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Sullivan County K-12 Administrators' Perceptions and Attitudes
Regarding Harassment and the Associated Legal Liability

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

by
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December 2005

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Keywords: Safe Schools, Harassment, Bullying, Sexual Harassment, Racial Harassment,
Gender/Sexual Orientation Harassment

ABSTRACT

Sullivan County K-12 Administrators' Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Harassment and the Associated Legal Liability

by

Janie W. Stapleton

All students should be guaranteed a learning environment that is free from all forms of harassment that negatively affect the school climate as well as the learning environment.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of Sullivan County, Tennessee, K-12 administrators regarding harassment and the associated legal liability. The study also ascertained the attitudes of the administrators pertaining to various forms of student-to-student harassment in their schools, collected data regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of mandated anti-harassment measures, and examined administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training.

The research design was descriptive and used data gathered from a survey instrument developed by the researcher regarding administrators' perceptions and attitudes regarding harassment and the associated legal liability. The survey contained 26 question-items. The study's population consisted of 48 Sullivan County administrators. Data were analyzed using analysis of variance, *t* test, Pearson's correlation, Tamhane post hoc pairwise comparison, and Tukey post hoc test.

The results of the study indicated that administrators were knowledgeable about the law and legal ramifications regarding student-to-student harassment. The results also showed that middle and high school students needed more harassment-avoidance training than elementary students. No significant differences were found in their perceptions of the current status of harassment based on population, socioeconomic status, or level of the school.

The study offers a valuable insight into administrators' perception and attitudes regarding harassment and the associated legal liability. It also offers a number of recommendations including the need for more harassment-avoidance training to combat this problem for middle and high school students. Effective implementation of bullying prevention programs will need to involve all school stakeholders in order to be successful. The results may be used by school systems to plan for future staff development regarding harassment-avoidance training. Students have a right to feel safe at school as they grow and mature into adulthood. It is the duty of all schools to provide them that safe and secure atmosphere.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my children, Mark, Kelly, and Michael Smelser, who have stood behind me throughout all my endeavors as a lifelong learner. It was their encouragement and sacrifices that provided the motivation needed to complete this project. I love you all.

I would also like to dedicate the study to my grandchildren, Porter, Hannah, and Brittany, who have given up lots of time with their Granna so that I could pursue my desires. I love you and promise more fun times in the future.

A special dedication is made to my parents, Ernestine and Mike Weaver, who instilled in me at an early age the love of reading and learning and who inspired me to become a lifelong learner. Although you are not with me any longer, your influence is always a part of me.

Thank you to my brothers, Jim and Michael Weaver, who have always encouraged and supported my educational endeavors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“The 16-year-old gunman who killed nine people and himself on a remote Indian reservation in March, 2005, was described as a loner who was teased by schoolmates” (O’Driscoll, 2005, p. A4).

Burke (2000) reported from Goal Seven of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which was adopted by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1994, and stipulated, “By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning” (p. 18).

Wessler (2003) introduced the reader to examples of abuse in *The Respectful School*:

I’m in special ed, and when people call me stupid every day, day in and day out, after a while, you just can’t stand it anymore.

There was one girl on the bus who is pretty fat. The other kids pick on her so bad, every day. I don’t know how she can stand it.

I was harassed daily about being gay or bisexual, and it got so bad that I attempted suicide.

A group of boys ganged up on one girl, calling her a “whore” and a “slut” till she dropped out.

Someone etched “KKK” on a desk that a black 11th grade girl sat at every morning. She was very scared and started missing school. (p. 4)

According to Pereira (1994), perpetrators of violence in schools often based their violent acts on the “victim’s aggressive or nonaggressive nature, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or academic/intelligence” (p. 49).

Pauken (1997) stipulated that various forms of harassment were common in schools in the 1990s. In Pauken’s opinion, schools must implement anti-harassment rules and regulations in order to reduce the legal ramifications that may arise if a student is injured and chooses to sue the school district for negligence. Pauken added that harassment among students was becoming one of the most litigated areas in school law, which made the examination of legal knowledge and responses of school officials toward student violence and harassment an important matter.

School leaders cognizant of the duties and potential liabilities of their jobs understand that formulating and implementing sound policies is crucial. When policies are established, adhered to, and applied even-handedly, it is difficult for a court to find a school administrator personally liable. With this in mind, formulating a comprehensive, easily understood, properly enforced policy--whether on harassment, equal access, or other school-related issues--is essential to limiting liability for denial of equal treatment and improving safety in the school. (Taylor, 2003, p. 35)

Statement of the Problem

For the past few years, Sullivan County schools have been the subject of lawsuits that have focused on complaints about violations of the civil rights of minority students. In 2003, the Sullivan County Board of Education agreed to the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the Consent Order in Madison v. Sullivan County Board of Education. By adopting this Comprehensive Plan, the Sullivan County Board of Education committed itself to safeguarding the rights of all students within the school system to learn in an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination based on race, color, or national origin (Preble, Gallagher, & McDonald, 2003).

All Sullivan County schools are now working with the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence and Main Street Academix (MSA) to assess school climate and safety as a part of an overall effort to improve student academic performance and the success and well being of all students.

A Safe Measures™ School Climate Survey of 30 survey questions was administered to Sullivan County students in April 2003. This survey measured the levels of bias, prejudice, disrespect, harassment, and violence between students and between teachers and students. Students responded to each question by choosing one of five responses on a 5-point Likert type scale. Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003) reported, "Sexual orientation (perceived or actual), style (dress, hair style, etc.), physical appearance (weight, height, etc.), academic ability, and physical or mental disability as areas of harassment" (p. 20).

In the Sullivan County Central and North zones,

Seventy percent of high school students, 72% of middle school students, and 86% of elementary school students reported that they are free from routine bullying and harassment and feel safe at school. (Preble, Gallagher, et al., 2003, p. 20)

In the East and South zones,

Seventy-five percent of high school students, 77% of middle school students, and 85% of elementary school students reported that they are free from routine bullying and harassment and feel safe at school. (Preble, Pfeifer, & McDonald, 2003, pp. 19-20)

Preble, Pfeifer, et al., (2003) concluded that, while the statistics cited in regard to levels of harassment in Sullivan County appeared to be relatively small, the impact on individual students could be profound, even life threatening. The authors included the example of Columbine as a reminder that revenge had become a new paradigm in the minds of targeted students.

According to Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003), “Sullivan County will succeed in addressing the deeply rooted beliefs, practices, and behaviors that contribute to peer rejection, bullying, and harassment” (p. 11).

Prior studies have been conducted analyzing school administrators’ knowledge of the law relating to violent conduct among students as well as administrators’ knowledge of special education laws. Cunningham (1994) reported that researchers tested the legal knowledge of school administrators in the past, dealing primarily with areas of law such as special education, school prayer, and general constitutional law. However, very few studies discussed laws as they related to harassment among elementary and secondary schools or examined the comfort levels of principals regarding the use of their school-related legal knowledge.

The purpose of this study was to collect and report the attitudes of Sullivan County K-12 administrators pertaining to various forms of student-to-student harassment in their schools. Information was collected on the experiences the administrators had with student-to-student harassment in their schools over the past two years. Information was also collected on Sullivan

County K-12 administrators' attitudes toward the effectiveness of anti-harassment measures their schools implemented to reduce or eliminate student-to-student harassment and to determine if more harassment avoidance training is needed for administrators, faculty, and students. Finally, the administrators' level of confidence regarding legal knowledge dealing with student-to-student harassment was ascertained as it relates to their home school.

Significance of the Study

The research in this study was designed to provide useful information to administrators regarding various types of harassment and the legal issues related to harassment. By developing an awareness of administrators' perceptions of legal matters dealing with student-to-student harassment, school systems may be able to improve the overall safety of the schools. Administrators need to know the legal ramifications of dealing with harassment issues in the schools.

This study contributes to the current research and will provide information to the Sullivan County Board of Education in determining if the federal government mandate for harassment-avoidance training for all Sullivan County school employees and students has been successful as perceived by the administrators in the county.

Research Questions

Through quantitative analysis, 25 principals and 13 assistant principals or 79.2% of Sullivan County administrators employed in 28 Sullivan County schools provided their perceptions of various types of student-to-student harassment issues in their schools and their legal liability.

Many questions pertaining to the topic of harassment could be addressed in a study. However, for the purpose of this study, the following seven research questions were addressed:

1. What are the overall perceptions of administrators regarding harassment at their schools?

2. Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment at their respective schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
3. Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of (a) administrators, (b) faculty, (c) students, based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
4. Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the types of harassment that are more prevalent at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
5. Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities out of fear of legal action based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
6. Are there significant differences among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on the positions of principal or assistant principal, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree earned?
7. Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems based on the level of the school?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions and terms will be used in this study:

Administrator – “An administrator is a person employed by the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to work in an administrative position” (North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.).

Assistant Principal – “An assistant principal is an administrator at an elementary, middle, or a high school who is second in position behind the principal” (Wikimedia Foundation, 2001).

Bullying – Dan Olweus, professor of psychology at the University of Bergen, Norway, considered the preeminent researcher in the world in the field of childhood-bullying research, offered the following definition:

Bullying is an activity occurring when someone is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Negative actions are intentional infliction or attempts at such, including threatening, taunting, teasing, name-calling, hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, and restraining. It is possible to carry out negative actions without the use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person’s wishes. (Stein, 1999, pp. 50-51)

Comfort Level – “The subject’s perception of his/her confidence, knowledge, ability to apply his/her knowledge, and correctly make decisions” (Crockett, 1994, p. 11).

Gender/Sexual Orientation Harassment – Sullivan County School Board Policy #3098 defined sexual orientation harassment as:

Verbal or physical conduct based on a student’s actual or perceived sexual orientation including but not limited to unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, which offends, denigrates or belittles any individual because of his or her sexual orientation. (Sullivan County Department of Education, Brochure policy 3098, 2004c, pp. 1-2)

Harassment – “A synonym for victimization” (Juvonen & Graham, 2001, p. xiii). “Harassment is words, conduct, or actions directed at a specific person that annoys, alarms, or causes a lot of emotional distress for no legitimate purpose” (Region VII Comprehensive Center, 2004).

Law – “A body of rules of action or conduct prescribed by controlling authority, and having binding legal force” (Pauken, 1997, p. 12).

Legal Liability – “The condition of being responsible for a possible or actual loss, penalty, expense, or burden” (Pauken, 1997, p. 12).

Negligence – “Any conduct, usually causing injury to another’s person or property that falls below the degree of care that a reasonable person would exercise in the same situation or a standard of care fixed by law” (Pauken, 1997, p. 18). “Acts or omissions demonstrating a failure to use reasonable or ordinary care. It may refer to inadvertence, carelessness, or the failure to foresee potential harm” (Deskbook Encyclopedia, 1996, p. 2).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 – “A landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America’s schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b).

Perception – “One’s understanding, insight, or awareness or viewpoint” (Johnston, 2003, p. 7).

Prejudice – “Judging a person strictly on appearance or background” (Thompson, 1994, p. 9).

Principal – “The head administrator or designee of a public elementary, middle, junior high, or high school” (Pauken, 1997, p. 19).

Racial Harassment – “Unwanted nonverbal, verbal, written, graphic, or physical behavior directed at an individual or group on the basis of race or color” (NW Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Sullivan County School Board Policy #3096 defines racial harassment as:

Physical or verbal conduct relating to an individual’s race when the conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student’s academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student’s academic opportunities. (Sullivan County Department of Education, Brochure policy 3096, 2004a, pp. 1-2)

Safe Schools – Stephens (2004) stated that a safe school was in place when students could learn and teachers could teach in a welcoming environment, free of intimidation and fear.

Sexual Harassment – “Defining sexual harassment is one of the law’s newest frontiers” (Kantrowitz, 1992, p. 16). “Any unwelcome and unwanted behavior of a sexual nature. It may take the form of ridiculing, degrading, or threatening another based on an individual’s gender. It may be verbal, physical, and/or visual form” (Johnston, 2003, p. 6). “Sexual

harassment involves manifestations of power or violence which use sexuality to control the behavior of others” (Bogart & Stein, 1992, p. 146). Sullivan County School Board Policy #3093 defines sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature” (Sullivan County Department of Education, Brochure policy 3093, 2004b, pp. 1-2).

Student-to-Student Harassment – “Emotional abuse perpetrated by students against other students, including verbal threats or bullying” (Pauken, 1997, p. 20). “Face-to-face confrontation (e.g., physical aggression, verbal abuse, nonverbal gesturing) or social manipulation through a third party (e.g., social ostracism, spreading rumors)” (Juvonen & Graham, 2001, p. xiii).

Title I School –

A federally funded assistance program for economically and educationally disadvantaged students. Title I refers to a section of Public Law 207-110 (and predecessor, P.L. 103-382) “Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.” Currently, students classified as Title I include those in schools offering targeted assistance to low-income children and also schools with high rates of low-income children that use Title I funds to support schoolwide programs. (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a)

Limitations and Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to elementary and secondary administrators of the public schools of Sullivan County, Tennessee, school district who have been trained by the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence to recognize and deal with students who have been harassed or bullied based on sexual, racial, or gender/sexual orientation issues. This training may have affected their responses.
2. The timing of the request to complete the instrument may have been a factor. Administrators were participating in beginning-of-the-year meetings and opening of the school term.

3. This study addressed student-to-student harassment only and did not address student-to-teacher harassment or teacher-to-student harassment.
4. Other school personnel, such as counselors, teachers, students, board members, and parents, were not included. However, future studies may be modeled after this one to access the knowledge and practices of these groups.
5. The administrator response rate was 79.2%.
6. The lack of appropriate data required to use chosen statistics is considered a limitation.

Overview of the Study

This quantitative study is organized and presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the study, as well as a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and pertinent research questions. In addition, Chapter 1 contains the significance of the study and definitions of terms used in the study. Limitations and delimitations as well as an overview of the study are also included.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to the issues being addressed in this study. The history behind the mandate of harassment-avoidance training in Sullivan County is identified as well as harassment as a legal issue. The literature also identifies information relating to safe schools as well as information dealing with bullying, racial harassment, sexual harassment, and gender/sexual orientation harassment in the public schools. The administrator's role in a safe school in regard to harassment is also presented.

Chapter 3 highlights the research methodology and design. It includes a description of the methods used to gather data and procedures used in the study. It also provides information about the population in the study and describes the process of data collection.

The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents a summary and discussion of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations for future consideration.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

No school, whether elementary, middle, or high school, can be completely safe. However, establishing a safe learning environment is essential to academic success for all students. “The Bush administration is holding U. S. schools increasingly accountable for the academic success of all students through its No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Part of the NCLB is the requirement to eliminate persistently unsafe schools” (Preble, Gallagher, et al., 2003, p. 4). President Bush’s *No Child Left Behind Act of 2002* stated this challenge: “All children need a safe environment in which to learn and achieve. Too many schools in America remain unsafe; too many teachers are threatened by violence; and too many children fear for their safety” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b).

It was the opinion of Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003) that unchallenged bullying and harassment could escalate and explode into violence. The authors reported that their theory was supported by a 2001 report by the Surgeon General of the United States as well as by a 2002 U. S. Secret Service report that linked hostile school climate to school violence.

Many experts on violence say there’s a common pattern in school violence. No student just wakes up one morning, loads a rifle, and decides to carry out a school massacre without warning signs. The shooters generally come from troubled family backgrounds, dress or act differently from their peers – and get bullied or teased at school. (O’Driscoll, 2005, p. 4A)

The term “harassment” has become a common term in public schools today. The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature and research related to various forms of harassment and the legal issues regarding harassment in K-12 schools.

The first section outlines the issue of safe schools. Section two presents the legal issues dealing with students in public schools in regard to various types of harassment and bullying. Section three discusses the history relating to a federal mandate for harassment training for all

employees and students of Sullivan County, Tennessee. Literature relating to bullying, sexual harassment, racial harassment, and gender/sexual orientation harassment is presented in this chapter. The principal's role in dealing with harassment in the school as well as perceptions of knowledge of harassment laws and their influence on safe schools conclude Chapter 2 of this study.

Safe Schools

After another school shooting in March 2005, *USA Today* published an article that contained the following statements:

School safety improved after the mass murder of students at Columbine High School in 1999, but experts disagree on whether safety efforts have grown lax more recently. "‘Complacent’ That’s the first word that came to mind when I heard about the shooting in Red Lake, Minn., on Monday," says Curt Lavarello, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, which represents 16,000 school police officers. Others say it’s important not to overreact to isolated examples of school violence. "The number of fatalities has been quite low since Columbine," says Marsha Levick, legal director of the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia. "Fear shouldn’t cause us to lose our way in handling discipline problems at school." In 2005, there have been 19 violent deaths among the 54 million students enrolled in 119,000 elementary and secondary schools. (Cauchon, 2005, p. A1)

Opinions vary as to the safety of students in public schools today. Cauchon (2005) presented the opinion that schools increasingly have focused resources on improving test scores at the expense of safety.

In the article *Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools*, Arnette and Walsleben (1998) reported that Thoreau once wrote in his journal, "Nothing is so much to be feared as fear" (p. 1). It was the opinion of Arnette and Walsleben that the country faced the threat of the invasion of fear into the schools.

Wessler (2003) expressed the opinion that many students have their school experiences defined by fear of the next humiliating comment or fear of the potential for violence as a result of verbal harassment which can lead to threats. Wessler also expressed the opinion that many

students attended school in fear for their physical and emotional safety and were denied the opportunity to learn because they focused their energies on trying to keep safe.

Van Acker (1995) stated that schools were once thought to be safe havens in an otherwise violent world. However, Van Acker maintained that most people agreed this was no longer the case. The National Education Association (2005) reported, “Students learn best and achieve their full potential in safe and orderly classrooms. Statistically, schools continue to be one of the most secure places for our children” (p. 1). MacDonald and da Costa (1996) reported, “75.0% of students generally feel safe at school and 4.0% never feel safe” (pp. 8-9).

“Unless staff and students feel safe in school, neither teaching nor learning will occur. For many school-age children, however, fear is a realistic response to conditions in and around their schools” (Kaplan & Owings, 2000, p. 24). Stephens (2004) held the opinion that, without safe schools, teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn. Kelley (1980) wrote, “There is general agreement that school environments should be both productive and satisfying for those who are influenced by these environments” (p. 69).

Many ideas exist as to the definition of a safe school. Ronald D. Stephens, NSSC Executive Director, stated:

A safe school is in place when students can learn and teachers can teach in a welcoming environment, free of intimidation and fear. It is a setting where the educational climate fosters a spirit of acceptance and care for all students; where behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and fairly applied. (Stephens, 2004, p. 1)

Kaplan and Owings (2000) reported that a relationship existed between a safe school and a positive learning climate. The authors held the opinion that keeping students safe and increasing learning were connected. According to the authors, successful students who felt safe, valued, and competent were less likely to act aggressively toward others.

“The issue of school safety should be a shared concern for communities, businesses, parents, students, and administrators” (Hill & Hill, 1994, p. 115). According to Devoe, Ruddy, Miller, and Planty (2002), national indicators demonstrated that important gains were made in

the area of school safety. The authors also discovered that crime and safety issues remained substantial problems in our nation's schools. A federal report released in November 2004 showed that violent crime in schools dropped by 50.0% from 1992 to 2002 (Paulson, Miller, & Teicher, 2005).

School learning environments must be structured with high expectations for achievement and behavior and for positive relationships among students and teachers to ensure safer, more inclusive, higher-achieving schools. (Kaplan & Owings, 2000, p. 24)

As written by Marzano (2003) in *What Works in Schools*, a safe and orderly environment was among the factors that had an impact on student achievement. According to Spurling (2004), teachers reported that, when students were involved in bullying, whether as victims or bystanders, academics were affected.

Connors (2000) wrote in her book *If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students*:

Schools must provide a safe place for all the inhabitants to be without fear of being harmed. Parents collectively agree that the number one factor of importance to them is a safe environment for their children. A secure school is not only clean and healthy but also provides a setting for physical, intellectual, emotional, and social safety. (pp. 44-45)

Spurling (2004) reported that, when parents, students, and community members had a positive presence in the school, there was a safer environment.

Legal Issues of Harassment

Crockett (1994) maintained that the federal government became involved in education through various acts of congressional legislation. Crockett stated, "Legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is designed to ensure compliance with other federal statutes or court opinions" (p. 2). Crockett added that this act provided for the involvement of the Justice Department in investigating and prosecuting claims of discrimination.

As reported by Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, and Thurston (1987):

There is little doubt about where legal responsibility for education lies. Because the U. S. Constitution contains no reference to education, authority in this domain is reserved to the states and the people, under the Tenth Amendment. The issue is only slightly

obscured by the fact that historically the states have passed along discretion for most kinds of policy to the local school districts they established. (p. 250)

Various ideas exist as to the school's responsibility toward students' rights. "Schools generally lag behind the courts and general legislation in their administration of justice and upholding the rights of the individual. It can be easily documented that schools have been inclined to suppress individuals' rights" (Roe & Drake, 1974, p. 299).

Stephens (2004) maintained that the district's legal counsel should provide all administrators with a summary of federal, state, and local school safety-related laws and policies. Stephens also stipulated that in-service training regarding student behavior management should be offered for teachers and others involved in student discipline.

Weiler (2004) expressed the opinion that, under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U. S. Constitution, all students were entitled to equal protection under the law. Therefore, schools had a legal, ethical, and moral obligation to provide equal protection for all students.

McCarthy and Webb (2000) reported that the 1992 *Franklin v. Gwinnett* United States Supreme Court case held school districts responsible for responding to students' allegations of sexual harassment. In addition to legal sanctions against the harasser, the student victims were entitled to damages from the school district under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 for sexual harassment by a teacher. School districts could only be held liable under Title IX in cases which involved harassment of students by their peers if officials had actual knowledge of the behavior and failed to act. The student could only receive damages if the behavior was so severe and persistent that it interfered with the victim's ability to receive an appropriate education.

The following reported lawsuit is typical of lawsuits filed against school systems.

Two South Carolina middle school students teased and harassed another student for a period of several months. The two were sent to the school office and disciplined on several occasions and their teacher paddled them once for misbehavior. The harassed student complained one day that the others were throwing spitballs at him and teasing him. Although the teacher instructed the students to stop, a fight broke out at the end of

class and the student who had been harassed broke his leg. The student sued the school district in a South Carolina trial court for medical expenses and injuries, and a jury returned a \$25,000 verdict for him and \$3,000 for his mother. The trial court refused to grant the school district's motion for a directed verdict, finding that there was evidence of gross negligence by the school district. (Deskbook Encyclopedia, 1996, p. 38)

Kadel and Follman (1994) stipulated that schools were often charged with negligence when students were injured or traumatized and were not usually held liable unless the violence was reasonably foreseeable.

As a preventive measure against the problem of lawsuits, Stephens (2004) argued that school policies and rules should reflect behavior expectations outlined in federal, state, county, and local statutes or ordinances. Stephens maintained that students and parents should provide written acknowledgment that they received and read the student discipline code.

As reported in a *Kingsport Times-News* 2005 editorial entitled "Schools Must Take Steps," a 2005 bill passed unanimously by the Tennessee legislature and signed by Governor Bredesen required each of Tennessee's 136 school districts to adopt a formal policy that would prohibit harassment, intimidation, or bullying. This bill required school districts to form harassment-intimidation or bullying-prevention programs and task forces. The bill also stipulated the reporting of harassment incidents (Schools must take steps, 2005).

Harassment in Sullivan County, Tennessee

For the past few years, Sullivan County public schools have been the subject of lawsuits that have focused on complaints about violations of the civil rights of minority students. As reported by Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003), the Sullivan County Board of Education agreed to the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the Consent Order in *Madison v. Sullivan County Board of Education*.

Michael Madison, 18, of Bluff City, Tennessee, filed a \$4.0 million lawsuit in federal district court in March 2000, naming the Sullivan East High School principal, a teacher, and former students as defendants. His cousin, Marquita Madison, 16, of Bluff City, added her name

to the complaint on September 14. Both parties sought \$4 million in damages. Both students claimed that during their time at Sullivan East High School they had observed several instances when racial slurs and hate speech by students were tolerated and condoned by some of the school's faculty. A juvenile court judge ruled that four students had violated Madison's civil rights (Lane, 2000).

The proposed consent order, filed with the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, also settled a lawsuit filed by the victims. That lawsuit, and a separate complaint filed by the Justice Department, alleged that the Sullivan County Board of Education violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by failing to respond appropriately to complaints that the victims were being harassed by other students on the basis of race. The complaint alleged that, due to the school district's failure to put an end to the harassment, one victim completed high school through a home-schooling program and the other victim transferred to another school district. (Department of Justice, 2002)

Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003) reported that, by adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the Sullivan County Department of Education had committed itself to safeguarding the rights of all students within the school system to learn in an environment that was free from all forms of discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. The authors also reported that school leaders made it clear that they intended to use these legal problems as an opportunity to improve the Sullivan County Public Schools for all students.

Ralph F. Boyd, Jr., Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, stated that no student should have to endure harassment while receiving an education. It was his opinion that this case demonstrated the Department's commitment to protecting the civil rights of all Americans to receive equal educational opportunities (Department of Justice, 2002).

Among the Comprehensive Plan's nine parts, the following parts relate directly to student harassment:

- Policy: Prohibition against Racial and National Origin Harassment of Students
- Annual School Climate Assessment
- Dissemination of Policies to Parents and Students

- Student Harassment Prevention Curriculum and Programs
- Mandatory Education and Training Program for Employees (Preble, Gallagher, et al., 2003, p. 8)

The Sullivan County Board of Education (2004) added the following amendment to the Department of Justice's Comprehensive Plan:

Any teacher, administrator or other school personnel who observes, receives a report from a student or otherwise becomes aware that a student has been the victim of racial, color, or national origin harassment is required to immediately report the prohibited conduct to (1) The School Compliance Coordinator, (2) The Principal or Assistant Principal of the student's school, (3) The Sullivan County Board of Education Title VI Coordinator, (4) The Sullivan County Board of Educational Assistant Director of Schools, and/or (5) The Sullivan County Board of Education Director of Schools. (§11)

Bullying

According to Juvonen and Graham (2001), a student was being bullied or victimized when he or she was exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.

Juvonen and Graham identified the following examples of bullying:

- Students say mean and hurtful things or make fun of or use hurtful names.
- Students completely ignore or exclude a student from a group of friends or leave him/her out on purpose.
- Students hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock the student in a room.
- Students tell lies or spread false rumors or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him/her.
- Students do other hurtful things. (p. 6)

According to Preble, Pfeifer, et al. (2003), students became frightened, depressed, or angry when they were victims of verbal, emotional, or physical harassment, threats, or violence. They also reported that students who were routinely bullied or harassed were more likely to do poorly academically, have fewer friends, and were more at risk of adolescent suicide.

The Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence (2004) listed the following statistics regarding bullying:

- Six out of 10 U. S. teens report witnessing bullying at least once a day.
- For students in grades 6 to 10 nearly one out of six are victims of bullying each year.
- 66% of surveyed young people report having been teased at least once in the last month.
- 67% of student perpetrators of school shootings reported having been continually bullied in the past by peers. (p. 3)

Cauchon (2005) reported from a 2002 Secret Service report that stated most attackers felt bullied or persecuted and had engaged in behavior that worried others before the attack.

Cauchon continued, “It’s easy to focus in on shootings, but we also need to look at what we’re doing about harassment, teasing, bullying” (p. A4).

Spurling (2004) discovered a common theme in his research. He discovered that most bullying was of a noncriminal type that did not directly threaten students’ personal safety. However, Spurling stated that bullying negatively affected the school climate and the learning environment.

USA Today also reported, “Before Columbine, schools mostly accepted teasing and bullying as inevitable schoolyard practices. Since then, hundreds of schools have experimented with programs to stop those practices” (O’Driscoll, 2005, p. A4).

The May 16, 2005, *Kingsport Times-News* editorial reported that bullying was often included as a rite of passage in schools but was becoming more serious. The article stated that peer abuse was an infringement on the rights of the child and had become a social disease that needed immediate treatment. According to the article, research showed that behavior by bullies that was not corrected during childhood often led to criminal behavior in adulthood. The *Times-News* editorial continued by stating that bullying can do permanent psychological harm to victims as well as to the perpetrators (Schools must take steps, 2005).

Rich (2005) offered the opinion that bullying impaired a child’s ability to do well and feel good in school. She stated that bullying often led to real tragedy, to depression, as well as to the increase in student dropout. The author also stated that emotional well-being at school was

vital for educational success and that bullies must be shown that their actions will not be tolerated.

According to Stephens (2004), psychological intimidation was as damaging as physical assaults.

Hard looks, stare downs, exclusion, bullying, harassment, acts of extortion, and other forms of intimidating behavior should be identified as actionable offenses in the student code of conduct. Such threatening behaviors have the potential to escalate into more serious crime and should not be tolerated. (p. 4)

Several studies have focused on school-age children in the United States. Stein (1999) reported “81.0% of the males and 72.0% of the females reported being bullied by their peers, with ridicule and verbal and social harassment as the most common forms” (p. 55). Juvonen and Graham (2001) reported “14.0% of children believed that being harassed by peers had negatively affected one or more aspects of their adjustment” (p. 25).

According to Stein (1999), “15.0% of all children are involved in bully/victim problems at some point in elementary and junior high” (p. 51). Stein also estimated that approximately “7.0% of children have been bullies and 9.0% have been victimized, 3.0% have been bullied about once a week or more frequently, and somewhat less than 2.0% bullied others at that rate” (p. 51).

Van Acker (1995) reported that some students engaged in predatory violence in schools that consisted of repeated bullying or threatening behavior from one student or a group of students toward classmates. He held the opinion that predatory violence may often become the most severe type of violence.

According to Danielson (2002), students not only needed to feel that their school was physically safe, but they also needed to feel emotionally safe. The author also held the opinion that the lack of emotional and intellectual safety for students can become barriers to learning. Danielson stated, “An emotionally safe environment is a safe place where students are not

belittled by teachers or staff or bullied by other students. It is a place where there exists a tolerance for diversity of appearance and views, and students feel respected” (p. 124).

“In an intellectually safe school, everyone feels significant, and students are not humiliated, harmed, or belittled by another person” (Connors, 2000, p. 44).

Dear’s 1995 study of California educators and administrators identified bullying as a form of violence. The same study by Dear found that physical and verbal assaults among students probably accounted for the majority of violence in schools. A 1996 study by MacDonald and da Costa identified the three top problems in schools as “name-calling, theft, and bullying, including ethnic conflict” (p. 8).

According to Stephens (2004), emotional abuse of students took many forms. He reported that psychological intimidation of students was as damaging as physical assaults and that students should not be subjected to hard looks, stare downs, exclusion, harassment, and other forms of intimidating behaviors.

“There is substantial empirical evidence to suggest that frequent peer harassment is predictive of various forms of child maladjustment” (Juvonen & Graham, 2001, p. 33).

Sergiovanni (2001) maintained that the education of teachers and administrators regarding harassment was very important. He stated that graduate students who were training to become administrators must become familiar with the Interstate School Leadership Consortium: Standards for School Leaders or ISLLC Standards. According to ISLLC Standard three, “Effective conflict resolution skills must be used” (Sergiovanni, p. 28).

The 2004 study by Spurling revealed that administrators agreed bullying created holistic problems in schools. The administrators also stated that bullying had a negative impact on learning and instructional activity and that most problems in schools were related to aggressive, violent, and disrespectful behavior that was a result of bullying behavior.

Kulisch and Whittenbury (1998) stipulated that parents expected schools to provide the best possible learning environment for their children. They reported that parents were becoming intolerant of teachers and administrators who allowed harassment to occur.

Sexual Harassment

In order to confront student-on-student harassment and to develop programs to eliminate or reduce it, school administrators must know and understand the different types of harassment that occur among students, the causes and effects of this harassment, and the victims of violent acts. (Pauken, 1997, p. 27)

Johnston (2003) reported that sexual harassment was a serious issue in many schools and a potential for personal and institutional liability. Johnston continued, “Legal suits filed have held school employees responsible for the sexual harassment of students, whether the harassment is student-to-student or staff-to-student” (p. 9).

Kantrowitz (1992) reported that in 1986 the Supreme Court agreed sexual harassment violated a person’s civil rights. Morgenson (1992) stipulated that it had been more than 10 years since the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) wrote guidelines defining sexual harassment as a form of sexual discrimination which was illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The February 1992 landmark 9-to-0 decision of the U. S. Supreme Court in the *Franklin v. Gwinnett County (GA) Public Schools* case brought attention from school administrators to the problem of sexual harassment and sex discrimination in schools, and established the right to sue for compensatory damages under Title IX. (Stein, 1999, p. 28)

According to Stein (1999), the first peer-to-peer sexual harassment case, *Davis v. Monroe County (GA) School District* (No. 97-843), was heard by the Supreme Court in January 1999.

“In May 1999, the United States Supreme Court announced a standard of liability holding that student-to-student sexual harassment is actionable against a school district under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972” (Johnston, 2003, p. 4).

Title IX prohibits a recipient of Federal funds from discrimination on the basis of sex in admissions, recruitment, financial aid, academic programs, student treatment and services, counseling and guidance, discipline, classroom assignment, grading, vocational education, recreation, physical education, athletics, housing, and employment. Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of section 703 of Title VII. (Sullivan County Department of Education, n.d.)

Johnston (2003) cited a 1994 study that revealed that national, regional, and state studies documented that many students were sexually harassed on a regular basis, which seriously impacted the students.

In 1993, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) conducted the first nationwide student study of sexual harassment in schools and surveyed more than 1,600 students. The study revealed “85.0% of girls and 76.0% of boys reported that they had been subjected to sexual harassment at school” (Johnston, 2003, p. 1).

According to Johnston (2003), the AAUW survey indicated that, although school staff members harassed some students, the vast majority of sexual harassment was harassment of students by other students.

A 1980-81 study conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Education revealed that sexual harassment is a problem for many students in high school; that young women are much more likely to be victims of sexual harassment than their male counterparts; and peer sexual harassment ranged from verbal and written comments to physical assault to attempted rape. (Bogart & Stein, 1992, p. 11)

A study by MacDonald and da Costa (1996) revealed that students felt least able to deal with peer sexual harassment while a slight majority of the students studied felt able to deal with bullying. Pauken (1997) stated that the fastest growing body of literature in school violence involved the discussion of peer sexual harassment.

Stein (1999) also referred to the 1993 AAUW sexual harassment survey entitled *Hostile Hallways* that indicated that sexual harassment in schools created a hostile environment that compromised the education of America’s children. Stein offered the following statistics:

Of the 81% of the students who reported some experience of sexual harassment in school, 66% said they had been harassed at least once in the hall; 55% reported the classroom as

the site of the harassment; 43% reported occurrences outside of school but on school grounds (other than the parking lot); 39% reported harassment in the gym, playing field, or pool area; 34% indicated the cafeteria as the location; and 23% named the parking lot as the site of the harassment. Students indicated that locker rooms (19%) and rest rooms (10%), presumably gender-segregated sites, were also locations for sexual harassment. Overall, 83% of the girls and 60% of the boys reported experiencing unwanted sexual attention in school. (p. 17)

Stein (1999) also revealed, “Eighty-nine percent of the girls who responded reported the most common forms of sexual harassment were receiving sexual comments, gestures, or looks. Being touched, pinched, or grabbed were reported by 83.0% of the girls” (p. 12).

Much debate exists as to the liability of schools regarding harassment.

A recent Supreme Court decision, *Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District*, appears to hold school districts immune from lawsuits for damages in teacher/student sexual harassment cases if no administrator with authority to stop the harassment was aware of the problem. The court made the determination despite a claim by the plaintiff that the district did not have a clear complaint procedure in place at the time allowing her to report the teacher’s inappropriate conduct. (Kulisch & Whittenbury, 1998, p. 1)

Johnston (2003) wrote that sexual harassment not only psychologically impacted students but also carried implications for school officials who had a legal responsibility to ensure that students were not deprived of their constitutional right to be free of sexual abuse or harassment. Johnston reported that previous lawsuits held school administrators responsible for the sexual harassment of students.

According to Kulisch and Whittenbury (1998), “Parents and students will demand stricter policies, procedures and training designed to minimize harassment and punish those engaging in sexual harassment” (p. 1). Kulisch and Whittenbury offered the opinion that districts should take actions to establish schools that are free of sexual harassment. These schools should publish a written policy on sexual harassment and provide training for students on sexual harassment so that they can avoid the behavior.

Guernsey (1995) expressed the opinion that one of the main problems in fighting sexual harassment was that people didn’t always recognize it and that both students and administrators

needed to be educated regarding sexual harassment. This same opinion was expressed by Kulisch and Whittenbury (1998) who stated that some objectionable behaviors would be prevented by educating students to recognize sexually harassing behavior.

Johnston (2003) reported that several lawsuits around the country emerged to hold school administrators and personnel responsible for the sexual harassment of students. Johnston reported that it was imperative that school employees understand the history and legalities revolving around the issue of sexual harassment.

Not only can the person(s) who inflict sexual harassment on another person be held liable, but the personal liability of the school administrator can become an issue as well. This is true whether the sexual abuse and harassment is one of employee to student or one of student-to-student abuse. (Johnston, 2003, p. 10)

Stein (1999) reported, “A strategy to eliminate and prevent sexual harassment in schools is much easier if a school has committed itself to infuse a spirit of equity and a critique of injustice into its curriculum” (p. 112). The author continued, “We can make a difference in the classroom and beyond when we frame the subjects of bullying, hazing, and sexual harassment as one of injustice” (p. 112).

Racial Harassment

Roman poet, Quintus Ennius, wrote 200 years before the birth of Christ, “Whom they fear they hate” (Thompson, 1994, p. 9). Thompson explained that people fear others for many different reasons and exhibit prejudice by judging a person strictly on appearance. According to Thompson, one way prejudiced people make themselves feel superior is by striking at those they fear and do not know through name-calling. According to the U. S. Department of Education, “39.0% of public school students were considered to be part of a minority group in 2000, as opposed to just 22.0% in 1972” (Guitierrez, 2005, p. 17).

Roe and Drake (1974) maintained that individuals who differed from what was perceived as “normal” in our society often met with rejection. This rejection took many forms such as

being segregated, ignored, or treated in special ways that emphasized the differences. The authors also maintained that a student's race could lead to rejection in school.

According to a 1995 study by Dear, school administrators agreed that racial violence was a contributing factor in school violence. Guitierrez (2005) also reported that due to an influx of immigrants entering the country, racial conflicts continued to abound in overwhelming numbers. Guitierrez stated that principals and administrators faced more challenges in the area of race relations due to this increase in diversity.

As reported by the NW Regional Educational Laboratory (2001), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination in public schools on the basis of race, color, and national origin. To be considered illegal, harassing behavior must be unwanted or unwelcome, severe and harmful, or repeated and persistent.

Marriott (2003) concluded that racism was the problem, but doing something about it was the responsibility of the educator.

Gender/Sexual Orientation Harassment

Different viewpoints exist regarding the issue of harassment based on the gender/sexual orientation of students in the public schools. Rofes (1997) maintained that across the United States the issue of sexual orientation and schools was a major controversy. Rofes stated that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students were becoming more visible in schools.

According to Stein (1999), the collection of incident data on the harassment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students was very infrequent. "Ninety-one incidents were reported to the Safe Schools Coalition hotline from January 1994 through June 1997. Targeted individuals ranged from 7 years through adults" (Stein, p. 24). In 1984, a survey of gays and lesbians in eight cities showed that "94.0% had suffered some kind of abuse such as random punching, hitting, shoving, or name-calling" (Thompson, 1994, p. 54).

Bailey (2003) wrote that on January 2, 1997, a 14-year-old student committed suicide after a four-year struggle with his homosexual feelings. The student had been rejected and harassed daily at his school and could not overcome the torment. Bailey continued to report that more than two million adolescent students struggled with their sexuality or gender identity or with the untrue perception of being gay. The author reported that homosexuality and gender identity often became issues in the middle grades.

According to Weiler (2004), many schools failed to provide safeguards or promote awareness about sexual orientation of students. Weiler held the opinion that this neglect fueled prejudice, harassment, and discrimination in sexual minority students and denied them their basic rights of a free and appropriate public education. Weiler also stated that many school districts did not include sexual orientation in their existing codes or conduct regarding harassment.

Stein (1999) reported that in September 1997, the *Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network* issued a national report card on the protection of gay and lesbian students by their schools. According to these organizations,

Gay and lesbian students are estimated to number around 5 million students. A typical high school student hears antigay slurs as often as 25.5 times a day. When this occurs, only 3% of faculty will intervene. As a result of this lack of intervention, 19% of gay and lesbian students suffer physical attacks associated with sexual orientation, with 13% skipping school at least once per month and 26% dropping out altogether. (Stein, 1999, p. 23)

According to Frankfurt (2000), in most schools across the country, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth faced an extremely hostile climate. “A 1997 study by students in Des Moines, Iowa, found antigay comments, such as faggot, dyke, and homo were heard an average of 25 times a day (every 14 minutes!)” (Frankfurt, 2000, p. 29).

Reese (1996) maintained, “Although there are an estimated 2.9 million gay and lesbian adolescents in the United States, many schools--uncomfortable with the issue or unaware of the

extent of the abuse--have been slow to include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination policies” (p. 47).

Frankfurt (2000) reported that antigay behavior ranged from name calling to physical violence. It was often students who were not homosexual, but were perceived to be because they didn't conform to frequently imposed gender stereotypes, who bore the brunt of such assaults.

Often, a student is targeted for sexual harassment because the student is or is perceived to be homosexual. For these students, schools are often transformed from institutions of learning to places where verbal harassment, beatings, and even rape have become a reality. It is estimated that 28% of gay and lesbian students drop out of school because of hostile environments. Additionally, the isolation and hostility gay and lesbian adolescents face make them two to three times more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual youths. A survey released in the fall of 1996 by the Safe Schools Coalition in Washington State found that for every homosexual or bisexual student who reported being harassed at school, four heterosexual youths reported being targeted for abuse because they were perceived to be homosexual. (Johnston, 2003, p. 15)

To this date, few court cases involving gay students have been reported. However, a landmark decision was rendered in November 1996 by a unanimous jury in a federal court case that found three school district administrators had violated the rights of a gay young man. An out-of-court settlement awarded an Ashland, Wisconsin, student \$900,000 for the harassment that he endured for more than four years while at school. This case was the first of its kind for a gay or lesbian student. It was significant because the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was used for the first time in a case involving a gay or lesbian student (Stein, 1999).

Weiler (2004) reminded the reader that any educational program that received federal financial assistance must not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. “Making sure every kid has a safe environment has nothing to do with promoting anything but good education” (Harrington-Lueker, 1996, p. 58).

Frankfurt (1999) reported from the American Association of University Women survey that showed:

When students were asked to what degree they would be upset if they were the targets of the 14 different types of sexual harassment outlined in the survey, 86 percent said they would be very upset if they were called gay or lesbian – 85 percent of boys and 87 percent of girls. No other type of harassment provoked a reaction this strong among boys.
(p. 26)

It was Frankfurt's (1999) opinion that, whether or not teachers condoned homosexuality, they were reminded they undoubtedly had students sitting in front of them who were gay. He stated that those students needed to feel safe and valued. Frankfurt continued, "Let's not talk about whether homosexuality is right or wrong but whether or not kids feel safe in your school. There is nothing inconsistent with that and our charge as an educational institution" (p. 29).

Bloomstran (2002) stated that the prime purpose of education was to get students to look beyond stereotypes and to find the similarities between people rather than the differences, including the stereotypes about people with different sexual orientations or identities.

McCarthy and Webb (2000) concluded that school policies did not stop harassment. It was their opinion that educators needed to respond to any complaints of harassment and create a school environment where tolerance is expected and rewarded.

An Administrator's Role

"The world of the principal today is drastically different from the world of the principal in earlier years. The principal of this decade deals with unfamiliar problems of tension and conflict" (Roe & Drake, 1974, p. 297). The authors continued, "We deluded ourselves by assuming that there was a basic value system where all cultures, color, and creeds just sit together in classrooms understanding and respecting each other" (p. 298).

One major obstacle which administrators must overcome involves legal matters. Terrell (2001) maintained that students, teachers, administrators, school reformers, and policy makers were directly affected by legal questions that arose in schools. Terrell continued, "Public school

administrators need a working knowledge and clear understanding of principles of the law that affect the educational environment” (p. 2).

Crockett (1994) reported that there was a lack of knowledge on the part of principals, teachers, and other school officials on Supreme Court decisions in the state of Tennessee regarding legal issues in the schools.

Terrell (2001) reported results of a 1999 study of Virginia public school administrators that related to knowledge of law which found “64.8% of the respondents failed to achieve minimum competency. No significant differences were found between the legal knowledge of elementary principals, middle school principals, and high school principals” (pp. 11-12).

Crockett (1994) maintained that an understanding of school law was becoming inadequate for principals of the 1990s. He held the opinion that a fuller appreciation of liability risks should be reached as a result of the law’s influx into the classroom. He also reported that the increased complexity of the principal’s job was due largely to the student rights movement which had its beginnings in the 1969 *Tinker* ruling. This ruling mandated that the principal now must be a legal expert.

According to Duff (1999), a recent survey of school principals found “31.0% of high-school principals had faced lawsuits or out-of-court settlements within the past two years – up from less than 10.0% a decade ago. And 65.0% changed some school programs due to liability concerns” (¶ 7).

Crockett (1994) pointed out that legal areas of concern for administrators should include the legal relationship between principal and student as well as legal liability. Crockett also wrote that administrators must deal with situations that may lend themselves to possible litigation so it was important that they know some of the legal consequence of their actions.

As reported by Bailey (2003), principals should give clear signals to all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, that they were respected and protected. Bailey stated that principals must provide training for the faculty and staff in regard to gender

identity and aid in the development of skills to meet these students' needs. Bailey also stated that gay and lesbian students were no more or no less special than other students in needing a safe learning environment. Million (1999) added that elementary school was the place to start teaching respect for all students because hatred cannot be turned back when the students get older.

According to Woods (2004), all administrators and teachers were faced with the challenge of implementing discipline procedures that were effective and meaningful for all students. Woods also maintained that as school administrators implement policies and procedures to ensure school safety, they must also consider legal issues. Million (1999) added that not being prepared could get school districts and principals into big trouble.

As stated in Sergiovanni's *The Principals* (2001), "An administrator protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff" (p. 31). "The administrator also has knowledge of the law as related to education and schooling and uses legal systems to protect student rights" (p. 32).

Crockett (1994) stated that the increase in complex legal questions and educational litigation through lawsuits necessitated the need for principals to possess the latest legal knowledge in order to prevent lengthy and costly lawsuits.

In discussing the safety of students in schools, Sergiovanni (2001) referred to ISLLC Standard three, "The administrator has knowledge and understanding of principles and issues relating to school safety and security and is committed to a safe environment" (p. 28) as well as ISLLC Standard five, "The administrator also has knowledge of the law as related to education and school and uses legal systems to protect the rights and confidentiality of students and staff" (p. 31).

Stephens (2004) was quoted as saying, "There are two types of school administrators: those who have faced a crisis and those who are about to" (p. 1). Stephens continued, "Armed with knowledge an astute administrator can take actions to prepare for a crisis, avoid a crisis,

preclude successive crises, and lead the healing process following a crisis” (p. 1). Stephens added, “Administrators must make a conscious decision that safe and welcoming schools are a high priority and measure their progress toward that end” (p. 1).

Hill and Hill (1994) expressed the opinion that principals must be proactive leaders due to societal demands for safe schools. According to Hill and Hill, “The school principal is the pivotal catalyst in making a difference in building a strong school culture for learning to take place” (p. 115). Dietrich and Bailey (1996) stated that the responsibility for establishing a positive school climate began with the principal who provided leadership in developing and maintaining a climate conducive to learning. According to Dietrich and Bailey, principals must be visible and enthusiastic and communicate a sense of caring for both students and teachers.

“It is understood that the principal must operate within a framework already established by laws and individual school district policies” (Roe & Drake, 1974, p. 200).

Johnson (1976) also maintained that principals must be competent in the area of school law because it was an area crucial to the principal as well as to the entire school district.

Kulisch and Whittenbury (1998) reported that schools should provide teachers and administrators with the skills to handle harassment as well as the knowledge to recognize the types of student-to-student behaviors to report. Pauken (1997) reported, “School administrators must do something - - legally and ethically - - to protect the safety of law-abiding children and staff, and to prevent legal liability for themselves and their schools” (p. 317).

Terrell (2001) maintained that changes in the principal’s job over the last 30 years has led to the demand of a working knowledge of educational law in order to prevent litigation. Terrell expressed the opinion that the legal knowledge held by the principal affected the daily operations of the school and enhanced the principal’s ability to provide a safe and effective learning environment.

“Humiliation, taunting, threats, social ostracism by classmates – these are common school experiences encountered around the world. Survey data reveal that anywhere from 40.0%

to 80.0% of students report that they personally have been the targets of such peer hostilities at school” (Juvonen & Graham, 2001, p. xiii)

Kelley (1980) held the opinion that schools were social environments where it was important that educators attend to the levels of satisfaction to ensure an environment in which people were happy to study and to work.

Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003) maintained that even the best harassment-prevention programs would never completely eliminate conflict, put-downs, and insults at school.

As stated by Burke (2000):

In the students’ search for their own identities and, sometimes, their search for an escape from family and societal problems, they look to the schools for the constant that is often missing in their home lives. Educators today need to do more than help students meet standards, score high on standardized tests, master the curriculum, secure jobs or get accepted into college. Educators are also responsible for teaching students how to interact in socially acceptable ways and how to develop the interpersonal skills necessary to be successful in life. (p. 1)

According to the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence (2004), “All students are affected by prejudice and discrimination, whether they are the targets, the perpetrators, or the bystanders. Students need to understand that everyone plays a role in escalating or deescalating bigotry” (p. 1).

Many students who are harassed because of real or perceived differences do not feel safe in school. Schools have a responsibility to create classroom and school environments where all students have opportunities to learn and be successful. Students who do not feel safe at school cannot focus on learning, and as such they are deprived equal access to education. (Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence, 2004, p. 1)

Wessler (2003) expressed the opinion that anti-harassment policies, faculty training, and appropriate security measures would not create a safe and respectful school atmosphere unless the leaders within the school and the school system modeled the importance of maintaining a respectful, civil school environment.

Wessler (2003) concluded with the opinion that school principals who were the most successful in maintaining a safe and respectful school environment were those who became spokespersons for civility and respect for all students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This quantitative study was designed to collect and report the attitudes of Sullivan County K-12 administrators regarding student-to-student harassment in their schools. The study collected information on the experiences the administrators had with student-to-student harassment in their schools over the past two years. This study also collected information on Sullivan County K-12 administrators' attitudes toward the effectiveness of anti-harassment measures their schools implemented to reduce or eliminate student-to-student harassment to determine if more harassment-avoidance training was needed for administrators, faculty, and students. Finally, the study ascertained the administrators' level of confidence regarding legal knowledge dealing with student-to-student harassment as it related to their home school.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures that were used in this study. The chapter is organized into the following sections: research design, population, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, and summary.

Research Design

A quantitative method of research was used to obtain data through the use of a survey instrument.

Many questions pertaining to the topic of harassment could be addressed in a study. However, for the purpose of this study, the following seven research questions were addressed:

1. What are the overall perceptions of administrators regarding harassment at their schools?
2. Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment at their respective schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?

3. Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of (a) administrators, (b) faculty, (c) students, based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
4. Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the types of harassment that are more prevalent at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
5. Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities out of fear of legal action based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?
6. Are there significant differences among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on the positions of principal or assistant principal, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree earned?
7. Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems based on the levels of the schools?

To address research question one, descriptive statistics for each of the items in the Student-to-Student Harassment Survey were used. Null hypotheses were derived from research questions two through seven.

Hypotheses

From research question two, three hypotheses were developed.

Ho₂₁ – Ho₂₃: There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment at their respective schools since the implementation of the harassment- avoidance training based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

From research question three, nine hypotheses were developed.

Ho3₁ – Ho3₃: There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of administrators based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

Ho3₄– Ho3₆: There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of faculty based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

Ho3₇ – Ho3₉: There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of students based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

From research question four, twelve hypotheses were developed.

Ho4₁ – Ho4₃: There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of bullying harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

Ho4₄ – Ho4₆: There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the sexual harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

Ho4₇ – Ho4₉: There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the racial harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

Ho4₁₀ – Ho4₁₂: There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of gender/sexual orientation harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

From research question five, three hypotheses were developed.

Ho5₁ – Ho5₃: There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school related activities out of fear of legal action based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

From research question six, five hypotheses were developed.

Ho6₁- Ho6₅: There is no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law regarding student-to-student harassment based on the positions of principal or assistant principal, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree earned.

From research question seven, two hypotheses were developed.

Ho7₁ – Ho7₂: There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems based on the levels of the schools.

For research questions two through seven, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe the findings and test the null hypotheses.

Population

The Sullivan County Department of Education's directory of administrators was used to identify the total population of 48 Sullivan County K-12 administrators with a response rate of 79.2%. More information is found in Table 1.

Table 1

Population of Administrators

School Type	Principals	Assistant Principals
High School	4	12
Middle School	7	5
Intermediate 5-7	1	1
K-8 th Grade	1	1
Elementary School	15	1

Reported from Sullivan County Department of Education (2005)

A letter was sent to Mr. Glenn Arwood, Director of Sullivan County Schools, requesting support and permission to administer the survey (Appendix B). A letter was also sent to each principal and assistant principal requesting support for the completion of the survey (Appendix C).

Instrumentation

Demographic Survey

A demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) was administered in order to gain more insight about the participants in the study. The questions included information pertaining to administrators' characteristics including position as principal or assistant principal, age, gender, total years of experience as principal and/or assistant principal, total years' experience in education, and highest educational level. Administrators also indicated the level of their school, category as Title I or Non-Title I school, as well as the student population of the school. Finally, the participants reported their participation in a university or college course primarily devoted to school law as well as their sources of law-related information relating to harassment.

Student-to-Student Survey Instrument

Data for the study came from the use of a survey instrument consisting of 14 statements that asked the participants to indicate their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. An additional question asked respondents to indicate the current state of student-to-student harassment at their schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training (Appendix E).

Procedures

A 15-statement survey was developed and then mailed to all K-12 administrators of Sullivan County, Tennessee. According to Creswell (2003), validity was established in order to draw useful inferences from scores obtained through the use of the instrument. Validity was established by administering the instrument in an April 2005 pilot study at East Tennessee State University to a group of 12 purposefully selected ELPA students who had achieved administrative certification. The pilot group made suggestions for modifications to the instrument that included recommendations on spacing and order of statements, numbering of statements, and correction of a misspelled word (Appendix F).

Prior to the implementation of the study, approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University on August 19, 2005 (Appendix A). Upon approval by the IRB, a letter (Appendix B) was sent to Mr. Glenn Arwood, Director of Sullivan County Schools, requesting permission to administer the survey to the principals and assistant principals of all schools of Sullivan County. Upon Mr. Arwood's approval of the project on August 26, 2005, a letter (Appendix C) was sent to all K-12 administrators of Sullivan County on August 29, 2005. This letter requested their participation and assured confidentiality of the responses as well as including instructions for completion of the instrument. A pre-addressed envelope was enclosed for the return of the survey (Appendix E) through the use of Sullivan

County inter-departmental mail. A demographic survey (Appendix D) was also administered. A summary of results will be provided to the study participants upon request.

Between September 2005 and October 2005, data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 11.0 software program, which is designed to analyze and display data (Green & Salkind, 2003). Findings of the data analysis are presented in Chapter 4. Tables are used to present the data. A summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research are presented in Chapter 5.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were obtained through the administration of the survey instrument. *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) Version 11.0 data analysis software was used for all data analysis procedures in this study.

A variety of descriptive and inferential statistics appropriate for specific null hypotheses was used.

Summary

Chapter 3 consisted of the Introduction, Presentation of the Research Design, Population, Instrumentation, Procedures, and Data Analysis. The use of a quantitative study was discussed. The study consisted of seven research questions and 34 null hypotheses. The study used a population of 38 K-12 Sullivan County administrators who responded to the survey. Each administrator completed a survey and a demographic survey. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 includes implications, conclusions, and recommendations for further consideration.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

Chapter 4 reports the results of the analysis of data gathered in the study. The chapter also addresses how the data answer the research questions proposed in the study. The purpose of this study was to collect and report the attitudes of Sullivan County K-12 administrators pertaining to various forms of student-to-student harassment in their schools. Information was collected regarding the experiences the administrators had with student-to-student harassment since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training as well as data regarding the effectiveness of anti-harassment measures their schools implemented to reduce or eliminate student-to-student harassment to determine if more harassment-avoidance training was needed for administrators, faculty, and students. The administrators' level of confidence regarding legal knowledge dealing with student-to-student harassment was ascertained as it relates to their home schools.

Population

The study's population consisted of principals and assistant principals employed in the Sullivan County, Tennessee, school system. The purposeful sample included a total population of 48 administrators with 38 (79.2%) of administrators responding to the survey. During the month of September 2005, a 15-statement survey instrument was forwarded to 48 Sullivan County, Tennessee, administrators. Demographic information pertaining to population of schools, years of experience in education, and total years of experience as an administrator was obtained. The mean for population of schools was 591.21 with a standard deviation of 328.45. The mean for years of experience in education was 24.34 with a standard deviation of 7.64. The mean for years of experience in education was 24.34 with a standard deviation of 7.64. The

mean for total years of experience as an administrator was 9.11 with a standard deviation of 6.23. Other demographic and school characteristics are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Administrators and School Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	23	60.5
	Female	<u>15</u>	<u>39.5</u>
	Total	38	100.0
Current Position	Principal	25	65.8
	Assistant Principal	<u>13</u>	<u>34.2</u>
	Total	38	100.0
Age	30-39	5	13.2
	40-49	7	18.4
	50-59	22	57.9
	60 and over	<u>4</u>	<u>10.5</u>
	Total	38	100.0
Highest Level of Education	Master's Degree	5	13.2
	Master's + Post Graduate Hours	26	68.4
	Ed. Specialist or Ed.D.	<u>7</u>	<u>18.4</u>
	Total	38	100.0

Table 2 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics		<i>n</i>	%
Level of School	High School	12	31.6
	Middle School	9	23.7
	K-8 th Grade	2	5.3
	Elementary School	<u>15</u>	<u>39.5</u>
	Total	38	100.0
Title I Status of School	Title I	16	42.1
	Non-Title I	<u>22</u>	<u>57.9</u>
	Total	38	100.0

Types of Harassment Training

The types of harassment training experienced by the administrators of Sullivan County are included in Table 3. Thirty-seven administrators indicated that they had participated in harassment training involving in-school workshops that accounted for the highest percentage of training with 97.4%. Thirty administrators, or 78.9%, indicated receiving training from seminars. A small percentage, 28.9%, or 11 administrators, received harassment training through college-level classes. More information pertaining to types of harassment training is located in Table 3.

Table 3

Types of Harassment Training

Type of Training	<i>N</i>	% of Responses	% of Cases
College-level class(es)	11	8.4	28.9
Seminar(s)	30	22.9	78.9
In-school workshop(s)	37	28.2	97.4
Reading research	25	19.1	65.8
Discussion with attorneys	23	17.6	60.5
Other	5	3.8	13.2
Total	131	100.0	

Analysis of Research Questions

Data for this study were compiled from the results of the survey instrument, and various statistical methods were used to analyze the data.

Research Question 1

What are the overall perceptions of administrators regarding harassment at their schools? Survey items 1 through 14 were used to gather the data.

The percentage of administrators who agreed or strongly agreed to the survey items is included in Table 4. All administrators (100.0%) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, “I am knowledgeable of the law and legal ramifications regarding student-to-student harassment.” In addition, based on the high percentages of agreement to the survey items, respondents indicated that administrators (100.0%), teachers (97.4%), and students (94.7%) were trained to recognize harassment and were aware of policies. However, while the percentages of agreement to statements related to the need for additional training were relatively low for

administrators (26.3%) and teachers (28.9%), 63.2% indicated students need more training. Regarding the prevalence of harassment in the schools, 10.5% reported racial harassment was prevalent in their school. However, 26.3% felt that bullying was still prevalent, 18.4% reported sexual harassment was still prevalent, and 13.2% reported gender/sexual orientation harassment as still prevalent in the schools. Other data are located in Table 4.

Table 4

Percentages of Agreement or Strong Agreement to the Student-to-Student Harassment Questions

Student-to-Student Harassment Survey	<i>n</i>	Agree or Strongly Agree %
Knowledgeable of law and legal ramifications	38	100.0
Administrators trained and aware	38	100.0
Administrators need more training	10	26.3
Teachers trained and aware	37	97.4
Teachers need more training	11	28.9
Students trained and aware	36	94.7
Students need more training	24	63.2
Bullying is prevalent in my school	10	26.3
Sexual harassment is prevalent in my school	7	18.4
Racial harassment is prevalent in my school	4	10.5
Gender/Sexual Orientation harassment is prevalent	5	13.2
Activities have been modified out of fear of legal action	10	26.3
County guidelines for harassment-avoidance training appropriate	31	81.6
County policies provide appropriate guidelines to address problems	33	86.8

Research Question 2

Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment at their respective schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school? Data were collected from survey statement 15 that asked administrators to indicate if student-to-student harassment had declined, stayed the same (no detectable change), or increased.

From research question two, three hypotheses Ho₂₁-Ho₂₃ were developed.

Ho₂₁-Ho₂₃: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment at their respective schools since the implementation of the harassment-avoidance training based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.*

Levels of Schools. Ho₂₁: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment based on the levels of the schools.* For the analysis of the levels of schools and the current status of harassment, a 4-by-3 cross-tabulated table was constructed. There were four levels of school: High School, Middle School, K through 8th Grade, and Elementary School. No administrators from the Intermediate 5-7 category responded to the survey. The three levels of current harassment at the school were: harassment has declined; harassment has stayed the same; and harassment has increased since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training.

The chi-square test could not be used to test the null hypothesis because of violations of the assumptions of chi square: Seventy-five percent of the cells had an expected frequency of less than five and the minimum expected frequency was less than 1.

Overall, 23 respondents (60.5%) stated harassment had declined; 12 (31.6%) stated harassment had stayed the same; while 3 (7.9%) indicated harassment had increased.

Fifty-eight percent of high school administrators stated harassment at their high schools had declined, while 55.6% of middle school administrators said harassment had declined at their middle schools; 100.0% of K-8th Grade administrators, and 60.0% of Elementary School administrators said harassment had declined.

On the other hand, among high school administrators, 16.7% said harassment had increased, while 11.1% of middle school administrators reported an increase in harassment at their schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training. None of the administrators for K through 8th grade and elementary schools reported that harassment had increased as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5

Cross-tabulated Table for Status of Harassment since Implementation of Avoidance-Training by Level of School

	High School		Middle School		K-8 th Grade		Elementary School	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Declined	7	58.3	5	55.6	2	100.0	9	60.0
Stayed the same	3	25.0	3	33.3	0	00.0	6	40.0
Increased	2	16.7	1	11.1	0	00.0	0	00.0
Total	12	100.0	9	100.0	2	100.0	15	100.0

Population. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to test null hypothesis Ho₂: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment based on school population.* Current level of harassment at the school had three

levels: harassment has declined; harassment has stayed the same; and harassment has increased. Population was measured as the number of students at the school. The one-way ANOVA was not significant, $F(2, 35) = 1.587, p = .22$. The null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment based on population, was retained. However, the strength of the relationship, as measured by η^2 , was moderate (.083).

Although there was not a statistically significant relationship between harassment levels and school population, administrators who reported harassment had increased were in schools with the largest population size ($M = 896.67, SD = 265.77$). There was little significant difference between the populations of schools whose administrators stated harassment had declined ($M = 585.43, SD = 325.98$) and those administrators who stated harassment had stayed the same ($M = 525.92, SD = 327.63$). The means and standard deviations for school population size by current harassment level are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for School Population by Status of Harassment since Implementation of Avoidance Training

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Declined	23	585.43	325.98
Stayed the same	12	525.92	327.63
Increased	3	896.67	265.77

Title I Status. A 2-by-3 cross-tabulated table was generated to test null hypothesis H_{023} : *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the status of harassment based on the Title I status of schools.* There were two levels of Title status (Title I versus Non-

Title I schools) and three levels of the current state of harassment (harassment has declined, stayed the same, or increased).

The chi-square test could not be used to test the null hypothesis due to a violation of one of the assumptions of chi-square: 33.3% of the cells had an expected frequency less than five. Therefore, this null hypothesis was not tested.

For each level of harassment, there was very little significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools. Among administrators in Title 1 schools, 62.5% stated there had been a decline in harassment while 59.1% of administrators in Non-Title I schools said harassment had declined. Among administrators in Title I schools, 31.3% indicated the harassment level has stayed the same, while 31.8% of the administrators in Non-Title I schools reported harassment has stayed the same. Among administrators of Title 1 schools, 6.3% indicated there had been an increase in harassment while, among Non-Title I school administrators, 9.1% stated harassment had increased as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Cross-tabulated Table for Status of Harassment since Implementation of Avoidance Training by Title I Status of School

	Title I		Non-Title I	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Declined	10	62.5	13	59.1
Stayed the same	5	31.3	7	31.8
Increased	1	6.3	2	9.1
Total	16	100.0	22	100.0

Research Question 3

Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of (a) Administrators, (b) Faculty, (c) Students, based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?

From research question three, nine hypotheses Ho3₁- Ho3₉ were developed. Data were collected using survey statement three that stated that administrators need more training; statement five that stated teachers need more training; and statement seven that stated students need more training.

Ho3₁-Ho3₃: *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of administrators based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.*

Ho3₄-Ho3₆: *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of faculty based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.*

Ho3₇-Ho3₉: *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of students based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.*

Levels of Schools. Three one-way ANOVAs were used to evaluate the significant differences among levels of schools and the need for more training in recognizing student-to-student harassment for administrators (Ho3₁), faculty (Ho3₄), and students (Ho3₇). For each ANOVA, the independent variable, level of schools, had four levels: High School, Middle School, K through 8th Grade, and Elementary School. The dependent variables were measured with a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) response to the Harassment Survey question related to the need for more training in recognizing student-to-student harassment for administrators, faculty, and students, respectively.

For administrators, the one-way ANOVA was not significant, $F(3, 34) 1.815, p = .16$. The null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of administrators based on the levels of the schools, was retained. However, the effect size, as measured by η^2 , was large (.14).

High schools and middle schools appear to have a somewhat greater need for administrator training than K-8th and elementary schools, but these means are still fairly low as demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Administrators' Need for Training by Level of School

Level of School	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School	12	2.67	.99
Middle School	9	3.11	1.05
K-8 th Grade	2	2.00	0.00
Elementary School	15	2.20	1.01

For faculty in need of training, the one-way ANOVA was not significant, $F(3, 34) 2.063, p = .12$. The null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of faculty based on the levels of the schools, was retained. However, the effect size was large (.15).

As indicated in Table 9, middle school teachers have the greatest need for more harassment training with K-8th grade teachers needing the least amount of training.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Teachers' Need for Training by Level of School

Level of School	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School	12	2.67	1.07
Middle School	9	3.33	1.12
K-8 th Grade	2	2.00	0.00
Elementary School	15	2.33	.98

For students in need of training, the one-way ANOVA was significant, $F(3, 34) = 4.847$, $p = .01$. The null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of students based on the levels of the schools, was rejected. The effect size, as measured by η^2 , was large (.30). Because the overall F was significant, post hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted. Tamhane's post hoc test was chosen because equal variances could not be assumed $F(3, 34) 2.861, p = .05$.

There was a significant difference between the means of high school and K through 8th grade administrators ($p < .01$). The mean for high school administrators ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.00$) was larger than the mean for K through 8th grade administrators ($M = 2.00, SD = 0.00$) indicating that the administrators' attitudes for the need for more training for high school students is greater than for students in K through 8th grade. There was a significant difference in the means for middle school administrators and K through 8th grade school administrators ($p < .01$). The mean for middle school administrators ($M = 4.44, SD = .53$) was higher than the mean for K through 8th grade administrators ($M = 2.00, SD = 0.00$), indicating that the administrators' attitudes toward the need for more training of students in middle schools is greater than in K through 8th

grade schools. There was a significant difference in the means of middle school and elementary school administrators ($p = .01$). The mean for middle school administrators ($M = 4.44, SD = .53$) was higher than the mean for elementary school administrators ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.28$). Administrators' attitudes toward the need for more training for middle school students was greater than for elementary school administrators' attitudes for the need for more training for students. Finally, there was a significant difference between the means of K-8th grade school and elementary school administrators ($p = .04$). The mean for elementary school administrators ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.28$) was higher than the mean for K-8th grade school administrators ($M = 2.00, SD = 0.00$). There were no significant differences between the means of high school and middle school administrators or between high school and elementary school administrators. The means and standard deviations, as well as the 95.0% confidence intervals for the four levels of school are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences for Students' Need for Training by Level of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	High School	Middle School	K-8 th Grade
High School	12	3.58	1.00			
Middle School	9	4.44	.53	-1.86 to .14		
K-8 th Grade	2	2.00	.00	.66 to 2.50	1.84 to 3.05	
Elementary School	15	3.07	1.28	-.73 to 1.77	.29 to 2.47	-2.08 to -.06

Population. Ho₃₂, Ho₃₅, and Ho₃₈ address the relationship between the population size of the school with the need for more training for administrators, faculty, and students, respectively. Pearson's correlation was used to evaluate the relationship between school population and need for more training.

For administrators, there was a very weak relationship between school population and the need for more training for administrators ($r = .06$). The relationship was not significant ($p = .74$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of administrators based on population, was retained.

There was also a very weak relationship between population and the need for more training for faculty ($r = .01$). The relationship was not significant ($p = .97$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of faculty based on population was retained.

The relationship between the school population and the need for more training for students was very weak ($r = .03$) and not significant ($p = .87$). The null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training for students based on population, was retained.

Title I vs. Non-Title I Schools. Ho₃₃, Ho₃₆, and Ho₃₉ address the differences between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the need for more training for administrators, faculty and students, respectively. The independent variable, Title I status of the school, had two levels: Title I school and Non-Title I school. Three t-tests for independent samples were used to evaluate the differences between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the need for more training.

For administrators, there was no reported significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the need for more training, $t(36) = 1.232$, $p = .23$. The effect size, as

measured by η^2 , was small (.04). There was no significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the need for more training for faculty, $t(36) = .77, p = .45$. The effect size was small (.02). There was no significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the need for more training for students, $t(36) = 1.41, p = .17$. The effect size was small (.05). Therefore, all three null hypotheses, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of administrators, faculty, and students, were retained.

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations for Administrator, Teacher, and Student Training Needs by Title I Status of School

	Title I Status of School	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Administrators need more training	Title I	16	2.31	1.08
	Non-Title I	22	2.73	.99
Teachers need more training	Title I	16	2.50	1.03
	Non-Title I	22	2.77	1.11
Students need more training	Title I	16	3.19	1.28
	Non-Title I	22	3.73	1.08

Research Question 4

Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the types of harassment that are more prevalent at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school? Survey question eight, that stated

bullying is prevalent; question nine, that stated sexual harassment is prevalent; statement 10, that stated racial harassment is prevalent; and statement 11, that stated gender/sexual orientation is prevalent, were used to gather data. From research question four, 12 hypotheses, Ho4₁-Ho4₁₂ were developed.

Ho4₁-Ho4₃ address the significant difference among administrators' perceptions of bullying harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.

Level of School and Bullying. Ho4₁: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of bullying harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools.*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the level of the school and bullying. The ANOVA was significant, $F(3, 34) = 3.940, p = .02$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of bullying harassment based on the levels of the schools, was rejected. The effect size was large (.26).

Because the overall F (ANOVA) was significant, post hoc tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means of the groups. A Tamhane post hoc pairwise comparison was used, because equal variances could not be assumed, $F(3, 34) = 3.63, p = .02$. There was a significant difference between the middle school and elementary school means ($p = .02$). Bullying was more prevalent in middle schools than in elementary schools. None of the other pairs of means was significant. Table 12 shows the means and standard deviations as well as the 95% confidence intervals for pairwise differences.

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences for Prevalence of Bullying by Level of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	High School	Middle School	K-8 th Grade
High School		3.08	1.24			
Middle School	9	3.11	.78	-1.33 to 1.27		
K-8 th Grade	2	2.50	.71	-4.94 to 6.10	-8.92 to 10.14	
Elementary School	15	2.00	.76	-13 to 10.14	.14 to 2.08	14.43 to 15.43

Level of School and Sexual Harassment. Ho4: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of sexual harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools.*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the level of the school and sexual harassment. The ANOVA was significant, $F(3, 34) = 4.196, p = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there was no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of sexual harassment based on the levels of the schools, was rejected. The effect size was large (.27).

Because equal variances were assumed, $F(3, 34) = .789, p = .51$, Tukey post hoc tests were used to determine which pair(s) of means were different. There was a significant difference in the means between high school and elementary school ($p = .02$) as well as a difference in the means of middle school and elementary schools ($p = .04$). Sexual harassment was more prevalent in high schools and middle schools than in elementary schools. The other pairs of means were not significant.

Table 13

Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences for Prevalence of Sexual Harassment by Level of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	High School	Middle School	K-8 th Grade
High School	12	2.83	1.12			
Middle School	9	2.78	.97	-1.08 to 1.19		
K-8 th Grade	2	2.50	.71	-1.64 to 2.30	-1.74 to 2.30	
Elementary School	15	1.67	.82	.17 to 2.17	.02 to 2.20	-1.11 to 2.78

Level of School and Racial Harassment. Ho₄: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the racial harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools.* A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the level of school and racial harassment. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3, 34) = 1.991, p = .13$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of racial harassment based on the levels of the schools, was retained. The effect size was large (.15).

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations for Prevalence of Racial Harassment by Level of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School	12	2.42	1.24
Middle School	9	2.00	1.23
K-8 th Grade	2	2.50	.71
Elementary School	15	1.53	.52

Level of School and Gender/Sexual Orientation. Ho4₁₀: *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of gender/sexual orientation harassment at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools.*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the level of the school and gender/sexual harassment. The ANOVA was significant, $F(3, 34) = 4.165, p = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of gender/sexual orientation harassment based on the levels of the schools, was rejected. The effect size was large (.27).

Equal variances were assumed, $F(3, 34) 1.856, p = .16$. Tukey post hoc tests were used to determine which pair(s) of means was significantly different. There was a significant difference between the means of high schools and elementary schools ($p = .01$): Harassment based on gender/sexual orientation was more prevalent in high schools than in elementary schools. None of the other pairs of means was statistically significant.

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences for Prevalence of Gender/Sexual Orientation Harassment by Level of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	High School	Middle School	K-8 th Grade
High School	12	2.75	1.14			
Middle School	9	2.22	1.09	-.55 to 1.61		
K-8 th Grade	2	2.50	2.71	-1.62 to 2.12	-2.20 to 1.64	
Elementary School	15	1.53	.52	-.27 to 2.17	-.35 to 1.72	-.88 to 2.81

Population and Types of Harassment. Ho4₂ (Bullying), Ho4₅ (Sexual), Ho4₈(Racial), Ho4₁₀ (Gender/Sexual): *There is no significant relationship between administrator's*

perceptions of types of harassment at their respective schools and the population of the schools. Pearson's correlation was used to evaluate the relationship between school population size and four types of harassment.

Bullying. Pearson's correlation showed there was a positive relation ($r = .31$) between school population and bullying. While the relationship was not statistically significant ($p = .06$), the effect size as measured by r^2 was moderate (.10). The null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant relationship between administrators' perceptions of bullying and school population, was retained.

Sexual Harassment. The correlation between school population and sexual harassment showed a somewhat moderate, positive relationship ($r = .37$) between the variables with a large effect size ($r^2 = .14$). The relationship between population and sexual harassment was significant ($p = .02$); therefore, the null hypothesis that stated there is no significant relationship between administrators' perceptions of sexual harassment and school population was rejected.

Racial Harassment. The correlation between population and racial harassment showed a significant ($p = .03$) somewhat moderate, positive relationship between the variables ($r = .35$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant relationship between administrators' perceptions of racial harassment and school population, was rejected. The effect size for the relationship between population and racial harassment was large ($r^2 = .12$).

Gender/Sexual Harassment. Finally, the correlation between school population and gender/sexual harassment showed a moderate, positive relationship ($r = .52$). The relationship was significant ($p < .01$) with a large effect size ($r^2 = .27$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant relationship between administrators' perceptions of gender/sexual harassment and population, was rejected. Each of the correlations showed that as school population increased, the prevalence of the types of harassment increased.

Title I Status and Types of Harassment.

Ho4₃ (Bullying), Ho4₆ (Sexual), Ho4₉ (Racial), Ho4₁₂ (Sexual/Gender): *There is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of types of harassment at their respective schools based on the Title I status of the schools.*

Bullying. There was no significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the prevalence of bullying, $t(36) = 1.296, p = .20$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of bullying based on Title I status, was retained. The effect size, as measured by η^2 , was small (.04).

Sexual Harassment. There was no significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the prevalence of sexual harassment, $t(36) = 1.388, p = .17$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of sexual harassment based on Title I status, was retained. The effect size was small (.05).

Racial Harassment. There was no significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the prevalence of racial harassment, $t(36) = .500, p = .62$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of racial harassment based on Title 1 status, was retained. The effect size was small (.01).

Gender/Sexual Orientation Harassment. There was no significant difference between Title I and Non-Title I schools and the prevalence of gender/sexual harassment, $t(36) = .674, p = .50$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of gender/sexual harassment based on Title I status, was retained. The effect size was small (.01). Table 16 shows the means and standard deviations for the four types of harassment by Title I and Non-Title Schools.

Table 16

Means and Standard Deviations for Types of Harassment Prevalent in Schools by Title I Status of Schools

Types of Harassment	Title I Status of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Bullying	Title I	16	2.38	.96
	Non-Title I	22	2.82	1.10
Sexual	Title I	16	2.06	1.00
	Non-Title I	22	2.55	1.10
Racial	Title I	16	1.88	.89
	Non-Title I	22	2.05	1.13
Gender/Sexual Orientation	Title I	16	2.00	.89
	Non-Title I	22	2.23	1.11

Research Question 5

Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities out of fear of legal action based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school? Survey question 12, which stated activities at my school have been modified out of fear of legal action, was used to gather data.

From research question five, three hypotheses Ho5₁-Ho5₃ were developed. *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities out of fear of legal action based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school.*

Level of School. Ho5₁: *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward modification of school-related activities and level of the schools.* A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between modification of school-related activities and the levels of the schools.

The ANOVA was not significant, $F(3, 34) = .912, p = .44$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward modification and level of the schools, was retained. While there was not a significant difference among the levels of schools and the modification of activities out of fear of legal action, the mean of K-eighth grade administrators was the greatest while the mean of high school administrators was the smallest mean. Table 17 shows the means and standard deviations for each level of school.

Table 17

Means and Standard Deviations for Activities Modified Out of Fear of Legal Action by Level of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School	12	2.33	1.23
Middle School	9	2.56	1.42
K-8 th Grade	2	3.50	.71
Elementary School	15	2.93	1.03

Population. Ho5₂: *There is no significant relationship between administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities and population of the schools.* Pearson's correlation was used to evaluate the relationship between modifications of attitudes and

population. Pearson’s correlation showed there was a weak, negative correlation ($r = -.19$), $p = .25$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there was no significant relationship in administrators’ attitudes toward modification based on population, was retained. The effect size, as measured by R^2 was small (.04).

Title I Status. H_{05_3} : *There is no significant difference in administrators’ attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities and status as a Title I or Non-Title I school.* An independent t test for independent samples was used. The test was not significant, $t(36) = 1.125$, $p = .30$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there was no significant difference in modification and Title I status, was retained.

Table 18

Means and Standard Deviations for Activities Modified Out of Fear of Legal Action by Title I Status of School

	Title I Status of School	n	M	SD
Activities modified out of fear	Title I	16	2.94	.99
	Non-Title I	22	2.50	1.30

Research Question 6

Are there significant differences among administrators’ self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on the positions of principal or assistant principal, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree earned? Survey question one was used to gather data that involved knowledge of the law and legal ramifications. Five hypotheses H_{06_1} - H_{06_5} were developed.

H_{06_1} - H_{06_5} : *There is no significant difference among administrators’ self-ratings of knowledge of the law regarding student-to-student harassment based on the positions of*

principal or assistant principal, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree earned.

Position and Knowledge of the Law. Ho6₁: *There is no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on position of principal or assistant principal.* An independent samples *t* test was conducted and found to be not significant $t(36) = .105, p = .917$. There was virtually no significant difference between principals and assistant principals and knowledge of the law. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there was no significant difference between principals' and assistant principals' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on position, was retained. The effect size as measured by η^2 was very small (.001).

Table 19

Means and Standard Deviations for Knowledge of the Law by Position

	Position	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledgeable of law	Principal	25	4.48	.510
	Assistant Principal	13	4.46	.519

Years of Administrative Experience and Knowledge of the Law. Ho6₂: *There is no significant relationship between administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law and years of administrative experience.* Pearson's correlation was not significant (.81) and showed virtually no significant relationship between years of administrative experience and knowledge of the law ($r = .04$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on years of

administrative experience, was retained. The effect size, as measured by r^2 was very small (.002).

Age and Knowledge of the Law. Ho6₃: *There is no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on age.* A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between age and knowledge of the law. The ANOVA was not significant $F(3, 34) = 1.709, p = .18$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on age, was retained. The effect size was moderate (.13). The lowest mean was found in administrators in the 60-and-over category. Administrators in the 50-59 age group possessed the highest mean. Other data can be found in Table 20.

Table 20

Means and Standard Deviations for Knowledge of the Law by Age

Age	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
30-39	5	4.40	.55
40-49	7	4.43	.54
50-59	22	4.59	.50
60 and over	4	4.00	.00

Gender and Knowledge of the Law. Ho6₄: *There is no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on gender.* An independent samples *t* test was conducted and found to be not significant $t(36) = .582, p = .56$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on gender, was retained. The effect size as measured by η^2 was very small (.01).

Table 21

Means and Standard Deviations for Knowledge of the Law by Gender

	Gender	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledgeable of law	Male	23	4.43	.517
	Female	15	4.53	.52

Highest Level of Education and Knowledge of the Law. Ho₆₅: *There is no significant difference among administrators' self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on highest level of education.* There were three categories of the highest level of education: master's degree, master's plus post graduate hours, and ed. specialist or Ed.D. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between highest level of education and knowledge of the law. The ANOVA was not significant $F(2,35) = 2.691, p = .08$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference in level of education and knowledge of the law, was retained. The effect size was moderate (.13). Administrators who had acquired an educational specialist or Ed.D. degree had the highest mean in Knowledge of the Law. Other data are located in Table 22.

Table 22

Means and Standard Deviations for Knowledge of the Law by Highest Level of Education

Highest Level of Education	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Master's Degree	5	4.40	.55
Master's + Post Graduate Hours	26	4.38	.50
Ed. Specialist or Ed.D.	7	4.86	.38

Research Question 7

Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems based on level of school? Data were collected from survey question 13, which stated that Sullivan County's guidelines have been appropriate for the handling of harassment-avoidance training, and statement 14, which stated Sullivan County's policies provide appropriate guidelines for addressing harassment problems. From research question seven, two hypotheses Ho7₁-Ho7₂ were developed.

Ho7₁-Ho7₂: *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems based on the levels of the schools.*

Level of School. Ho7₁: *There is no significant difference among attitudes toward the district's guidelines for harassment-avoidance training based on level of schools.* A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between attitude and district's guidelines for harassment-avoidance training. The ANOVA was not significant $F(3, 34) = 1.862, p = .16$. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference in attitudes toward guidelines for harassment-avoidance training based on the level of schools, was retained. The effect size as measured by η^2 was large (.14). The largest mean, 4.22, was found in middle school administrators with the smallest mean, 3.42, being found in high school administrators. Other data are located in Table 23.

Table 23

Means and Standard Deviations for Appropriateness of County Guidelines for Harassment-Avoidance Training by Levels of School

Level of School	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School	12	3.42	1.08
Middle School	9	4.22	.44
K-8 th Grade	2	4.00	.00
Elementary School	15	4.07	.88

Harassment Problems and Level. Ho7₂: *There is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes and district's guidelines for handling harassment problems based on the level of schools.* A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between attitude and district's guidelines for handling harassment problems. The ANOVA was not significant $F(3, 34) = 1.702, p = .19$. The null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference among administrators' attitudes toward district guidelines based on levels of the school, was retained. The effect size was medium (.13). The highest mean (4.47) was in the elementary school category with the smallest mean (3.83) in the high school category. Other data can be found in Table 24.

Table 24

Means and Standard Deviations for Appropriateness of County Policies to Address Problems

Level of School	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School	12	3.83	1.12
Middle School	9	4.44	.53
K-8 th Grade	2	4.00	.00
Elementary School	15	4.47	.64

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

Chapter 5 provides a general summary of the findings of this study and the literature review and provides conclusions and recommendations for further study and practice. The purpose of this quantitative study was to ascertain the attitudes of Sullivan County K-12 administrators pertaining to various forms of student-to-student harassment in their schools. Data were collected regarding administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of anti-harassment measures their schools have implemented to reduce or eliminate student-to-student harassment to determine if more harassment-avoidance training is needed for administrators, faculty, and students. The administrators' level of confidence was ascertained regarding legal knowledge dealing with student-to-student harassment in their home schools.

Seven research questions relating to student-to-student harassment, administrators' knowledge of legal issues relating to harassment, and the perceptions of Sullivan County administrators regarding issues of harassment and harassment-avoidance training in the county formed the basis of this study.

The study was conducted by surveying 48 administrators (principals and assistant principals) in Sullivan County, Tennessee, during the month of September 2005 with 38 (79.2%) administrators responding to the survey. The instrument used in the study consisted of two sections, with the first section consisting of an 11-item demographic questionnaire pertaining to gender, age, highest educational level, total years of experience, years as a principal or assistant principal, current position, level of school, population of school, category of school, and information relating to harassment-avoidance training. Analysis of the data revealed that more males than females responded to the survey, which is consistent with the population of administrators in Sullivan County. Principals responded at the rate of 65.8% as compared to

34.2% for assistant principals. The largest percentage (57.9%) reporting was in the 50-59 age category with 68.4% respondents holding a master's degree plus post-graduate hours.

Administrators in Sullivan County are required to attain a master's degree in administration or state certification in administration. The mean for years of experience (24.34) indicated that administrators in Sullivan County are nearing the retirement category. With a mean population of 591.21, Sullivan County schools are included in the medium-size category of schools. Fifty-seven percent of the administrators responding were from Non-Title I schools. Surveys were returned from all categories except Intermediate 5-7 schools. Sullivan County has one Intermediate 5-7 school.

Data for the study came from the use of a survey instrument that consisted of 14 statements that asked the participants to indicate their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale. An additional question asked respondents to indicate the current state of student-to-student harassment at their schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training, with choices of declined, stayed the same (no detectable change), and increased. Participants were given approximately 10 days to reply to the survey. The data presented in Chapter 4 were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS data analysis software. Appropriate methods of statistical analysis were used including descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, *t* test, Pearson's correlation, Tamhane post hoc pairwise comparison, and Tukey post hoc test.

Summary of the Literature

President Clinton in 1994 suggested that by the year 2000 every school in America would offer an environment conducive to learning. The literature reviewed revealed that in 2005 every school in America is not offering an environment that is conducive to learning for those students who do not feel safe due to harassing behavior exhibited by their schoolmates. The literature revealed that some schools are focusing their resources on improving test scores at the expense of student safety.

A study of the literature also revealed that legal issues regarding the safety of students has become an issue, especially in the area of harassment, due to the negligence of administrators to enforce anti-harassment measures. The Fourteenth Amendment entitled equal protection under the law for all students, and school policies should reflect this expectation.

Bullying, racial harassment, sexual harassment, and gender/sexual orientation harassment are all too common in schools regardless of the grade level. It was reported that bullying negatively affects the school climate and learning environment. The research reported that student-to-student sexual harassment is occurring on a regular basis in some schools, impacting students and posing legal implications for school officials. The literature revealed that racial harassment often leads to school violence. A study of the literature revealed that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students were becoming more visible in schools. However, many schools fail to promote awareness about sexual harassment. It was reported that any educational program that received federal financial assistance must not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

A review of the literature revealed that the role of the school administrator has drastically changed. An understanding of school law relating to issues of harassment is now mandatory due to liability concerns. Principals must provide training for the faculty and staff in regard to all areas of harassment.

Sullivan County, Tennessee, has not been spared from these harassing behaviors. Harassing behavior has resulted in legal problems for the county that has led to a federal mandate for all students and employees of the county to undergo harassment-avoidance training.

The literature also revealed that even the best harassment-prevention programs would never completely eliminate all harassment. All students are affected by prejudices and discrimination, but school principals who were the most successful in maintaining a safe and respectful school environment were those who became spokespersons for insisting that all students are respected for who they are.

The results of this study will provide useful information to the administrators of Sullivan County, Tennessee, schools regarding various issues relating to student-to-student harassment. Administrators will be able to compare the data tabulated regarding their level of school to other levels of schools as well as gaining insight into their own level of school.

Summary of the Findings

Seven research questions and 34 hypotheses were addressed in the study with the data analysis results being presented in this section.

Research Question 1

What are the overall perceptions of administrators regarding harassment at their schools?

Survey items 1 through 14 were used to gather the data. Answer choices ranged from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Data from question 1 were calculated in percentages. One hundred percent of the respondents agreed that they were knowledgeable of the law regarding student-to-student harassment and were aware of county policy and procedures. This finding should be welcome news to the Director of Sullivan County Schools who is responsible for enforcing the federal government mandate in regard to harassment-avoidance in the county schools. The administrators also indicated teachers (97.4%) and students (94.7%) at their school had been trained sufficiently in harassment-avoidance techniques and were aware of county policies and procedures. However, 63.2% indicated that students need more harassment-avoidance training. Considering the vast amount of training that all students and employees of Sullivan County have received over the last two years, this percentage could be considered high.

With regard to county guidelines for harassment-avoidance training being appropriate, 81.6% indicated that training had been appropriate. No stipulation was made for the remaining 19.0% on whether they felt that more training was needed or if the training offered by the county was not the appropriate methods since no definition was given for the term *appropriate*. The

same analysis could be made for county policies providing appropriate guidelines as indicated by 86.8%. The remaining 14.0% were not given the opportunity to indicate if they needed more guidelines or if too many guidelines were being enforced.

Research Question 2

Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the current status of harassment at their respective schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?

Percentages were calculated to determine administrators' perceptions of the impact of harassment-avoidance training at their school. According to the review of literature, by developing an awareness of harassment, school systems may be able to improve the overall safety of the schools.

The chi-square test could not be used to test the null hypothesis because of violations of the assumption of chi-square. The largest percentage (60.5%) indicated that student-to-student harassment at their school had declined since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training. However, 31.6% stated that harassment had not been affected by the training and had stayed the same, and 7.9% indicated that harassment had increased. At 39.5%, I find the percentage to indicate that harassment-avoidance training is still needed in Sullivan County. No reasons were given for the increase. This increase could be attributed to the fact that with avoidance training the students had become more aware of the concept of harassment, which led to their reporting more harassment incidents--not that harassment in the schools had increased per se.

Ho₂₁ stated that there was no significant difference among administrators' perceptions of the status of harassment based on the levels of schools (high school, middle school, K through 8, and elementary). Elementary administrators (60.0%), High School (58.0%), and Middle School

(55.6%) reported that harassment had declined since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training. Although 100.0% of K-8th grade administrators reported that harassment had decreased, the number of schools is limited to one K-8 school that responded. No elementary schools reported an increase in harassment. Again, the administrators were not asked to attribute this increase to any specific reasoning.

Ho₂₂ stated there is no significant difference based on population. The one-way ANOVA was not significant; therefore, the hypothesis was retained. However, the increase in harassment was reported from the largest population.

Ho₂₃ stated there is no significant difference based on Title I status. Again, the chi-square test could not be used; therefore, this null hypothesis was not tested. Very little significant difference in all categories was found between Title I and non-Title I schools. With the stigma of Title I schools serving a lower socioeconomic level of students, I find these results reassuring.

Research Question 3

Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the need for more harassment-avoidance training on the part of (a) Administrators, (b) Faculty, (c) Students, based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?

It was the opinion of Preble, Gallagher, et al. (2003) that unchallenged bullying and harassment could escalate and explode into violence; therefore, harassment-avoidance training is necessary in order for students to learn how to challenge other students who are bullying and harassing them as well as for faculty and administrators to learn how to prevent this bullying and harassment. It was determined for Ho₃₁-Ho₃₃ through the use of a one-way ANOVA that the differences were not significant for administrators' need for more training based on the level of the school. Therefore, these hypotheses were retained, although high schools and middle schools appear to have a slight need for more administrator training than the other levels. Ho₃₄-Ho₃₆ in

reference to the need for more training for teachers were also retained due to the one-way ANOVA finding being not significant. However, middle school teachers had a slight need for more training over the other levels.

Through the use of the one-way ANOVA, Ho3₅-Ho3₇ dealing with the need for more student harassment-avoidance training were rejected. Administrators' attitudes for the need for more training for high school students was greater than for students in K through 8th grade as well as the need for middle school students over K through 8th grade as well as elementary students. However, although the means were small for all levels, the conclusion cannot be drawn that elementary students do not need harassment-avoidance training. No administrators indicated that the need for training regardless of level did not exist. One administrator added a note to the survey stating that more training is needed teaching students to resist and withstand harassment rather than reporting harassment. This respondent added the comment that we are convincing our students that they are victims. My belief is that, if students receive training beginning at a younger age, awareness can be developed that will carry over with the students when they reach the higher levels of school. Students will then be able to resist harassment as well as to become more aware of reporting harassment.

Pearson's correlation was used to evaluate Ho3₂, Ho3₃, and Ho3₈, which address the relationship between student population and the need for more training for administrators, faculty, and students. All three nulls were retained, although the need for more training for students was still higher than for administrators or faculty.

Three *t* tests for independent samples were used to evaluate Ho3₃, Ho3₆, and Ho3₉, which relate to the need for more training based on Title I status of the schools. All three nulls were retained indicating that no significant differences were found. Because Title I status is based on income level of students' parents and the need for free/reduced lunches, I find this outcome to be very enlightening. Administrators were not asked to indicate the race, socioeconomic level, or gender of students in the demographic survey. Some people tend to stereotype Title I schools as

being inferior, since Title I schools have large numbers of lower-socioeconomic students. The findings in this study could be used to prove that harassment is not a socioeconomic problem but a problem that exists in all levels of income of students.

Research Question 4

Are there significant differences among administrators' perceptions of the types of harassment that are more prevalent at their respective schools based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?

Twelve hypotheses were developed to address this question. Ho4₁-Ho4₄ addressed the difference among administrators' perceptions of bullying at their respective schools. According to The Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence (2004), 6 out of 10 teens report witnessing bullying at least once a day. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted and found to be significant to evaluate the relationship between the level of the school and bullying. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected. Post hoc tests were conducted that indicated a significant difference between the middle school and elementary school means. Bullying was found to be more prevalent in middle schools than in elementary schools. None of the other pairs was significant. Administrators were not asked to give reasoning behind their answers. However, from my experiences in teaching elementary school and middle school, I have observed that bullying occurs mainly when students are not being supervised adequately by adults. Middle school students have more freedom than elementary students in the hallways, cafeteria, locker rooms, rest rooms, and other areas of the building. Therefore, the opportunity for bullying is greater for middle school students than for elementary students. My recommendation would be for middle school students to receive more direct supervision, which should cut down the opportunities for bullying to occur.

Ho4₄ related to the level of school and sexual harassment. In the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, Johnston (2003) reported that sexual harassment was a serious issue in many schools

and a potential for personal and institutional liability. Through the use of a one-way analysis of variance, this hypothesis was also rejected. Tukey post hoc tests were used to determine which pair(s) of means were different. There was a difference in the means between high school and elementary school as well as a difference in the means of middle school and elementary schools. The finding that sexual harassment was more prevalent in high schools and middle schools than in elementary schools should not be surprising. Again, administrators were not asked to state any opinions. However, as students become more aware of the definition of sexual harassment, they could be more likely to report incidences. Also, as students mature, conversation and activity of a sexual nature tend to become more common, which may lead to the increase of sexual harassment as students move from elementary school to middle school to high school.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted and found to be not significant dealing with Ho47, which stated that there is no difference among administrators' perceptions of the racial harassment at their schools. Therefore, this hypothesis was retained. As stated in the literature review of Chapter 2, the history of harassment-avoidance training in Sullivan County began with a court case based on racial harassment and a mandate from the federal government that all employees and students at all Sullivan County schools follow a five-year plan of harassment-avoidance training. Although the means were small, evidence still points to the fact that racial harassment still exists in all levels of schools.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the level of the school and gender/sexual harassment. The ANOVA was significant; therefore, the null was rejected. A Tukey post hoc test was used to determine which pairs were different. A significant difference was found between the means of high schools and elementary schools. None of the other pairs of means was significant. Again, the overall awareness of the topic of gender and sexual harassment should account for this difference. However, 15 administrators indicated that gender/sexual harassment existed in elementary schools, which points to the fact that avoidance-training dealing with gender/sexual harassment should begin in the elementary

schools although the method of training may be a subject that should be thoroughly investigated before being presented to elementary students.

Pearson's correlation showed there was a positive relationship between school population (size) and bullying although not statistically significant ($p = .06$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. However, the correlation between school population and sexual harassment was significant ($p = .20$), school population (size) and gender/sexual harassment ($p < .01$), as well as the correlation between school population (size) and racial harassment ($p = .03$). Therefore, these hypotheses were rejected. As school population (size) increased, the prevalence of these types of harassment increased also. This finding should not come as a surprise to any administrator. As school population (size) increases, the ratio of adults to students may increase, which may result in more harassment occurring away from adult supervision.

Again the status of Title I schools was examined and compared to Non-Title I schools but this time in regard to types of harassment. Again, Title I status and the types of harassment, bullying, sexual, racial, and sexual/gender, were found to exhibit no differences. H_{04_3} , H_{04_6} , H_{04_9} , and $H_{04_{12}}$ were all retained. Although the existence of types of harassment was still prevalent in all levels of schools, the socioeconomic level of students appears to have no effect on this existence.

Research Question 5

Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the modification of school-related activities out of fear of legal action based on the levels of the schools, population of the schools, and status as a Title I school?

According to the literature, Weiler (2004) expressed the opinion that all students were entitled to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. Therefore, schools had a legal, ethical, and moral obligation to provide equal protection for all students. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between modification of the school-related

activities and the levels of schools. The ANOVA was not significant; therefore, Ho5₁ was retained. However, K-eighth grade administrators exhibited the greatest mean, whereas high school administrators exhibited the smallest mean. No explanation was given for the term “fear of legal action.” Some administrators may have interpreted this term negatively to mean that the federal mandate must be followed to the letter or legal action could be used against the schools. Therefore, out of fear of this legal action, all mandates would be implemented. Other administrators may have interpreted this “fear of legal action” to not be a threat at all. If administrators are following all mandates already and are working to ensure that their school is safe for all students, then a fear should not exist. The interpretation of “fear of legal action” on the part of the administrators may have affected their response to this question.

The null was also retained for Ho5₂ relating to “fear of legal action” and population (size) as well as Ho5₃ relating to Title status and this fear. As stated in the literature, Stephens (2004) argued that school policies and rules should reflect behavior expectations outlined in federal, state, county, and local statutes or ordinances.

Research Question 6

Are there significant differences among administrators’ self-ratings of knowledge of the law based on the positions of principal or assistant principal, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree earned?

Null hypotheses pertaining to position, years of administrative experience, age, gender, and highest educational degree were all examined using various statistical methods and were all retained. An independent samples *t* test determined that no difference existed between principals and assistant principals and knowledge of the law. Pearson’s correlation was not significant (.81) and showed no relationship between years of administrative experience and knowledge of the law. A one-way analysis of variance showed no difference in age and knowledge of the law. However, the lowest mean was found to be in the 60-and-over category. Different reasons may

exist for administrators in this age group having less knowledge of the law. They may have entered the profession when knowledge of the law was not as necessary as it may be today. However, all administrators, regardless of their age, should be knowledgeable of the law to ensure that their school is safe for all groups of students. Gender did not play a part in knowledge of the law. Administrators acquiring an educational specialist or Ed.D. degree had the highest mean in knowledge of the law. Educators must constantly update their certification and keep abreast of the trends in education. The subject of harassment has now become a hot topic in most college-level courses. Those administrators obtaining an Ed.D. degree are bombarded with research dealing with this topic.

Research Question 7

Are there significant differences among administrators' attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems based on the level of the school?

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between attitude and district's guidelines for harassment-avoidance training based on the level of school. H_{07_1} was found to be not significant' therefore, it was retained. The means ranged from 3.42 to 4.07 with the largest mean found in middle school administrators. High school administrators accounted for the smallest mean. Again, interpretation of the meaning of this question was important. Some administrators may feel that Sullivan County's requirements for harassment-avoidance training were appropriate. Other administrators may feel that the type of training has been inappropriate with more training needed, whereas other administrators may have felt that the training has become "overkill."

The same reasoning could be applied to H_{07_2} . Administrators' attitudes regarding the district's guideline for handling harassment problems could be divided into three groups-- administrators who felt that guidelines were appropriate, administrators who felt that more

guidelines were needed, and administrators who felt that guidelines were “overkill.” The ANOVA was not significant; therefore, the null was retained in regard to administrators’ attitudes to the district’s handling of harassment and level of schools.

Conclusions

As discussed in the literature review, the topic of harassment and its implications for school administrators has become an important issue. Any form of harassment can negatively affect the learning environment which may in turn also affect the safety of the students. The following conclusions were developed as a result of the findings:

1. In order for students to feel safe in school, all forms of harassment must be eliminated.
2. Legal issues regarding the safety of students has become an issue, especially in the area of harassment due to the negligence of administrators to enforce anti-harassment measures.
3. One hundred percent of Sullivan County administrators who responded to this study indicated they were knowledgeable of the law relating to harassment and were aware of county policy and procedures.
4. Student-to-student harassment reportedly has declined in Sullivan County Schools since the implementation of harassment-avoidance training.
5. All levels of students in Sullivan County were deemed to need more training, with high school students having the greatest need.
6. Harassment in Sullivan County was not perceived to be a socioeconomic problem due to the findings relating to Title I schools.
7. Bullying was reportedly found in all levels of schools but was reportedly more prevalent in middle schools than in elementary schools.

8. Sexual harassment was considered to be more prevalent in high schools and middle schools than in elementary schools.
9. Evidence still points to the fact that racial harassment is still perceived to exist in Sullivan County.
10. Avoidance training dealing with gender/sexual harassment should begin in elementary schools.
11. As school population increased, the prevalence of sexual harassment, racial harassment, and gender/sexual harassment reportedly increased.
12. Sullivan County administrators who responded reported that they are not modifying school-related activities out of fear of legal action but out of the need for all students to be in a safe environment.
13. Administrators of all ages should be knowledgeable of the law to ensure that their school is safe for all groups of students.
14. Sullivan County administrators, regardless of level of school, formed different attitudes toward the district's guidelines for the handling of harassment-avoidance training and district guidelines for addressing harassment problems.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations for further research are based on findings from this study as well as my personal opinion.

1. Future studies may expand on this study by including faculty as well as students in Sullivan County as the population. Results from this study may be used in a comparative manner to inform effective policymaking.
2. This study may also be expanded to include administrators in school districts that have not been mandated by the federal government to undergo harassment-avoidance training.

3. Further research may use a mixed-methods approach (namely qualitative and quantitative methods) to facilitate personal/qualitative expression on the subject matter and to ensure richness of the data.
4. Finally, future studies may expand the section dealing with legal knowledge to include examples of legal issues so that results may be objectively tabulated based on these examples rather than subjectively based on administrators' opinions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board

East Tennessee State University
Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Institutional Review Board

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Janie W. Stapleton

TITLE OF PROJECT: Sullivan County K-12 Administrators' Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Harassment and the Associated Legal Liability

This Informed Consent will explain about being a research subject in an experiment. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to collect and report the attitudes of Sullivan County K-12 administrators pertaining to various forms of student-to-student harassment in their schools; to collect information on their experiences with student-to-student harassment in their schools over the past two years; to collect information on their attitudes toward the effectiveness of anti-harassment measures in their schools to reduce or eliminate student-to-student harassment; and to ascertain the principals' level of confidence regarding legal knowledge dealing with student-to-student harassment as it relates to their home school.

DURATION: The expected duration is approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. The survey will be administered during the month of September 2005.

PROCEDURES: The instrument to be used in this study is a survey calling for participants to respond to 14 questions by circling the responses ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. One question involves selecting a response of declined, stayed the same, or increased in reference to harassment-avoidance training. The instrument does not identify the participants in any way.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS AND/OR COMPENSATION: There are no direct benefits or compensation to the volunteer participants. However, the research in this study will be designed to provide useful information to administrators regarding various types of harassment and the legal issues related to harassment.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Janie W. Stapleton at Holston Middle School, 354-1503, or by e-mail at jes@chartertn.net. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6055 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Every attempt will be made to see that the study results are kept confidential. The instrument utilized in this study does not contain any identifying marks disclosing the identity of subjects; therefore, privacy will be maintained. The information obtained from the survey will be kept confidential and will be reported in aggregate and as part of a summary data.

The records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements and stored at 2304 Stuart Drive, Kingsport, TN, for at least 10 years after the end of this research. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: The nature demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me.

The study record will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

APPENDIX B

Letter to Director of Sullivan County Schools

August 23, 2005

Mr. Glenn Arwood
Director of Sullivan County Schools
Blountville, TN 37617

Dear Mr. Arwood:

As you know, I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Education, I am conducting research related to the perceptions and attitudes of principals and assistant principals regarding harassment and the associated legal liability.

This letter is to request your permission for the principals and assistant principals of all Sullivan County Schools to participate in this study.

The purpose of this study is to collect and report the attitudes of Sullivan County K-12 administrators pertaining to various forms of student-to-student harassment in their schools. This study will collect information on the experiences the administrators have had with student-to-student harassment in their schools over the past two years. This study will also collect information on Sullivan County K-12 administrators' attitudes toward the effectiveness of anti-harassment measures their schools have implemented to reduce or eliminate student-to-student harassment to determine if more harassment-avoidance training is needed for administrators, faculty, and students. Finally, the study will ascertain the administrators' level of confidence regarding legal knowledge dealing with student-to-student harassment as it relates to their home schools.

The information obtained from the questionnaire and survey will be kept confidential and will be reported only as part of summary data.

Upon completion of my dissertation, I will be happy to share the results with you. I appreciate your consideration. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call me at home, 245-5718, at Holston Middle, 354-1503, or e-mail at jes@chartertn.net.

Sincerely,

Janie W. Stapleton

APPENDIX C

Letter to Sullivan County K-12 Administrators

August 28, 2005

Dear Administrators:

As many of you know, I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Education, I am conducting research related to the perceptions and attitudes of Sullivan County principals and assistant principals regarding harassment and the associated legal liability.

Please take the time to help me in this undertaking by completing the enclosed demographic survey and the 15-item survey regarding your perceptions and attitudes. Mr. Arwood has approved your participation in this survey. I have enclosed a questionnaire for the principal and each assistant principal in your school. After everyone at your school has completed the questionnaire, I would appreciate it if you would please place them in the enclosed self-addressed envelope and return them to me via school mail. I know how busy you are at this time of year, but I would appreciate it if you could return the survey within five working days, as I would like to complete the statistics in preparation for a December graduation.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in this research study. The information obtained from the questionnaire and survey will be kept confidential and will be reported only as part of summary data.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at Holston Middle at 354-1503 or by e-mail at jes@chartertn.net. Upon completion, I will be happy to share the results of my study with you.

Sincerely,

Janie W. Stapleton

Enclosures

APPENDIX D

Demographic Survey

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be considered confidential and totally anonymous. If you should have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at Holston Middle School, 354-1503, or jes@chartertn.net. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please check the appropriate responses to the following sections:

I. Gender:

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

II. Age:

- 1. Under 30
- 2. 30-39
- 3. 40-49
- 4. 50-59
- 5. 60+

III. Highest Educational Level:

- 1. Master's Degree
- 2. Master's + Post Graduate Hours
- 3. Educational Specialist
- 4. Ed.D
- 5. Other _____

IV. Total Years of Experience in Education: _____

V. Total Years of Experience as a Principal and/or Assistant Principal:

VI. Current Position:

- _____ 1. Principal
- _____ 2. Assistant Principal

VII. Level of current school:

- _____ 1. High School
- _____ 2. Middle School
- _____ 3. Intermediate 5-7
- _____ 4. K-8th Grade
- _____ 5. Elementary School

VIII. Population of school: _____ students

IX. Category of school:

- _____ 1. Title I
- _____ 2. Non-Title I

X. Have you taken a university or college course primarily devoted to school law?

- _____ 1. Yes
- _____ 2. No

XI. Please indicate the types of training on harassment in which you have participated:

(Check all that apply.)

- _____ 1. College-level class(es)
- _____ 2. Seminar(s)
- _____ 3. In-school workshop(s)
- _____ 4. Reading research
- _____ 5. Discussion with attorneys
- _____ 6. Other (Please specify) _____

APPENDIX E

Survey Instrument

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT SURVEY

Using the scale below, circle the number that most closely matches your level of agreement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I am knowledgeable of the law and legal ramifications regarding student-to-student harassment.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Administrators in my school have been trained to recognize student-to-student harassment and are aware of policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Administrators in my school need more training in recognizing student-to-student harassment.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers in my school have been trained to recognize student-to-student harassment and are aware of policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers in my school need more training in recognizing student-to-student harassment.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Students in my school have been trained to recognize student-to-student harassment and are aware of policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Students in my school need more training in recognizing student-to-student harassment.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Bullying is prevalent as a type of student-to-student harassment in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Sexual harassment is prevalent as a type of student-to-student harassment in my school	1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

	SD	D	N	A	SA
10. Racial harassment is prevalent as a type of student-to-student harassment in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Gender/Sexual Orientation harassment is prevalent as a type of student-to-student harassment in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Activities at my school have been modified out of fear of legal action due to harassment.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Sullivan County's guidelines for the handling of harassment- avoidance training have been very appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Sullivan County's policies provide appropriate guidelines to address problems of harassment.	1	2	3	4	5

15. Since the implementation of the harassment-avoidance training, student-to-student harassment at my school has:

- _____ 1. Declined
- _____ 2. Stayed the same (no detectable change)
- _____ 3. Increased

Please use the back of this survey to make any suggestions or comments about how Sullivan County Schools could better prevent student-to-student harassment.

Thank you for participating in this study. Place the completed Demographic Survey and Survey Instrument in the self-addressed envelope and return it in the school mail within five working days to: Janie Stapleton, Assistant Principal, Holston Middle School.

APPENDIX F

Pilot Test Cover Letter

April 20, 2005

Member of ELPA 7813 Class
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a pilot test participant for my dissertation instrument. I appreciate your time and support. I have enclosed the current draft of my Demographic Survey, as well as a draft of the Survey Instrument.

The results of the pilot test will be used to revise the questionnaire and the survey. Please note the following items as you evaluate my work:

- Length of time needed to complete both parts
- Clarity of the statements included in the survey
- Clarity of the instructions for completing both parts
- Ease of completion
- Any additional comments or suggestions

After you have evaluated the Demographic Survey and Survey Instrument, please e-mail me at jes@chartertn.net with your suggestions.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Janie Stapleton

VITA

JANIE W. STAPLETON

- Personal Data: Date of Birth: May 27, 1949
Place of Birth: Abingdon, Virginia
Marital Status: Single
- Education: East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Elementary Education, B.S., 1979
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Education, with Instructional Technology Specialty Area, M.Ed., 1997
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Library Media Endorsement K-12, 1998
Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee;
+45 Hours Above Masters, 2000
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Administrative Endorsement and State Certification, 2003
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Educational Leadership, Ed.D., 2005
- Professional
Experience: Classroom Teacher, Grades 1-5, Orebank and Brookside Elementary,
Sullivan County Schools, 1982-1999
Elementary Librarian/Media Specialist, Kingsley Elementary,
Sullivan County Schools, 1999-2003
High School Librarian/Media Specialist, Central High, Sullivan
County Schools, 2003-2005
Middle School Assistant Principal, Holston Middle School, Sullivan
County Schools, 2005