for positive outcomes. It is clear in the research that professional development on school wide anti-violence, anti bullying (policies) and positive reinforcement of a set of standards for all staff and schools (Benefield, 2005).

### Recommendations for Future Research

Seven recommendations for further research are offered based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Replication of this study is needed by comparing regions of Virginia or national regions in the United States. The surveying of teachers in various geographic locations could yield experiences of parent bullying from a broader view since this study reported findings in only one school. Some schools were either over or under represented.
2. Replicate this study to investigate what safety measures and intervention practices can be used to protect physical education teachers and coaches from confrontational parents.
3. Replicate this study to investigate what special education teachers experience from parents who confront and bully them.
4. Replicate this study to examine what is the cost to the economy in teacher absenteeism, leaving the profession and medical cost after parent bullying episodes.
5. Replicate this study to determine and investigate if parent bullying is a factor at the college level.
6. Replicate this study to determine what anti-bullying practices can be used to counter teacher victimization incidences at K-12 schools.
7. Replicate this study to determine and investigate if bullying is more evident at the elementary, middle or high school levels and if bullying demonstrates different forms at different levels.

Finally, future research regarding parent bullying may want to examine this phenomenon through a more representative sample of ethnicities and gender. This sampling may provide a more representative finding in the results.

### Summary

This study showed how the incidents of parent bullying has a significant impact at Excellence High School on teachers. The results of the survey provided valuable information about parent bullying and how teachers perceived this experience. This study will add to the body of knowledge on parent bullying. Parent bullying was shown to be a problem for teachers causing some to consider leaving the profession and causing some teachers to feel negatively toward parents and the bullying experience. This chapter discussed the results from the study and

statistically significant findings. The purpose of the study was to investigate parents trying to bully teachers at school. The data demonstrated that teachers were bullied by confrontational parents. Based on the results of the study, conclusions were drawn from the findings; general discussions of the findings were offered for consideration, and recommendations for future research were presented.

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APPENDIX A  
ARTICLE SUMMARY REVIEW

*Synthesis of Research on Confrontational Parents Who Try to Bully Teachers*

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Factors related to Bullying</b>	<b>Type of Study</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Findings</b>
King & Alexander	1996	Victimization, abuse, accusations, and intimidation.	Case Study	N=10	Themes emerge on potential of violence on public contact jobs. Violent acts may be both predictable and preventable.
Jaksec	2005	Confrontational, Parental Agression, Anger, Verbal aggression, Turbulent encounters, Hostile, Disgruntle, and Difficult Parents	Survey	N=669	60% s had profanity and shouting directed to them. 70% had false accusations leveled against them. 79% received threats from parents three or more times.
Benefield	2005	Verbal Abuse, verbal intimidation, disparaging remarks, ridicule, public challenges, physical intimidation, acts of violence, physical assault,	Survey	N=587	Verbal abuse 25.6%, Public Challenges 22.1%, Threats 21%, Assaults 1.7%, Vandalism 9.5%, Disparaging remarks 20.4%, Ridicule 14.1% and Intimidation 14. %
Middleton-Moz & Zawadski	2002	Name-calling, rumors, humiliation, ridicule, blaming, isolating, assaults, ostracizing, and ethnic slurs.	Case Studies	N=18	85% of bullying incidences have witnesses bullies are esteemed, ignored or rejected, rarely held accountable. Victims are told bullying is a part of growing up.
Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins	2004	Violence, threats & intimidation	Survey	N=721	72% threats, 41% harassment, 24% physical assault, 91% intimidating behavior
Mikkelsen & Einarsen	2002	Workplace violence of targets who were mostly teachers and nurses	Survey	N=118 Targets N=118 Control	76% targets reported symptoms of PTSD. 61.7% reported moderate to severe impairment. 80% reported no other event at more negative than bullying.

APPENDIX B  
RESEARCH LETTER

Jackie Johnson  
200 South Whiting Street  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
[jajohns6@vt.edu](mailto:jajohns6@vt.edu)  
March 7, 2007

Frances Ivey, Principal  
Excellence High School  
Excellence City Public Schools  
2000 Excellence Way  
Excellence, Virginia 22304

Dear Mrs. Ivey:

School safety is of major concern for all public educators. A demanding responsibility for school division educators is to ensure a violence-free community for students, teachers, parents and the community-at-large.

I am a doctoral candidate at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The purpose of this study is to collect data on the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace in Excellence City Public Schools. This research is designed for face-to-face administration and the survey consists of 20 items.

Your assistance in conducting this study is requested because of your role and responsibility for the safety of your educators. Names will not be recorded on the surveys, nor will the school division be identified. All information will be held in the strictest of confidence. Surveys will be made available during staff meetings and immediately collected. It is important that teachers respond to the survey by April 30, 2007.

The survey is designed to obtain information from teachers who may have experienced an aggressive challenge or a communication barrier with a parent. We want to know what the teachers are experiencing. Find attached are Chapters 1-3 and the survey to be used.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to receive a copy of the final results of this study, please contact me at (703) 842-2291 or at [jajohns6@vt.edu](mailto:jajohns6@vt.edu). Please accept my sincere appreciation for your assistance with this worthy research project.

Sincerely,

Jackie Johnson,  
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C  
POSTCARD AND COVER LETTER ANNOUNCEMENT

(Postcard and Cover letter announcement to be sent prior to Internet email survey).

My name is Jackie Johnson and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The purpose of this study is to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace--the school. In two weeks you will receive a survey on this topic to be completed at a staff meeting. I would greatly appreciate you sharing your expertise and experiences by completing the survey when you receive it.

Thank you in advance for supporting this research effort.

Sincerely,  
Jackie Johnson

APPENDIX D  
TEACHER SURVEY

**DO PARENTS TRY TO CONFRONT TEACHERS AT SCHOOL?**

### Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information on how the behavior of confrontational parents are viewed by teachers. The results of the survey will be used to add to the body of knowledge on adult bullying behaviors. Your responses are strictly confidential and will only be reported in aggregate.

**Part I. Types of Behaviors: During the previous school year (2005-2006) have you experienced any of the following types of behaviors from parents? Respond to the following scale of 0-5 (with 5 being the highest equal to 5 or more times) by circling the number of times you have experienced each kind of behavior.**

TYPE OF BEHAVIOR	NUMBER OF TIMES INCIDENT OCCURRED					
1. Verbal abuse	0	1	2	3	4	5+
2. Verbally threatened	0	1	2	3	4	5+
3. Name-calling	0	1	2	3	4	5+
4. Ridiculed in front of students	0	1	2	3	4	5+
5. Ridiculed in front of other adults	0	1	2	3	4	5+
6. Publicly challenged	0	1	2	3	4	5+
7. Physically intimidated	0	1	2	3	4	5+
8. Physically assaulted	0	1	2	3	4	5+
9. Your property been the target of vandalism	0	1	2	3	4	5+

**Part II. Location, Behaviors, Triggers and Results of Parent Behaviors: Respond to the following questions by checking all that apply to you.**

10. Where were you when an angry parent confronted you?
- Classroom
- Hallway
- Parking lot
- Cafeteria
- Internet
- Gym
- Sports activity
- School office
- Other (Please specify)

11. What situation(s) may have led to a parent confrontation? Please check all that apply.

- You did not respond to a parent email  
 You failed to call parent  
 Student discipline referral  
 Student suspension from school  
 Student has low test scores  
 Student removed from sports team  
 Student has low grades on report card  
 Student has homework issues  
 Student loss of bus privileges  
 Student unauthorized cell phone use  
 Student has low attendance rates  
 Student breach of Internet use  
 Child abuse referral  
 Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

12. What has happened after a parent has vented their frustration? Check all that apply.

- I did not have a confrontation last year  
 I gave in by complying with parent request  
 Parent apologized  
 Authorities intervened  
 Parent called school board member, attorney, and/or mayor  
 Parent worked with teacher  
 Parent assaulted the teacher  
 Principal supported teacher  
 Principal supported parent  
 Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Check which adjective(s) you would use to describe the behavior of parents with whom you had confrontations. Check all that apply.

- |                                           |                                       |                               |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subtle           | <input type="checkbox"/> Overt        | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blatant          | <input type="checkbox"/> In secret    |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out in the Open  | <input type="checkbox"/> Covert       |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behind your back | <input type="checkbox"/> In your face |                               |

**Part III. Situational Event/Occurrence: Think of a particular episode you experienced last year where a parent tried to bully you. Please describe anything else that would help educators better understand the experience of parent bullying.**

14. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

15. Have you considered leaving the teaching profession after a parent bullying episode?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Part IV. Demographics: Check all that apply.**

16. What is your gender?  
Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_
17. What is your ethnicity?  
American Indian \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian \_\_\_\_\_  
Black \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_  
Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
18. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
19. What is your current teaching level?  
High Grades \_\_\_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_\_\_ 12
20. How many years have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your views and responses to this survey questionnaire. All information provided in this survey is strictly confidential.**

APPENDIX E  
SURVEY PERMISSION TO USE EMAIL

Appendix E



back to inbox

[My VT](#) [WebMail](#) [Filebox](#) [Help](#) [Log Off](#)

---

Delete Reply Reply All Forward Redirect View Source Move to: This message to Message

**Date:** Thu, 03 May 2007 12:09:53 -0400  
**From:** jajohns6@vt.edu  
**To:** frances.ivey@fcps.edu  
**Subject:** Survey administration

**Attachments:**

-  2 application/octet-stream 35.58 KB Permission to conduct survey, Jackie Johnson.doc
-  3 application/octet-stream 56.11 KB Survey.doc

---

Frances,  
Please find attached my letter to you seeking permission to conduct the survey.  
A hard copy will be in the mail to you. You will also find a copy of the survey  
to be used. Dr. Mallory may make some changes to the survey which should be very  
minor. Thank you so very much for allowing me to do this. I'll see you on the  
15th of May around 2:00pm.  
Jackie

Delete Reply Reply All Forward Redirect View Source Move to: This message to Message

**WebMail 3.0**  
© 2006 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

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## APPENDIX F

### COLLECTING DATA PERMISSION TO USE EMAIL

Appendix F



My VT
 WebMail
 Filebox
 Help
 Log Off

Delete
 Reply
 Reply All
 Forward
 Redirect
 View Source
 Move to: This message to
 Message

**Date:** Thu, 17 May 2007 07:54:43 -0400  
**From:** jajohns5@vt.edu  
**To:** Frances.Ivey@fcps.edu  
**CC:** wmallory@vt.edu  
**Subject:** Thank You

Mrs. Ivey,  
 Thank you for working with Dr. Mallory and me by consenting to allow me to collect data from your teachers on Tuesday, May 15th. This will allow me work toward the completion of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program.

When it comes to parents, teachers no doubt are the experts at working to create harmonious school-to-home communications. Therefore, teacher responses to my survey are an invaluable resource for providing the needed evidence in the collection of data for my methodology chapter. This research will add to the body of knowledge on workplace bullying in schools.

The responses given by your teachers will be held in the strictest of confidence. Survey responses are now stored in a locked file cabinet in my office at home. In fact, total animosity has already been set in place to protect your teachers. At no time the name of your school, your name, reference to a particular teacher or teacher names will be used.

In my dissertation, the name Excellence City Public Schools from a Mid-Atlantic State is referenced to help protect and make sure no link, connection or tie can be made to your school or staff members. A copy of the dissertation will be made available for you at the end of my program completion for you and your staff to read.

Again, thank you very much for providing me the opportunity to move forward in my endeavor of completing my doctoral studies.

Jackie Johnson,  
 Doctoral Candidate

Delete
 Reply
 Reply All
 Forward
 Redirect
 View Source
 Move to: This message to
 Message

**WebMail 3.0**  
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APPENDIX G  
CHART PERMISSION TO USE EMAIL

Appendix G



My VT WebMail Filebox Help Log Off

Delete Reply Reply All Forward Redirect View Source Move to: This message to Message

**Date:** Fri, 18 May 2007 07:40:58 -0400  
**From:** "Ivey, Frances W" <Frances.Ivey@fcps.edu>  
**To:** jajohns6@vt.edu  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Thank You

You are very welcome!!!! Good Luck!!

Can you send me a copy of the chart that I need to use to compare studies for my prelim??

Thanks

Frances Ivey

-----Original Message-----  
**From:** jajohns6@vt.edu [mailto:jajohns6@vt.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 18, 2007 7:28 AM  
**To:** Ivey, Frances W  
**Subject:** Fwd: RE: Thank You

----- Forwarded message from "Mallory, Walt" <wmallory@vt.edu> -----  
**Date:** Thu, 17 May 2007 15:21:21 -0400  
**From:** "Mallory, Walt" <wmallory@vt.edu>  
**Reply-To:** "Mallory, Walt" <wmallory@vt.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: Thank You  
**To:** jajohns6@vt.edu

Frances, Thanks - we owe you one.

Walt Mallory, Ed.D.  
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Room 455 Northern Virginia  
 Center Virginia Tech  
 7054 Haycock Road  
 Falls Church, VA 22043  
 703-538-8479  
 703-501-7930  
 wmallory@vt.edu

-----Original Message-----  
**From:** jajohns6@vt.edu [mailto:jajohns6@vt.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 17, 2007 7:55 AM  
**To:** Frances.Ivey@fcps.edu  
**Cc:** Mallory, Walt

APPENDIX H  
SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FOR PILOT STUDY REVISIONS AND COMMENTS

---

Directions: Please note by marking Clarity of directions and questions posed; ease in response; time required to complete the survey; information to add, change or delete and/or presentation and format of survey item. This is a summary of all responses.

*Respondents Suggestions for Survey Instrument Modifications:*

- Ninety-one percent suggested that the survey instrument directions and questions posed were clear.
- Eighty-nine percent expressed that the survey was appropriate for teachers to read.
- One hundred percent of the respondents agreed that the survey provided ease in response.
- Ninety-seven percent of respondents felt that the survey was clear.
- One hundred percent of the respondents surveyed agreed that the survey took 5-10 minutes to complete.
- Ninety-seven percent of the respondents suggested that the presentation and format of the survey needed no changes.
- Ninety-four percent of the respondents noted that the survey administration was appropriate.
- Ninety-four percent of the respondents completed the survey.
- Eighty-six percent of the respondents knew what civility policies were.

Table 3

*Demographics of Field Testing*

Demographic	Total		Percentage
Gender	36		
Male	12	12	34.2
Female	24	24	63.2
Age			
21-30	3	3	8.3
31-40	13	13	36.1
41-50	13	13	36.1
51-60	6	6	16.7
Ethnicity			
Black	13	13	36.1
White	23	23	63.9
Asian	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	0
Other	1	1	2.8
Level			
Elementary	7	7	19.4
Middle	9	9	25.0
High	9	9	25.0
Alternative	9	9	25.0
Years of Experience			
0-3 years	1	1	2.8
4-7 years	4	4	11.1
8-11 years	6	6	16.7
12 or more years	25	25	69.4

Table 45

*Independent and Dependent Variables*

Variables	Type	Values	Dependent/Independent
Frequency of abuse	Scale	0-45	Dependent
Parent Behaviors	Nominal	Verbal Abuse Name calling Physical Assault Accusations Intimidation Publically Challenged	Dependent
Location	Nominal	Classroom Hallway Parking Lot Cafeteria Internet Gym School Office	Dependent
Situations/Triggers	Nominal	Email not sent Failed to call Discipline referral Suspension from school Low Test scores Off sports team Low Grades Homework Bus Privileges Cell phone use Poor Attendance Internet use	Dependent
Description of Parent Behavior	Nominal	Subtle Blatant Out in the open Behind your back Overt In secret Covert In your face	Dependent

(Table continued)

Table 45 (continued)

<b>Variables</b> Open Ended	<b>Type</b> Qualitative	<b>Values</b> -----	<b>Dependent/Independent</b> -----
Leave	Nominal	Yes No	Dependent
Ethnicity	Nominal	Asian Black Hispanic Mixed Culture Pacific Islander White	Independent
Age	Ratio	21 -66	Independent
Teaching level	Nominal	High School	Independent
Years taught	Ratio	1-33	Independent

APPENDIX I  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE UPCOMING SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

My name is Jackie Johnson and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am conducting a study and need your help. The survey takes about seven minutes to complete.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the dynamics of confrontational behaviors of parents towards teachers in the workplace-the school. In a week, you will receive a survey on this topic.

I would greatly appreciate you sharing your expertise and experiences by completing the survey when you receive it. Thank you in advance for supporting this research effort.

## APPENDIX J

## RESPONSE ITEM 10: OTHER LOCATIONS OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

Other Location of Bullying Incidents

	<i>f</i>	Percentages
	104	88.8
Conference Room	1	.9
Grocery Store	1	.9
In Guidance Office	1	.9
Meeting	4	3.4
Phone	2	1.7
Touching Bases	4	3.4

---

 n=13

## APPENDIX K

## RESPONSE ITEM 11: OTHER SITUATIONS THAT LED TO PARENT CONFRONTATION

Other Situations that Led to Confrontations		
	Frequency	Percent
	102	87.2
Accused Teacher	1	.9
All of us met with Class	1	.9
Managers' Statements	1	.9
Son Loss His Cloths	1	.9
Classroom Practices	1	.9
Disagreement	1	.9
Didn't Get College of Choice	1	.9
Extra Curricular Activity	1	.9
Flash Drive	1	.9
No Award Given	1	.9
No Math Problems Given	1	.9
Plagiarism Charge	1	.9
Special Education Issue	1	.9
Student Rejection	1	.9
Yearbook Committee	1	.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	

APPENDIX L  
OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEM 14

- 1.** Parents refused to hold their own child accountable for his/her lack of effort/work done- rather this parent blamed me.
- 2.** My students are immigrants (ESOL). The parents are extremely respectful towards me.
- 3.** Although I did not have an incident, I feel parents think they are “entitled to whatever they are demanding.
- 4.** A father told me that his daughter told him, when she asked to work with me after school, that I said I did not like to stay after school. She had it wrong and he assumed she was right.
- 5.** Parents typically challenge grades.
- 6.** Parent didn’t believe their child did anything wrong.
- 7.** Parent said they didn’t want me to change a grade-but they were requesting it all the same.
- 8.** I asked for clarification of comments from e-mail and in person several times; never got a response from the parent.
- 9.** I gave make-up work to a boy to shut the parent up. Parent told other parents about it who told me what mother said.
- 10.** Parent tried to get me to change a referral; parents did not attempt to see both sides of the issue even though well explained. In my face, yelling.
- 11.** Parent called me and ranted for 15 minutes on my answering machine. Very, very nasty.
- 12.** Mainly, parents may have poor social skills. Nothing is wrong with you. Parent avoided me. Because a student was not receiving musical solos, I was accused of showing

favoritism. Student had a history of absenteeism, lack of participation, and emotional immaturity. I do feel that since most of us teachers and parents communicate with e-mail, there is less of a sense of restraint when parents write their feelings as opposed to speaking about it.

**13.** Parent did not get all Special Education accommodations or services that they believed their child deserves. This was an extremely bad situation where parent acted behind my back.

**14.** In a plagiarism charge (against the student) on a Government research paper against the student, parent sent subtle e-mails to me. The parent wrote angry e-mails to me and to guidance questioning my professionalism, accusing me of harassing the student, etc. Administrators and Guidance supported me.

**15.** Parent request flash drive I had confiscated because student copied other student's files. Father stormed into school to demand I give it back. I refused and had given it to the Assistant Principal. The spouse later apologized for husband's inappropriate behavior. Student was removed from my class.

**16.** Parent was on the phone with his kid. Kid still failed. Parent listening to phone conversations. It was very stressful. I never talked to the parent again.

**17.** Parent was afraid their child was not treated fairly and that they would not have a chance to parent or intervene to correct the student.

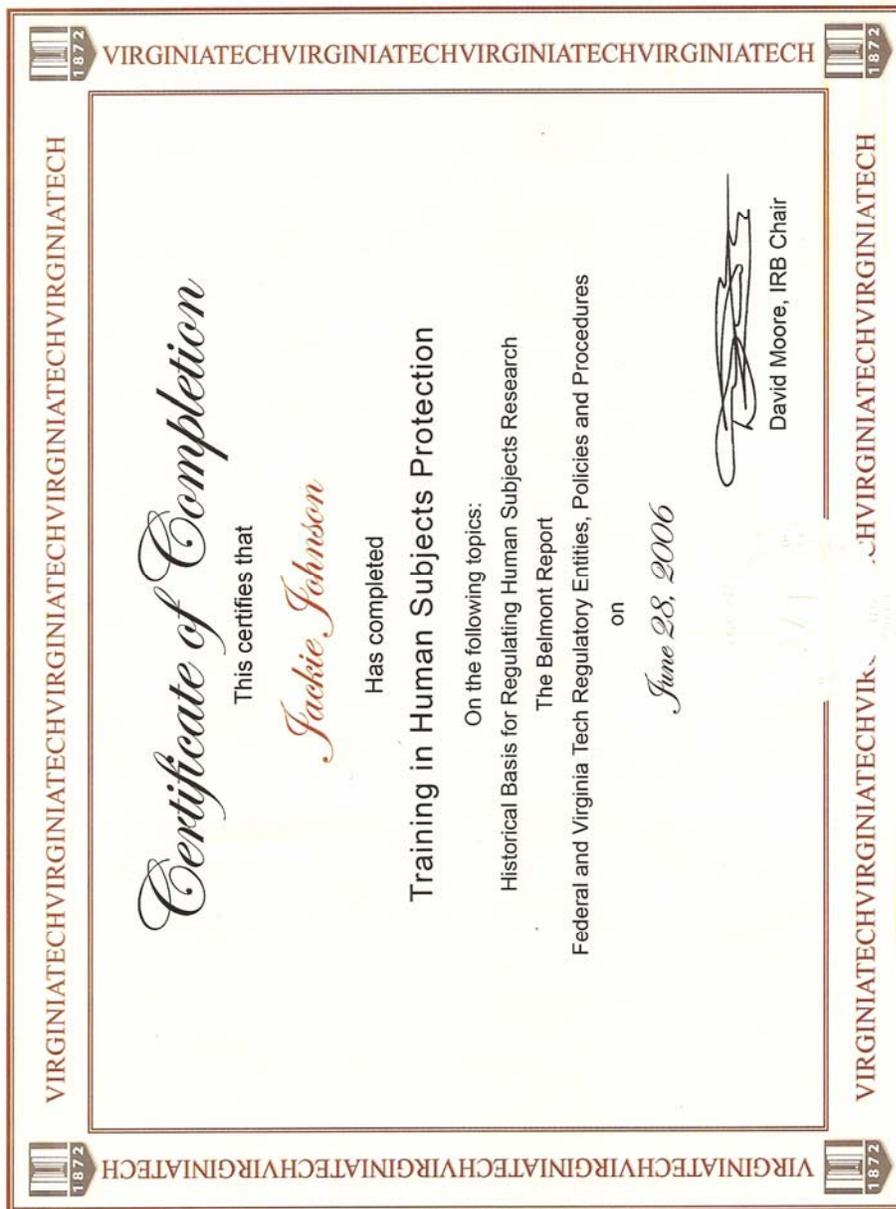
**18.** Parent wants to be emailed regularly.

**19.** The parent does a lot of implying that I am incompetent and that their child would have fewer problems if I did my job differently.

- 20.** Parent talked to other parents, then to me. Special Education meeting held to address her concerns and demands for her child. She talked to other teachers about what I said and did.
- 21.** I have had to compromise my principles based on ranting, angry parent wishes (at the Administrators request).
- 22.** Parent wanted me to e-mail him every time his child turned in an assignment. This incident was awful.
- 23.** Worst last year- flash drive issue. Some hard to swallow words, in my face. I gave in by complying with parent request about Internet use.
- 24.** Parents enjoy venting their frustrations via e-mail. Last year, a parent apologized once face-to-face.
- 25.** Her daughter was not receiving playing time in games. I said it is not a pay to play league. At this level you have to go with the players you feel have the best chance of bringing you a win.
- 26.** This parent wanted me to restore full credit to late work, which she said he (her son) never does late work. I reminded the Mom that I have accepted his late work before and she wrote a note about why work was late in the past.
- 27.** Parents feel free to attack teacher via e-mail with little consequences.
- 28.** Parents almost always take the word of their children, and administrators must be briefed before dealing with parents and attempt to keep the teacher and parent separate while handling the situation.
- 29.** Parent blamed me for the lack of communication between the classroom teacher and the parent. Student was not to be blamed.

- 30.** Parent yelled at me in my face during touching bases.
- 31.** Via e-mail-parent unhappy about the yearbook.
- 32.** Parent bullying his own child and teacher. Their way is the only and best way.
- 33.** They (parents) are so nasty on the Internet, curse, and attitude-the whole nine yards.
- 34.** Parents feel entitled to their wants-no matter what as long as their child gets what is being asked.
- 35.** Very mean to me about her child's behavior. Loud, argumentative. Parent backed off. I wanted to quit after this incident.
- 36.** Parent is a building nuisance. When e-mail does not work, she then resorts to calling me late at night or very early in the A.M.
- 37.** Parent e-mailed me my response all over the community. I felt humiliated by it all.
- 38.** Parent stopped speaking to me after screaming in my face in class.
- 39.** Student a "brat" according to parent she feels her child is spoiled and the victim, although his behaviors are off the chart!
- 40.** The father called me names and told me I was the source of all of his daughter's problems.
- 41.** Parents are always polite.
- 42.** On Back to School Night, parent upset about homework and IEP issues. The parent stormed out angry because she felt I was not giving her daughter a break on the homework.

APPENDIX M  
HUMAN SUBJECT TRAINING CERTIFICATE



APPENDIX N  
IRB AMENDMENT 1 APPROVAL

**Office of Research Compliance**

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FWA000005721 expires 1/20/2010  
IRB # is IRB00000867

DATE: May 8, 2007

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Walt Mallory  
Jackie Johnson

FROM: Carmen Green 

SUBJECT: **IRB Amendment 1 Approval:** "Do Confrontational Parents Try to Bully Teachers?"  
IRB # 07-222

This memo is regarding the above referenced protocol which was previously granted approval by the IRB on April 24, 2007. You subsequently requested permission to amend your IRB application. Approval has been granted for requested protocol amendment, effective as of May 8, 2007.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

cc: File

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