



## REL Appalachia Ask A REL Response

Behavior and Mental Health; Discipline  
July 2019

### Question:

What are some promising practices to address racially motivated hate crimes and promote a positive school climate in middle and high schools?

### Response:

Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about addressing racially motivated hate crimes and positive school climate in middle and high schools. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. Ask A REL provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations in response to questions about available education research.

Following an established REL Appalachia research protocol, we searched for peer-reviewed articles and other research reports on strategies or best practices that could address racially motivated hate crimes or promote a positive school climate in middle and high schools. The sources included ERIC and other federally funded databases and organizations, research institutions, academic research databases, and general Internet search engines. For more details, please see the methods section at the end of this document.

The research team did not evaluate the quality of the resources provided in this response; we offer them only for your reference. Also, the search included the most commonly used research databases and search engines to produce the references presented here, but the references are not necessarily comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist. References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance.

### References

Bajaj, M., Ghaffar-Kucher, A., & Desai, K. (2016). Brown bodies and xenophobic bullying in U.S. schools: Critical analysis and strategies for action. *Harvard Educational Review, 86*(4), 481–505. Abstract retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1123787>; full text available at <https://works.bepress.com/monisha-bajaj/10/>.

*From the abstract:* "In this essay, Monisha Bajaj, Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher, and Karishma Desai present an evidence-based action project that seeks to interrupt and transform

bullying behaviors directed at South Asian American youth in schools in the United States. In the context of this essay and project, they argue that larger macro-level forces which promote misinformation about youth who inhabit brown bodies have given rise to bullying and, in some cases, harassment and hate crimes in schools. Conventional literature on bullying offers inadequate frames for how the forces of Islamophobia—which affect all those perceived to be Muslim—and bullying come together to shape realities for South Asian American youth in schools. The authors advance new frameworks and strategies for understanding xenophobic and bias-based bullying and explore schools as sites of possibility to interrupt Islamophobia and misinformation about South Asian Americans.”

Cabral, N., Gordon, M., & Leighninger, M. (2018). *Addressing incidents of bias in schools: A guide for preventing and reacting to discrimination affecting students*. New York, NY: Public Agenda. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED594792>

*From the abstract:* “There is a growing concern about discrimination and hate crimes taking place across the country. While incidents of bias can occur anywhere, it is especially troubling when it happens in our schools. Discussing race and discrimination can be difficult for the most seasoned of professionals, however, that discomfort should not prevent important conversations from taking place. This guide is designed to bring together a school community in order to address and prevent incidents of bias, discrimination, and hate crimes. It includes suggestions for facilitating the discussions so that they are safe, illuminating and productive, as well as for organizing the process so that it fits in the daily rhythm of the school community.”

Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P. (2015). Law and policy on the concept of bullying at school. *American Psychologist*, 70(4), 333–343. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Dewey\\_Cornell/publication/276148312\\_Law\\_and\\_Policy\\_on\\_the\\_Concept\\_of\\_Bullying\\_at\\_School/links/59d8232faca272e6095f92e2/Law-and-Policy-on-the-Concept-of-Bullying-at-School.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Dewey_Cornell/publication/276148312_Law_and_Policy_on_the_Concept_of_Bullying_at_School/links/59d8232faca272e6095f92e2/Law-and-Policy-on-the-Concept-of-Bullying-at-School.pdf)

*From the abstract:* “The nationwide effort to reduce bullying in U.S. schools can be regarded as part of larger civil and human rights movements that have provided children with many of the rights afforded to adult citizens, including protection from harm in the workplace. Many bullied children find that their schools are hostile environments, but civil rights protections against harassment apply only to children who fall into protected classes, such as racial and ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, and victims of gender harassment or religious discrimination. This article identifies the conceptual challenges that bullying poses for legal and policy efforts, reviews judicial and legislative efforts to reduce bullying, and makes some recommendations for school policy. Recognition that all children have a right to public education would be one avenue for broadening protection against bullying to all children.”

Gage, N. A., Prykanowski, D. A., & Larson, A. (2014). School climate and bullying victimization: A latent class growth model analysis. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29(3), 256–271. Abstract

retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1055858>; full text available at [https://www.apa.org/images/spq-0000064\\_tcm7-176465.pdf](https://www.apa.org/images/spq-0000064_tcm7-176465.pdf)

*From the abstract:* “Researchers investigating school-level approaches for bullying prevention are beginning to discuss and target school climate as a construct that (a) may predict prevalence and (b) be an avenue for school-wide intervention efforts (i.e., increasing positive school climate). Although promising, research has not fully examined and established the social-ecological link between school climate factors and bullying/peer aggression. To address this gap, we examined the association between school climate factors and bullying victimization for 4,742 students in Grades 3–12 across 3 school years in a large, very diverse urban school district using latent class growth modeling. Across 3 different models (elementary, secondary, and transition to middle school), a 3-class model was identified, which included students at high-risk for bullying victimization. Results indicated that, for all students, respect for diversity and student differences (e.g., racial diversity) predicted within-class decreases in reports of bullying. High-risk elementary students reported that adult support in school was a significant predictor of within-class reduction of bullying, and high-risk secondary students report peer support as a significant predictor of within-class reduction of bullying.”

Nance, J. P. (2013). Students, security, and race. *Emory Law Journal*, 63(1), 1–57.

Retrieved from [http://law.emory.edu/elj/\\_documents/volumes/63/1/articles/nance.pdf](http://law.emory.edu/elj/_documents/volumes/63/1/articles/nance.pdf).

*From the abstract:* “In the wake of the terrible shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, our nation has turned its attention to school security. For example, several states have passed or are considering passing legislation that will provide new funding to schools for security equipment and law enforcement officers. Strict security measures in schools are certainly not new. In response to prior acts of school violence, many public schools for years have relied on metal detectors, random sweeps, locked gates, surveillance cameras, and law enforcement officers to promote school safety. Before policymakers and school officials invest more money in strict security measures, this Article provides additional factors that should be considered. First, drawing on recent, restricted data from the U.S. Department of Education, this Article presents an original empirical analysis revealing that low-income students and minority students are much more likely to experience intense security conditions in their schools than other students, even when taking into account neighborhood crime, school crime, and school disorder. These findings raise concerns that such inequalities may continue or worsen as policymakers provide additional funding for security measures. Second, this Article argues that strict security measures do not support long-term solutions needed to effectively prevent school violence. Indeed, strict security measures may exacerbate the underlying problems by creating barriers of adversity and mistrust between students and educators.”

Peguero, A. A. (2012). Schools, bullying, and inequality: Intersecting factors and complexities with the stratification of youth victimization at school. *Sociology Compass*, 6(5), 402–412.

Retrieved from

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264257260\\_Schools\\_Bullying\\_and\\_Inequality\\_Intersecting\\_Factors\\_and\\_Complexities\\_with\\_the\\_Stratification\\_of\\_Youth\\_Victimization\\_at\\_School](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264257260_Schools_Bullying_and_Inequality_Intersecting_Factors_and_Complexities_with_the_Stratification_of_Youth_Victimization_at_School)

*From the abstract:* “Bullying within United States (U.S.) schools is a growing concern among parents, school officials and policymakers. In early 2011, the first-ever White House Conference on Bullying Prevention was held in hope of addressing bullying within U.S. schools. Although the social, political, and media attention is increasing, it is important to consider the complexities and disparities associated with school bullying. In this article, four of the wide array of influences that increase the vulnerabilities of youth to be a victim of bullying at school are reviewed: (i) race and ethnicity, (ii) being and immigrant, (iii) gender, and; (iv) sexual orientation. Understanding and acknowledging the inequalities associated with school bullying, as well as the policies implemented in response, is instrumental for the U.S.’ efforts towards providing safe, healthy, and democratic learning environments.”

Price, M., Hill, N. E., Belle, L., Liang, B. & Perella, J. (2019). Teacher relationships and adolescents experiencing identity-based victimization: What matters for whom among stigmatized adolescents. *School Mental Health*. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maggi\\_Price/publication/333320818\\_Teacher\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Adolescents\\_Experiencing\\_Identity-Based\\_Victimization\\_What\\_Matters\\_for\\_Whom\\_Among\\_Stigmatized\\_Adolescents/links/5ce6b97f92851c4eabb935c8/Teacher-Relationships-and-Adolescents-Experiencing-Identity-Based-Victimization-What-Matters-for-Whom-Among-Stigmatized-Adolescents.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maggi_Price/publication/333320818_Teacher_Relationships_and_Adolescents_Experiencing_Identity-Based_Victimization_What_Matters_for_Whom_Among_Stigmatized_Adolescents/links/5ce6b97f92851c4eabb935c8/Teacher-Relationships-and-Adolescents-Experiencing-Identity-Based-Victimization-What-Matters-for-Whom-Among-Stigmatized-Adolescents.pdf)

*From the abstract:* “The negative impact of discrimination on adolescent mental health is well established, but less is known about the effects of identity-based bullying (i.e., verbal or physical assaults targeting identity(ies)). The current study examined the impact of identity-based victimization (i.e., everyday discrimination and identity-based bullying) on mental health, and the protective role of teacher–student relationships, in a diverse sample of adolescents. Data from a diverse sample of 9th–12th graders (N=986, 51% youth of Color, 52% cisgender girls, 22% sexual minorities, 41% free/reduced-price lunch status) in a semi-urban high school were analyzed using structural equation modeling analyses, including moderation and multigroup comparisons. Findings indicated that identity-based victimization is pervasive and negatively associated with mental health. Adolescents with stigmatized identities across sexual orientation, race, and gender faced a higher risk of experiencing identity-based victimization, and mental health challenges. Teacher–student relationships that were positive and autonomy-enhancing had a moderating effect on the association between identity-based victimization and mental health for many adolescents, such that they were not protective for those experiencing more severe victimization (i.e., high discrimination or identity-based bullying). Multigroup analyses indicated significant model fit differences across race and gender. Results suggest that extant school-based supports are not enough to combat the pervasive effects of identity-based victimization. Findings support the examination and implementation of changes in clinical and school-based practice and policy to better support stigmatized and victimized adolescents.”

Willoughby, B. (2012). *Responding to hate and bias in school: A guide for administrators, counselors and teachers*. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED541255>

*From the abstract:* “Your school has plans and protocols in place to respond to fires, severe weather, medical emergencies, fights and weapons possession. But what about school

incidents like those listed above that involve bigotry and hate? Are plans in place to respond to a bias incident or hate crime? Too often these plans are created in the moment during the actual crisis. Bias incidents are far too complex for on-the-fly planning; an early misstep can heighten tension and damage chances for long-term success. This paper is designed primarily for school administrators, but teachers, staff, counselors, students and others also may find guidance here. The guide is divided into three sections: (1) Before a Crisis Occurs. How can you and other school leaders assess your school's climate with an eye toward defusing tension, preventing escalation and avoiding problems?; (2) When There's a Crisis. What are the nine key points to consider when responding to a crisis that has been triggered by a bias incident at your school?; and (3) After the Worst is Over. How can you address long-term planning and capacity building for the future, including development of social emotional skills? Checklists, forms, and worksheets are appended."

### **Additional Ask A REL Responses to Consult**

Ask A REL Central at Marzano Research. (2018). *What competencies and strategies have a positive impact on culturally responsive pedagogy?* Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/askarel/responses/teacherprep-1218.asp>

Ask A REL Midwest at American Institutes for Research. (2017). *What does the research say about differentiated or disproportionate behavioral interventions?* Retrieved from [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/askarel/2017/RDR004\\_BI\\_Response\\_April.aspx](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/askarel/2017/RDR004_BI_Response_April.aspx)

Ask A REL Northwest at Education Northwest. (2018). *What does the research say about the effectiveness and implementation of restorative practices in schools?* Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/askarel/restorative-justice.asp>

Ask A REL West at WestEd. (2018). *What is the relationship between culturally inclusive practices and student outcomes?* Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Ask/Details/2>

### **Additional Organizations to Consult**

IDRA EAC-South: <https://www.idraeacsouth.org/>

*From the website:* "The IDRA EAC-South builds bridges among administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members so that all stakeholders can find that common higher ground where all students will benefit regardless of race, sex or national origin. The center's philosophy maintains that desegregated school settings must ensure full inclusion and participation by all students and their parents regardless of race, sex, national origin or religion. The IDRA EAC-South is one of four federally-funded centers that provide technical assistance and training at the request of school districts and other responsible governmental agencies to build capacity of local educators to ensure a more equitable learning environment for all students."

Not In Our Town: <https://www.niot.org/>

*From the website:* "Not In Our Town and Not In Our School are both projects of The

Working Group, an Oakland-based nonprofit founded in 1988. Not In Our Town was launched in 1995 with our landmark PBS film that documented the heroic efforts of Billings, Montana citizens who stood up for their neighbors after a series of hate crimes. They inspired hundreds of communities in the United States and around the world to take action against hate...With film, social media, and organizing tools, Not In Our Town helps local leaders build vibrant, diverse cities and towns, where everyone is encouraged to participate.”

- Not In Our School: <https://www.niot.org/nios>

Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/>

*From the website:* “Teaching Tolerance provides free resources to educators—teachers, administrators, counselors and other practitioners—who work with children from kindergarten through high school. Educators use our materials to supplement the curriculum, to inform their practices, and to create civil and inclusive school communities where children are respected, valued and welcome participants.”

## Methods

### Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- (“hate crime\*”) AND (race OR racial) AND (secondary OR middle OR high AND school) AND (guide OR practice OR strateg\* OR intervention)
- (bully\*) AND (race OR racial) AND (secondary OR middle OR high AND school) AND (guide OR practice OR strateg\* OR intervention)
- “positive school climate” AND (race OR racial) AND (secondary OR middle OR high AND school)

### Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the academic database ProQuest, Google Scholar, and the commercial search engine Google.

### Reference Search and Selection Criteria

In reviewing resources, Reference Desk researchers consider—among other things—these four factors:

- Date of the publication: Searches cover information available within the last ten years, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- Reference sources: IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols receive highest priority. Applicable resources must be publicly available online and in English.

- **Methodology:** The following methodological priorities/considerations guide the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized controlled trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, policy briefs, etc., generally in this order; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected), study duration, etc.; (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, etc.
- **Existing knowledge base:** Vetted resources (e.g., peer-reviewed research journals) are the primary focus, but the research base is occasionally slim or nonexistent. In those cases, the best resources available may include, for example, reports, white papers, guides, reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, and organization websites.

Resources included in this document were last accessed on June 19, 2019. URLs, descriptions, and content included here were current at that time.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by education stakeholders in the Appalachia region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia (REL AP) at SRI International. This Ask A REL response was developed by REL AP under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0004 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, administered by SRI International. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.