

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

PREPARED FOR: Honourable George Abbott, Minister, for **Decision**, at the request of James Gorman, **Deputy Minister**.

SUBJECT: Anti-bullying and Threat Assessment – Prevention and Intervention Strategy.

BACKGROUND:

There are still high rates of bullying and serious risks and threats in schools around the world. In BC, there have been a number of serious incidents that involve school aged children where in some incidents warning signs were not recognized, missing an opportunity to provide possible intervention and supports to students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

In BC there are inconsistent policies and practices to deal with incidents of bullying and threat making behaviour.

DISCUSSION:

There is nothing more important than keeping our kids safe. In order to reduce the number of bullying incidents there needs to be a culture shift in our province. The best place to start to model positive behaviours and culture is within our schools. Students must feel safe in order to learn. We must have mechanisms for students who do not feel safe to feel confident in reporting. We need to better support our staff that support kids every day in their classes. We need to ensure staff are trained, understand positive school cultures, and to respond to incidents as they arise.

There is no “one size fits all” model but what is proposed is taken from best practices based on research, evaluation, and lessons learned mainly from Finland, Quebec, and Ontario. The goal is to foster good relationships, recognize behaviours, intervene, and support where necessary.

The proposed prevention and intervention strategy includes training, online reporting, enhanced codes of conduct for districts, provincial guidelines for community protocols, and designated staff in districts.

Details of these elements include:

1. An anonymous online reporting tool for students. The Ministry of Education will create a standard website for students that will be customized by individual schools and districts.
2. Multiple level training regime to reach the main two populations: 80 percent of students experience bullying incidents and 20 percent of high risk students. This includes threat and risk assessment training for district staff, teachers, and community partners. Training would continue on cyclical basis to ensure new staff are trained and supported. (see chart)
3. Provincial guidelines for safe schools and a template sample for district level protocols.
4. Enhanced codes of conduct that will include a duty to report and respond in each district.
5. Each district will develop a district protocol with community partners.
6. Each district will designate a safe schools coordinator. Their role would be to monitor web reporting site, direct communication with Ministry of Education (Superintendent Liaison), coordinate multi-level threat assessment training for their district.

The proposed launch date is February, 29, 2012 – Pink Shirt/Anti-bullying day.

LINKS TO OTHER MINISTRIES:

Consultations have begun with:

- Education partners – BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Council, BC School Trustees Association, BC School Superintendents Association, BC Principals Vice Principals Association, BC Teachers Federation, First Nations Education Steering Committee, Federation of Independent School Association
- School districts: SD 83 & 23 North and Central Okanagan, SD 71 Comox Valley, SD 36 Surrey
- Ministries – Public Safety and Solicitor General, Children and Family Development, Advanced Education, Health, Social Development
- Community partners – Police, Probation, Representative for Children and Youth
- University partners – University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, UFV

OPTIONS:

The following is a list of policy decisions required if the proposed strategy is endorsed in principle.

1.	Should the ministry designate one the six provincial professional development days to focus on anti-bullying – starting in 2012?	(Y)	N
2.	Should the duty to report incidents of bullying and threat be included in the codes of conduct?	(Y)	N
3.	If yes to 2 - should schools/districts report bullying and threat incidents to the ministry?	(Y)	N
4.	Should the training – at all levels – be mandatory?	(Y)	N
5.	Is the approach to training the right direction?	(Y)	N
6.	Should there be anti-bullying and threat risk assessment training as part of the pre-service training through universities?	(Y)	N
7.	Should the language in the codes of conduct be prescriptive regarding sexual orientation? • Currently the Guide advises that Boards of Education must consider ^{bc consistent} <i>with</i> the <i>BC Human Rights Code</i> when developing codes of conduct in their school districts, and describes that “ <i>Most relevant for the purposes of developing codes of conduct, is [the prohibition] of discrimination on the basis of an individual’s or a group’s race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, or sexual orientation.</i> ”	(Y)	N
8.	If government creates and covers the cost of the online reporting tool should it be mandatory for school districts to implement in their schools?	(Y)	N
9.	Should we alter expectations for independent schools. Currently there is no requirement for a Codes of Conduct in independent schools.	Y	(N)
10.	If yes to 9, should it be mandatory?	Y	(N)

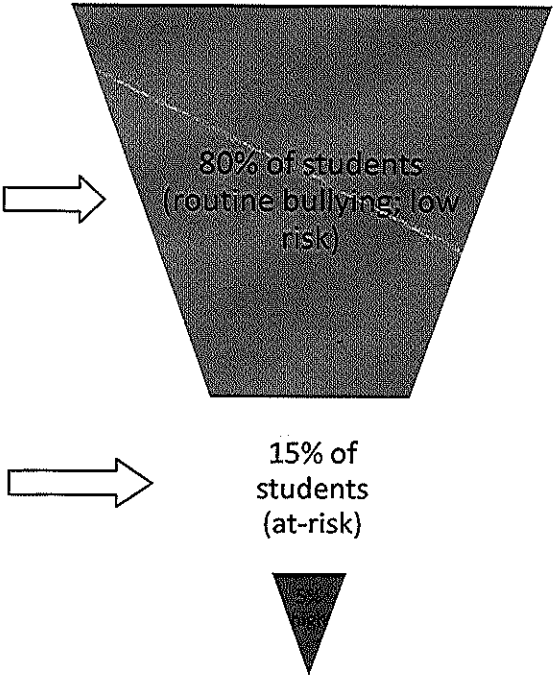
Attachment: Training Framework

Contact Information Liaison/Care Team 250-896-3735 Department File		Agree / Disagree	Agree / Disagree
	ADM initial	James Gorman Deputy Minister	Honourable George Abbott Minister
		Date signed: Nov 28 2011	Date signed: Nov 28 2011

Date Drafted: November 25, 2011

Revision No.:

#	Content	Participant	Timeline
1	Parent resources – anti-bullying watch to watch for and how to talk to your kids	Parents and general public	Available for use by Sept. 2012
2	Prevent Bullying - establish and maintain a positive school culture.	Principals and school teams	Start Sept. 2012 – Complete: June 2013
3	Basic Threat and Risk Assessment (school level procedures - when working with a potentially violent incident	school teams & district teams community partners	Start Sept. 2012 – Complete: June 2013
4	Advanced Threat and Risk Assessment Conducting predictive threat assessments; establishing cross-sector teams; developing long-term support plans	School district teams, police, community partners	Start Sept. 2013 – Complete: Dec. 2013
5	Train the Trainer: Threat and Risk Assessment Cross-sector teams are trained to train others in advanced threat assessment	School district teams, community partners	Start: Jan 2014 - Complete: June 2014



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SUBJECT: Anti-bullying and Threat Assessment – Prevention and Intervention Strategy

BACKGROUND:

There are still high rates of bullying and serious risks and threats in schools around the world. In BC, there have been a number of serious incidents that involve school aged children where in some incidents warning signs were not recognized, missing an opportunity to provide possible intervention and supports to students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

In BC there are inconsistent policies and practices to deal with incidents of bullying and threat making behaviour.

DISCUSSION:

There is nothing more important than keeping our kids safe. In order to reduce the number of bullying incidents there needs to be a culture shift in our province. The best place to start to model positive behaviours and culture is within our schools. Students must feel safe in order to learn. We must have mechanisms for students who do not feel safe to feel confident in reporting. We need to better support our staff that support kids every day in their classes. We need to ensure staff is trained, understand positive school cultures, and to respond to incidents as they arise.

There is no “one size fits all” model but what is proposed is taken from best practices based on research, evaluation, and lessons learned mainly from Finland, Quebec, and Ontario. The goal is to foster good relationships, recognize behaviours, intervene, and support where necessary.

As identified in BC’s 2011 Speech from the Throne, this initiative will begin to change school cultures and expand existing anti-Bullying policies in schools to include a comprehensive training regime, on-line reporting tools and advanced Threat Assessment tools and protocols.

PROPOSED STRATEGY:

The proposed prevention and intervention strategy includes training, online reporting, enhanced codes of conduct for districts, provincial guidelines for community protocols, and designated staff in districts.

Details of these elements include:


1. An anonymous online reporting tool for students available from mobile devices. The Ministry of Education will create a standard website for students that will be customized by individual schools and districts.
2. Enhanced web site that includes multi-media resources aimed at parents.
3. A five-year multiple level training regime to reach the main two populations: 80 percent of students experience bullying incidents and 20 percent of high risk students. Request for proposals closes on Jan. 20, 2012. Training would start October 2012 and would continue on cyclical basis to ensure new staff are trained and supported.
 - Anti-bullying training – initially for elementary schools. Two people from each school and three-member district teams will be trained in recognizing, creating and maintaining positive safe school cultures.
 - Threat/Risk Assessment training - initially for middle and secondary schools. School-based and district based teams will be trained in basic and advanced threat/risk assessment. Training is available for community partners in each region.

4. Provincial guidelines for safe schools and a template sample for district level protocols.
5. Enhanced codes of conduct that will include a duty to report and respond in each district and strengthened language consistent with the Human Rights Act. Currently the Guide advises that Boards of Education must consider the *BC Human Rights Code* when developing codes of conduct. New language will reflect that Boards of Education must reference the *BC Human Rights Code - the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of an individual's or a group's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, or sexual orientation*
6. Each district will develop a district protocol with community partners – MCFD, police, mental health.
7. Each district will designate a safe schools coordinator. Their role would be to monitor web reporting site, direct communication with Ministry of Education (Superintendent Liaison), coordinate multi-level threat assessment training for their district.
8. Designate one the six provincial professional development days to focus on anti-bullying – starting in 2012/13 school year.
9. Ensure anti-bullying and threat risk assessment training is part of the pre-service training through universities for new teachers.
10. Encourage independent schools to create codes of conduct and participate in the provincial training that will occur in their region to help strengthen community relationships.

LINKS TO OTHER MINISTRIES:

Consultations have begun with:

- Education partners – BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Council, BC School Trustees Association, BC School Superintendents Association, BC Principals Vice Principals Association, BC Teachers Federation, First Nations Education Steering Committee, Federation of Independent School Association
- School districts: SD 83 & 23 North and Central Okanagan, SD 71 Comox Valley, SD 36 Surrey
- Ministries – Public Safety and Solicitor General, Children and Family Development, Advanced Education, Health, Social Development
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<div>Contact Information</div> <div>Liaison/Care Team</div> <div>250-896-3735</div> <div>Department File</div>		<div>Approved by:</div> <div></div>
	ADM initial	James Gorman Deputy Minister
		Date signed: Jan. 6, 2012

In British Columbia, the provincial government and 60 school districts, each with a locally elected board of education, share responsibility for the education system. The Ministry of Education develops high-level education legislation and policy, while boards of education have substantial autonomy to determine local policies about students and schools.

Legislation	
Current	Proposed
Section 85(1.1) of the <i>School Act</i> requires that boards must, subject to the <i>Act</i> and regulations, and in accordance with the Provincial standards established by the minister, establish a code of conduct for students enrolled in educational programs provided by the board.	No proposed changes to legislation.
Section 85(2) of the <i>School Act</i> allows boards to determine local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district.	
Section 168(2) provides that the minister may make orders about establishing provincial standards for code of conducts required under section 85(1.1). (www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/).	
Section 6 of the <i>School Act</i> requires students to comply with the code of conduct and other rules and policies of a board of education.	
Regulations	
Current	Proposed
School Regulation, s. 4(1)(b) states that the duties of a teacher include ensuring that students understand and comply with the codes of conduct governing their behaviour and with the rules and policies governing the operation of the school.	No proposed changes to regulations.
School Regulation, s. 5(7)(g) states that the principal of a school is responsible for administering and supervising the school including the general conduct of students, both on school premises and during activities that are off school premises and that are organized or sponsored by the school.	

Orders	
Current	Proposed
<p>Government enacted the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order (Fall 2007), setting out process and content requirements for codes of conduct. In particular, s. 6 sets out content that boards must include in their codes of conduct:</p> <p>6. Boards must ensure that the following elements are included in their codes of conduct:</p> <p>(a) one or more statements that address the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the <i>BC Human Rights Code</i> in respect of discriminatory publication and discrimination in accommodation, service and facility in the school environment;</p> <p>(b) a statement of purpose that provides a rationale for the code of conduct, with a <i>focus on safe, caring and orderly school environments</i>;</p> <p>(c) one or more statements about what is</p> <p>i. acceptable behaviour, and</p> <p>ii. <i>unacceptable behaviour</i>, including aggressive behaviours such as <i>bullying behaviours</i> while at school, <i>at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school environment</i>;</p> <p>(d) one or more statements about the <i>consequences of unacceptable behaviour</i>, which must take account of the student's age, maturity and special needs, if any;</p> <p>(e) an explanation that the board will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint of a breach of a code of conduct.</p> <p>www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m276-07.pdf</p>	<p>Proposed changes to Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a duty for students and teachers to report incidents of bullying • Require districts to implement an online reporting tool (Government is creating and covering the cost). • Require students and teachers to use the online reporting tool to report bullying behaviours and incidents. • Require boards to report to the Minister regarding bullying incidents in their district. • Require boards to reference the BC Human Rights Code in their codes of conduct, particularly the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of an individual's or group's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation

<p>Under s. 168(2) (m) the Minister may make orders designating one or more of the non-instructional periods permitted under the regulations to be scheduled and used for a specific purpose.</p> <p>Currently, the Designation of Purpose for Non-Instructional Days Order requires boards to schedule one non instructional day in the 2011/12 school year for the purpose of facilitating activities that in the board's opinion are designed to enhance student achievement, with a focus either on personalized learning or aboriginal student success.</p>	<p>Change the language in the order so that the Minister designates the non-instructional day in the 2012/13 school year to focus on anti-bullying/ preventing bullying behaviours.</p>
Policy	
Current	Proposed
<p><i>Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide</i> (2004) is the Ministry's <i>de facto</i> policy regarding anti-bullying. The guide sets out the provincial standards for codes of conduct and identifies attributes of safe, caring and orderly schools. It also outlines strategies for informing appropriate members of the school community of safety concerns in a timely way. (www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/guide/scoguide.pdf)</p>	<p>New provincial guidelines for safe schools will be developed.</p>
Guides	
Current	Proposed
<p><i>Developing and Reviewing Codes of Conduct: A Companion to the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Ministerial Order and Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide</i> (2004) was created to assist boards of education in meeting their obligation to ensure that codes of conduct in their districts meet the provincial standards and comply with the <i>School Act</i> and the <i>Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order</i>. The <i>Companion</i> guide (in English and French) and Ministerial Order can be found at (www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resourcedocs/facilitators_companion.pdf)</p>	<p>Guides will be reviewed and updated.</p>

<p>The Ministry of Education's <i>Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework</i> (2008) describes key concepts, references legislation, and includes important implications for policies, strategies and initiatives in the school system related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • honouring diversity and promoting human rights • preventing discrimination, harassment and violence • responding to incidents of discrimination, harassment or violence when they occur. <p>(http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/guide/scoguide.pdf#page=61>)</p>	
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Note: Several school districts have district-level policies that broadly address diversity issues, and several have policies that specifically address lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ) youth issues . In particular, SD 64 (Gulf Islands) involved students who identified themselves as LGBTQ in the board's policy development process and SD 41 (Burnaby) recently had quite a lot of media coverage on their new policy to protect LGBTQ children and youth from harassment, intimidation and other bullying behaviours. The BC School Trustees Association(BCSTA) has a searchable online database of district policies (www.bcsta.org).

Ontario, Quebec, Finland& British Columbia’s Bullying Prevention and Safe School Strategies

Overview:

BC’s Safe Schools Strategy positions BC to be among the Canadian leaders in terms of bullying prevention and will include, arguably, the most comprehensive training regimen in North America. The strategy will include training 15,000 school district representatives, teachers, parents, police and community partners over a five year period, covering all public school districts and schools in the province.

The Ontario government (Conservative) first introduced legislation related to safe schools in 2000 which focused on zero-tolerance. In 2008 the government (Liberal) was seen to back-track with new legislation that included bullying as one reason students could be suspended. The latest round of proposed amendments (Nov. 2011) includes defining bullying, allows students to set up support clubs and allows a progressive discipline model to end in expulsion. The Ontario government faced public and political pressure to address bullying in schools after a teen suicide was profiled in the media. The student pointed to bullying in school. The government is facing opposition from religious groups claiming the legislation infringes on their Charter of Rights and Freedoms. One unique note in Ontario is that both the government and opposition introduced competing anti-bullying legislation on the same day. The Conservative’s bill calls for counselling for bullying victims as well as aggressors.

Ontario and Quebec are far ahead of Alberta in developing policies and programs to address school-related bullying but Ontario has no evidence or data to show their approach is working. Quebec’s report is expected this year on their 3-yr action plan that started in 2008. Quebec has not announced a plan that carries them past 2011.

	Ontario	BC	Comparison
State of Programs today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff must report serious student incidents, including bullying to the principal. • Principals are required to contact parents of victims. • \$5m/yr to train school board teams including principals, vice-principals and teachers on ways to apply discipline in a non-discriminatory manner. • \$9m to help school boards enhance partnerships with local agencies. • \$10.5m annually for school boards to fund 170 psychologists, social workers, child and youth workers, counselors and others. • Partnership with Kids Help Phone to support students related to bullying. • Codes of conduct clarify behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 60 Boards of education have codes of conduct that follow the BC Human Rights Code, and describes unacceptable behaviour including bullying. • Boards determine local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the district. • Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools describes the vision which boards of education, schools and school communities across British Columbia must continually strive. It also outlines strategies for informing appropriate members of the school community of safety concerns in a timely manner. • A number of resources for teachers, school administrators, support staff and parents that focus on bullying, available in multiple languages. • Questions regarding safety at schools in 	<p>Last update to BC’s safe schools strategy was in 2007, the majority of Ontario’s actions began in 2008.</p> <p>Both jurisdictions have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codes of conduct • Duty to report • A kids help phone • Safety survey questions • Multi-language information for parents <p>Ontario has a Premier’s award for safe schools Ontario invests over \$10m for 170 specialists – psychologists, social workers, etc.</p>

	<p>motivated by hate are unacceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money for programs for expelled students and students serving long-term suspensions. • A multi-lingual pamphlet for parents on bullying prevention. • A registry of bullying prevention programs on the Ministry website and has developed school climate surveys. • Provincial Premier's Award. • Anti-bullying week in November. 	<p>Satisfaction Survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclaim Anti-bullying week and Pink Shirt Day in February. • Help lines: Youth Against Violence Line and VictimLink BC – both 24/7 government support. 	
<p>Improvements – proposed (Ontario annnc'd but legislation not passed)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined bullying in their legislation. • Expulsion can be considered for bullying – up from suspension. • Boards must support student activities promoting gender equity, anti-racism, respect for people with disabilities, all sexual orientations and gender identities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An anonymous online reporting tool (mobile) for students. • A five-year multi- level training regime for positive safe school cultures and will train community teams in threat risk assessment for high risk students and serious incidents. • Enhanced multi-media resources for parents. • Provincial guidelines for safe schools and a template sample for district level protocols. • Enhanced codes of conduct that will include a duty to report and respond and strengthened language consistent with the Human Rights Act. • Districts will develop a protocol with community partners – MCFD, police, mental health. • Each district will have a safe schools coordinator. • A pro-d day for teachers focused on anti-bullying. • Safe schools training will be part of pre-service training for new teachers. • Encourage independent schools to create codes of conduct and participate in the provincial training. 	<p>BC's approach focuses on culture shift and training, Ontario's emphasizes the "tough love" approach.</p> <p>Ontario has made legislative changes; BC's changes will be through a Ministerial Order for public schools and will encourage independent school to participate.</p> <p>BC is providing province-wide training on safe school cultures and how to identify behaviours and conduct threat risk assessments. BC's threat and risk assessment is not currently being done in Ontario. Ontario's training focused on applying discipline in a non-discriminatory manner.</p> <p>BC's online reporting tool will provide easier access for students and goes directly to the school district; this tool complements existing 24 hour emergency services and help lines. Ontario has no such tool for students.</p> <p>Ontario put in legislation that boards must support student activities and clubs that promote gender equity, sexual orientation and anti-racism. BC is strengthening the Codes of Conduct to require boards to state the BC Human Rights Code language in their document.</p> <p>Ontario does not have metrics to show that their approach has made a difference.</p>

			BC additions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe schools coordinator • District protocols with community partners • Provincial guidelines for safe schools • Pre-service training for teachers • Province-wide pro-d for teachers • Evaluation and measurement
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Quebec	Comparison with BC
<p><i>Violence in the Schools: Action Plan 2008 – 2011</i></p> <p>\$16.8M investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to report • School climate survey • Funding for regional support officers to provide education, guidance and expertise to the region and works with the provincial training team to train regional resource group • Encourage school boards to adopt a structured, coherent approach to intervening, preventing and dealing with violence • \$2.3m annually to boards to support initiatives to prevent and deal with violence • \$1.75m to support suspended or expelled students • Better prepare new and incoming teachers to deal with violence through universities • Create a monitoring system to track violence in schools • Semi-annual newsletter promoting best practices and programs • Ministry website focused on violence in schools • Organize a provincial forum/event for sharing of expertise • Create a directory of procedures and programs for preventing and dealing with school violence • Evaluate the implementation of the action plan and its impact with results being released in 2012 • \$7M for to fight anti-gay bullying in schools, workplace and society <p>Annc’d Feb 15 - Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public and private schools in Quebec will adopt an anti-bullying, anti-violence plan • Schools to establish partnerships with the police and social services in their area • Each school must designate someone responsible for the anti-bullying effort • Schools must produce an annual report detailing what has been done in the past year to eliminate 	<p>Quebec’s plan was to create a comprehensive, integrated approach to preventing and dealing with school violence. BC’s approach is to create positive safe schools culture in addition to threat risk assessment for student violence – towards themselves and/or others.</p> <p>The plan relies on regional coordinators and regional resource groups to educate and train school boards and schools. Quebec is providing funding for these regional coordinators.</p> <p>BC’s approach is to have a designated safe school’s coordinator in each district. Training is being provided on a provincial level in order to ensure consistent approaches across the province in combination with district community plans. Safe schools coordinators will share best practices through an online community and face-to-face sessions.</p> <p>Quebec provides annual funding for suspended or expelled students to continue their education (\$1.75m), and for programs to prevent and deal with violence at an early age (\$2.3m).</p>

<div>bullying</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school principal will be obliged to lead the effort, will have to communicate with parents• \$1m ad campaign - partnership with media - \$75,000 contribution for \$900,000 in advertising No new government money• Financial sanctions for schools who don't comply with legislation	
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FINLAND:

Schools that have high performance rates may have successful programs to deal with bullying. To determine this, we reviewed one of the highest performing jurisdictions in the world as identified in the 2009 Program for International Student Assessments (PISA), Finland. This is a country with roughly the same student population as BC (500,000) and experience with extreme violence (**Jokela School Massacre**, November 7, 2007). In response to the bullying, the Finnish Ministry of Education funded *KiusaamistaVastaan (KiVa)*, Against Bullying, an evidence-based research program out of University of Turku, Finland. The program’s approach is to influence bystanders’ behavior to increase empathy, self-efficacy, and support for victimized peers. Nearly 80% of targets reported a stop in bullying in a controlled experiment.¹ This program has been voluntarily adopted by 90% of Finnish public schools, and is being implemented in various regions around the world including the Netherlands, Sweden and Kansas in the U.S.
