

THE BULLY REPORT



TRENDS IN BULLYING PULLED FROM
STUDENT FACEBOOK INTERACTIONS

In April 2012, DoSomething.org launched an interactive Facebook application, DoSomething.org's The Bully Project (Bully App), in partnership with the movie Bully, which allowed students to report on their experience with bullying in their schools by responding to eight close-ended questions and one open-ended prompt. The application would then grade¹ each school based a user's selections and prompt the user to share their results with their friends².

The Bully App was initially designed to be active for eight weeks with hopes that 15,000 people would take part. In the first ten days, over 21,000 people installed the application and graded their schools. The plans to turn off the application after two months were subsequently scrapped and as of September 2012; 183,525 people had installed the application and reported on their experience.

The original intent of the Bully App was to provide a direct forum for youth to voice their personal experience with bullying. Only after the explosion of traffic to the app was opportunity for comparative analysis and insight realized. Due to the backend design of the application, each user selected their school from a dropdown list of filterable options, resulting in all students at a given school to be easily grouped together. Additionally, characteristics of each school could easily be pulled in from outside data sets, and because the application operated within the Facebook platform, basic demographic data from each respondent could also be gleaned.

After removing college students and adults retrospectively reporting on their secondary school experiences, as well as suppressing multiple responses and users who manually or incorrectly entered a school (i.e. responses not tied to a verifiable school), 54,763 unique responses remained from students in verified secondary schools. This report analyzes these 54,763 responses.

HOW ACCURATE ARE THE FINDINGS PULLED FROM THE BULLY APP?

The content of the Bully App was casual by design – prompts within the app were chatty and at times leading – and all participants self-selected to take part. Almost every user of the Bully App had frequent exposure to bullying: 81% of users reported that they saw bullying at least once a week and 25% reported seeing bullying at least once per day. Just 3% of Bully App users selected that bullying at their school was “not an issue at all.”

¹The Bully Application would look at the frequency, variety and locality of bullying that a user selected and generate a letter grade based on a simple algorithm that tallied each negative response. For instance, selecting that your school has frequent name calling and frequent physical bullying would count as 2 additional points in the algorithm, with additional points corresponding to a lower letter grade. The grades ranged from 'A' to 'F', with 'F' being the worst. The grading was designed to give a typical set of inputs a 'C' grade.

²At the start of the grading experience bullying was defined as a repeated, awful action that makes someone feel bad about themselves. It takes on many forms - like nasty texts, physical harassment, insults, even dirty looks.

However, due to the large volume of data captured and the ability to look at relative differences in response rates based on demographic information, insights into how and where bullying takes place, as well as what measures correlate with decreased reporting rates, have been possible. These initial findings compare favorably with external data sets.

The US Department of Justice in their School Crime Supplement (SCS) found higher rates of bullying at public schools compared to private schools, a finding consistent with users from public schools reporting the highest frequencies in the Bully App. Additionally, the SCS also finds that as students move up in grade, they report lower rates of abuse; again, consistent with responses pulled from the Bully App.

School Crime Supplement (SCS)	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Public School	Private School
Total bullied at school or cyber-bullied anywhere	29%	28%	23%	22%	30%	20%
The Bully App	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Public School	Private School
In the last year, how often have you seen bullying in your school: At least once a day	38%	31%	26%	26%	28%	23%

The following report will highlight top line findings from the eight close ended questions from the Bully App and report summary statistics and insights, as well as trends revealed by using a basic binary regression model that calculated the odds of the different variables impacting the outcomes.

FINDINGS

Students report frequent bullying at almost every location in their daily routines

- Classrooms, a place where at least one adult/teacher is usually present, are one of the largest settings for bullying.
 - o Over half (54%) of the teens who took the survey said the classroom was a place of frequent bullying.
- The most common reported locations of frequent bullying were online (70%), in hallways (69%), in cafeterias (64%) and in classrooms (54%) – all places (with the exception of the internet) that students are required to frequent.
- The least common locations of frequent bullying were in locker rooms (32%), in bathrooms (27%) and at sporting events (26%) – places that students can avoid.

Both males and females report seeing similar frequency and severity of bullying, but differ in location and type

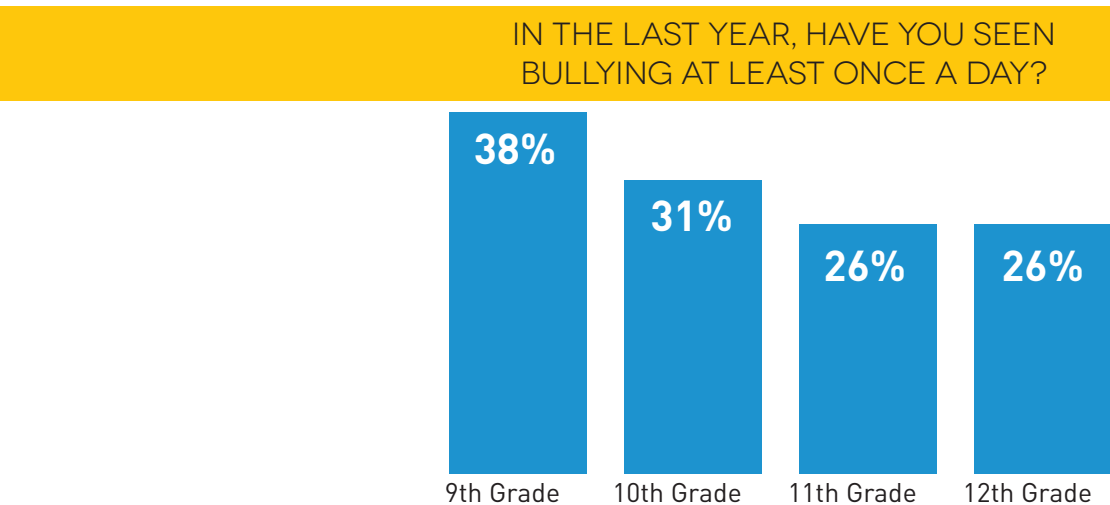
Both males and females report seeing similar frequency and severity of bullying, but differ in location and type

	Female: Most Frequent Locations			%	Male: Most Frequent Locations			%
#1 female →	1	Online		73%	1	Hallways		66% ← #1 male
	2	Hallways		70%	2	Lunch/Cafeteria		59%
	3	Lunch/Cafeteria		65%	3	Online		59%
	4	Classrooms		55%	4	Classrooms		51%
	5	On your phone (texting)		38%	5	Locker rooms		40%
	6	School Buses		37%	6	After school activities		34%
	7	After school activities		33%	7	School buses		33%
	8	Locker rooms		29%	8	On your phone (texting)		26%
	9	Bathrooms		27%	9	Sporting events		26%
	10	Sporting events		26%	10	Bathrooms		25%
	11	Somewhere else		20%	11	Somewhere else		24%

- Female students are more likely to report frequent bullying in 8 of the 11 asked about locations, but report similar impressions of overall frequency and severity as their male counterparts
 - o 28% of both male and female students report witnessing daily bullying.
 - o 3% of male students and 2% of female reported that bullying was not an issue at their school.

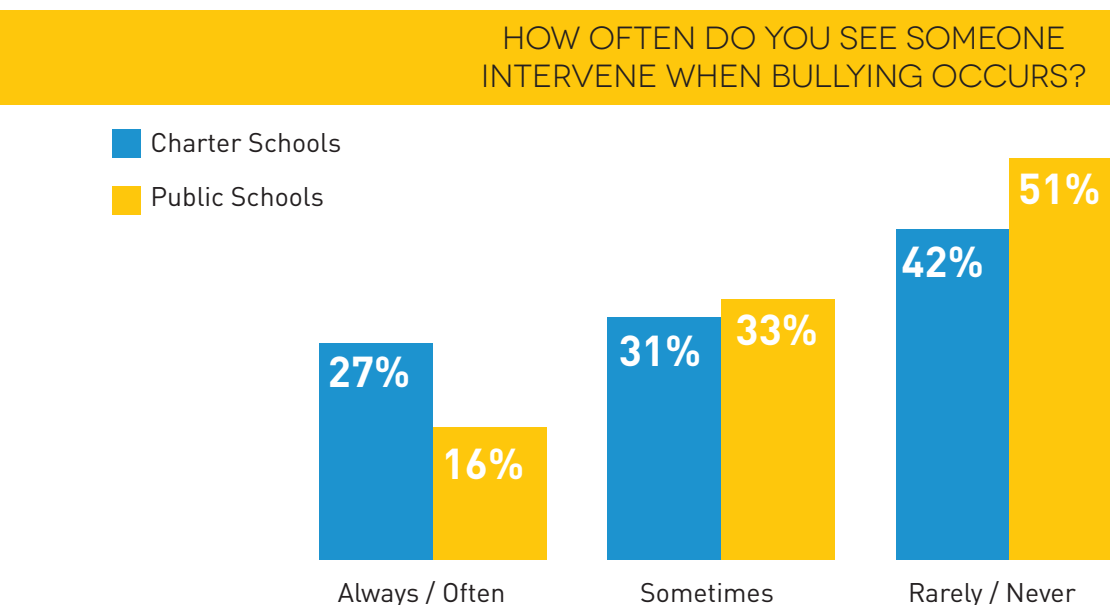
- For female students, frequent online bullying was the most reported (73%); for male students, frequent hallway bullying was the most reported (66%).
- Male students witness more physical abuse (40% vs. 36%), while female students witness more emotional abuse (62% vs. 52%).

As teens get older they witness decreases in overall bullying, but increases in digital bullying



- 38% of freshman reported seeing bullying at least once a day, compared to 26% of seniors.
- Name-calling, teasing, physical abuse and emotional abuse all decrease in reported frequency as students advance school.
- Only cyber-bullying and over the phone (text-based) bullying increase in reported frequency as students age

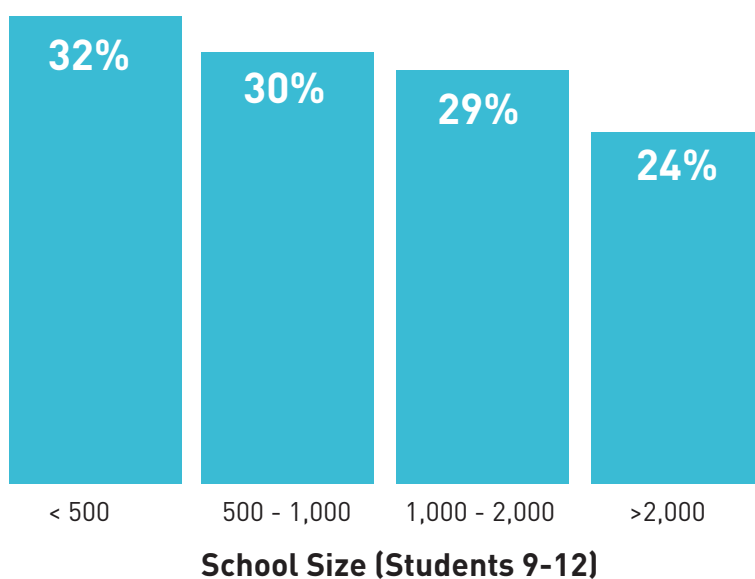
Students in charter schools reported more positive results than teens in public school.



- 25% of teens in charter schools say bullying “isn’t a problem,” compared to 11% of teens in public schools.
- Students at charter schools report more frequent intervention when bullying does occur, with 27% of charters school students reporting intervention always or often; 16% of public school students report the same.
- For all 11 locations asked about in the Bully App, students at charter schools are less likely to report bullying

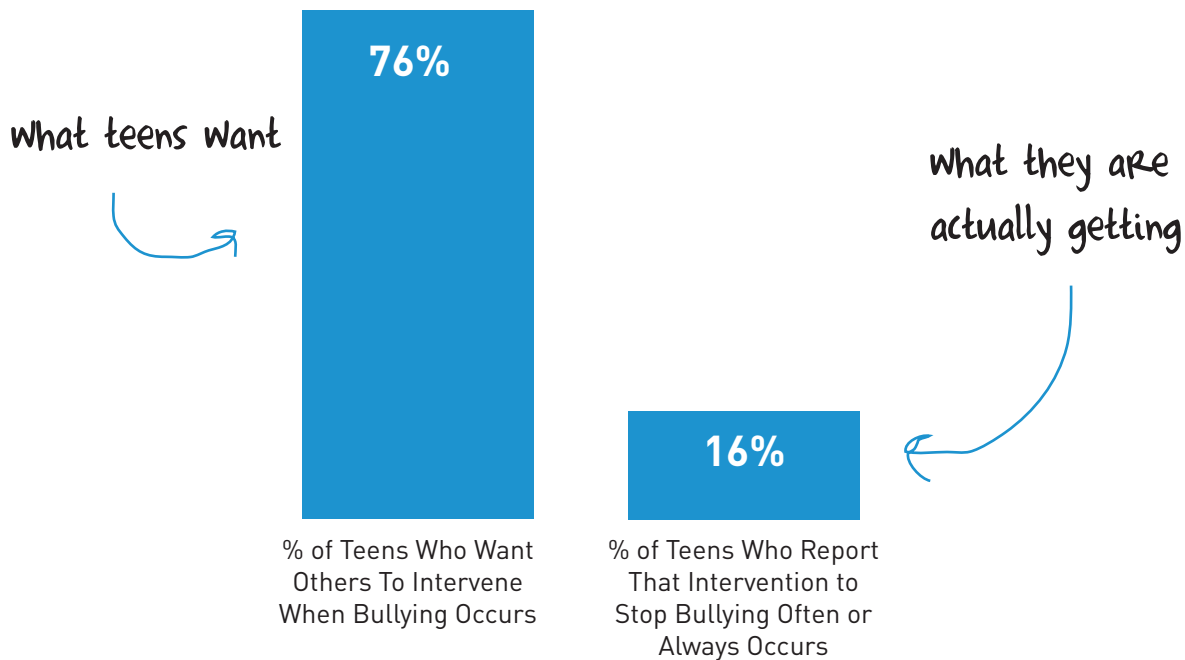
Difference based on school size

WITNESS BULLYING ON DAILY BASIS



- Students at larger schools, those with over 2,000 students, report less frequent bullying (24% reporting daily vs. 30% for smaller and mid-sized schools)
- Students at small schools (grades 9-12 student population under 500) report the highest rates of daily bullying at 32%, six points higher than students at large schools.
- Students at mid-sized schools (500-2,000 students in grades 9-12) report the highest overall rates of bullying, with 88% of students reporting some level of bullying.
- Students at mid-sized schools (500-2,000 students in grades 9-12) were more likely to report frequent bullying in 10 of the 11 locations asked about in the Bully App, with the exception of frequent bathroom bullying, which does not correlated with school size.

EXPECTATION GAP IN INTERVENTION RATES



- Three-quarters of teens said the best thing that others can do to help stop bullying is to intervene. However, only 16% report others always or often intervene and half of teens say they rarely or never see anyone do so.

When students report frequent bullying in school bathrooms, they also report twice the rates of physical abuse.

- There is a strong link between frequent bullying in bathrooms and physical abuse, with the effect most pronounced for high school boys, who are over twice as likely to report physical abuse in schools where frequent bathroom bullying occurs.

When other students routinely intervene, the odds of reported physical abuse decline. Routine intervention by teachers/other school officials have no impact on physical abuse.

- The only group's intervening that reduces the prevalence of physical abuse is the routine intervention by other students; routine intervention by teachers and school officials had no such impact on the propensity of student-on-student physical abuse.
- The probability of physical abuse drops by almost 10% when students at a school routinely intervene when they witness bullying.
 - o This is likely linked to the relationship between physical abuse and frequent bathroom bullying. When other students routinely intervene, the probability of frequent bathroom bullying decreases by 10% for boys and 6% for girls. The presence of usual student intervention also decreases the odds of seeing frequent bullying locker rooms, while remaining a non-factor in predicting bullying elsewhere.

- o In short: in areas where teacher and administrators are not typically present (bathrooms & locker rooms), routine student intervention has the greatest impact.

When teachers routinely intervene at a school, frequent classroom bullying decreases by almost 10%, as well as rates of bullying at after school activities.

- Proactive teachers are part of the solution: when students report routine intervention by teachers the odds of them also reporting classroom bullying decrease by almost 10%, the most salient factor related to decreased in classroom bullying.
- When teachers intervene, frequent bullying at after school activities also decreases, although the effect is smaller. Routine teacher intervention is not correlated with decreased odds of frequent bullying for any other location, including online or over phone/sms.

Frequent teasing and name calling are the most closely linked types of bullying to classrooms, with the probability of both doubling when in classroom bullying is reported.

Online bullying is the most pervasive type of bullying; routine intervention by any group (students, teachers, school officials) has no impact on rates of online bullying.

- Online bullying – the most pervasive based on findings, with 2 out of 3 students reporting frequent online bullying – is also the most pernicious; no groups' intervening behavior has any impact on the prevalence of online bullying.
- The odds of all other types of bullying - with exception of physical abuse - increase if online bullying is frequent.
 - o This suggests a substitution between online bullying and physical bullying, though more research is needed. Both an increase in online bullying and a decrease in physical bullying could be the result of some omitted socio-economical variable; for example, median family income for students in the school.

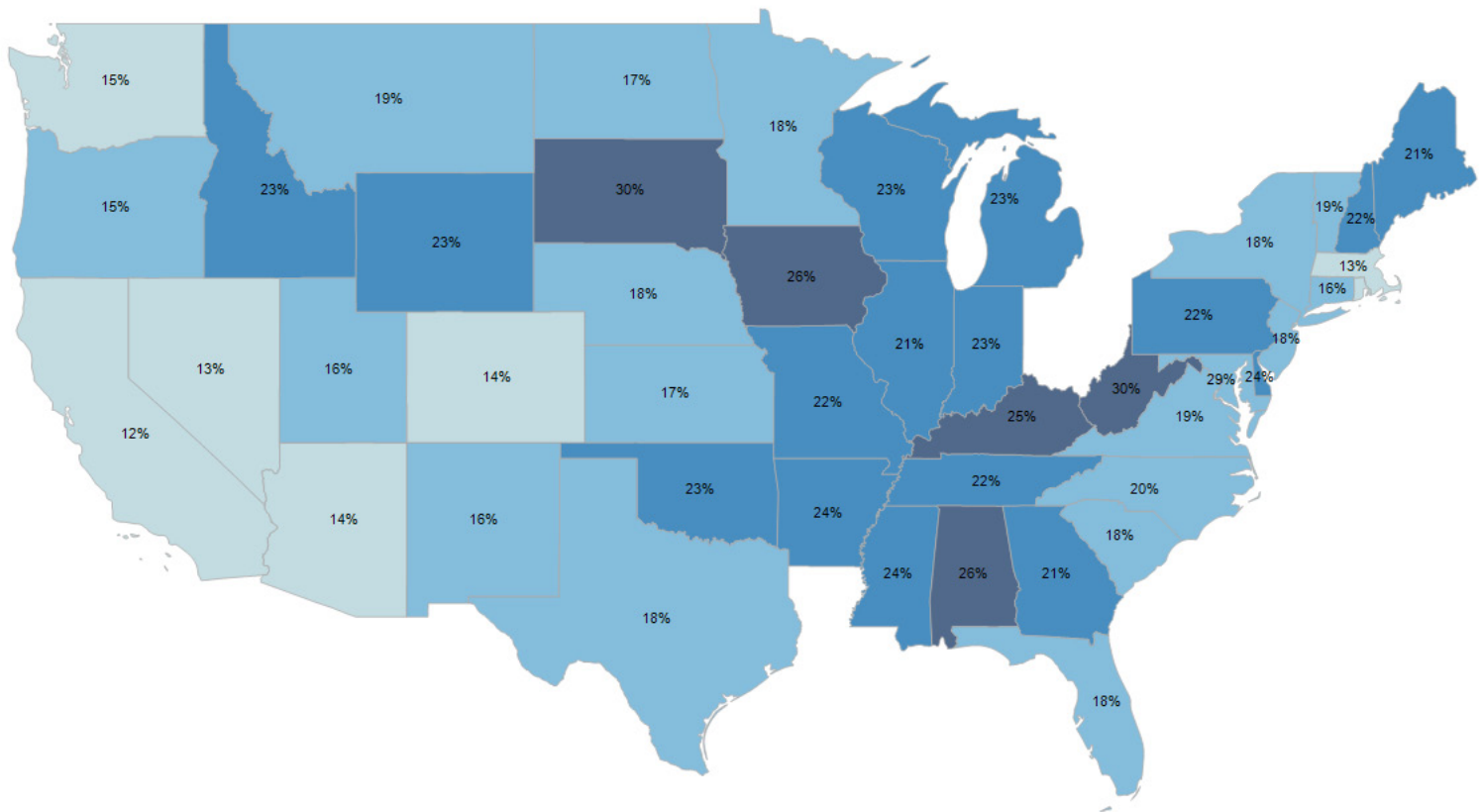
Emotional abuse, especially for girls, is strongly linked with the use of mobile phones and texting as a means of bullying.

- Frequent use of mobile phones as a platform for bullying(sms/texting) are strongly tied to increased reporting of emotional abuse. For girls, frequent use of mobile technology almost doubles the probability of reported emotional abuse, the most closely tied form of bullying to the technology.

For girls, usual intervention from other students correlates with a slight decrease in the probability of mobile/sms bullying; for boys, no such connection exists.

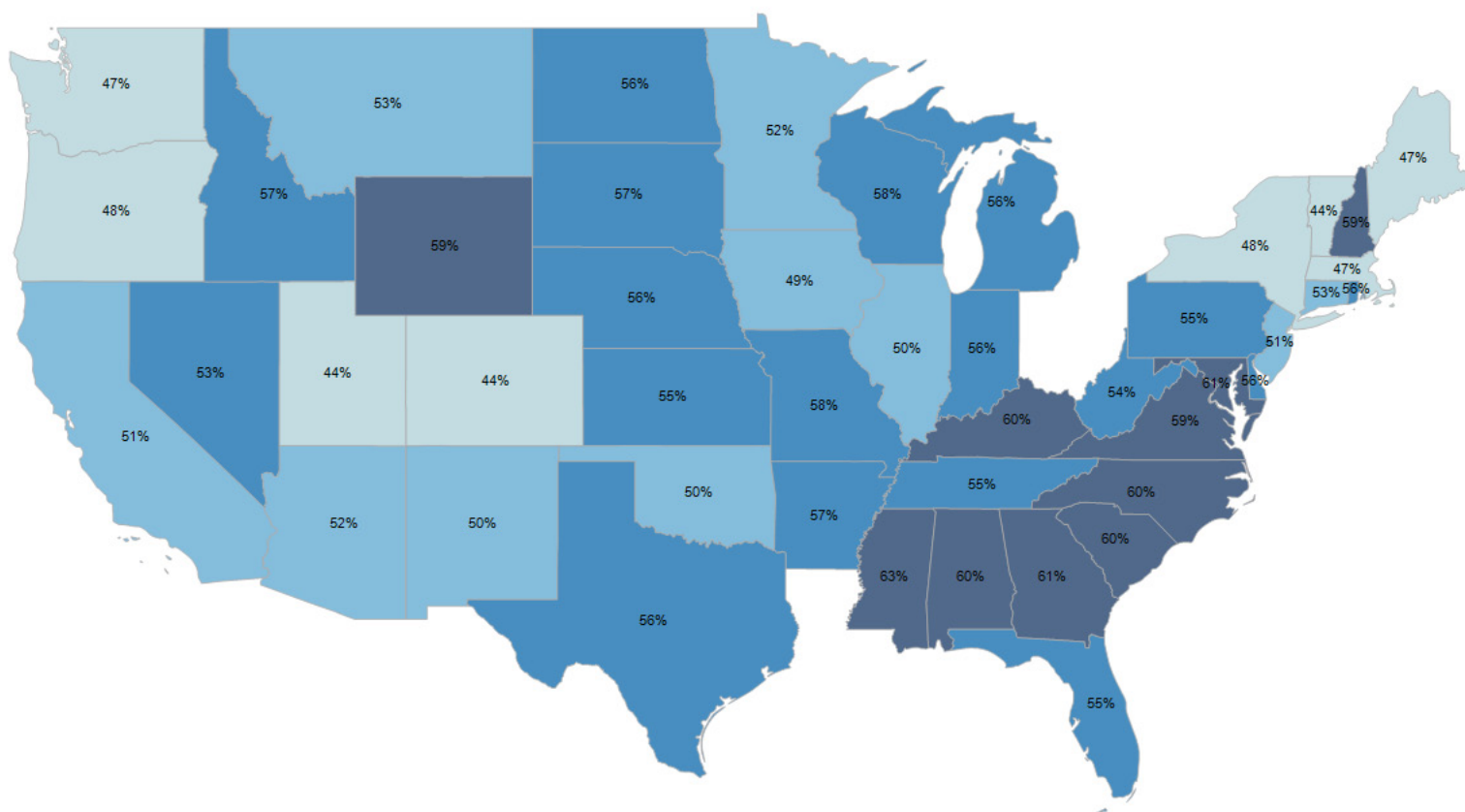
Bullying patterns vary by state.

STUDENT REPORTING SEEING BULLYING MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY



- California students reported significantly lower incidents of bullying compared to other states.
 - o Only 12% of students in California report seeing bullying multiple times a day, compared to a national average of 18%.
 - o California students are the least likely to report bullying on school buses (17% vs. 36% nationally), in hallways (51% vs. 69% nationally) or with mobile phones (30% vs. 35% nationally).

FREQUENT IN CLASSROOM BULLYING BY STATE



- Teens in Appalachia and the South East consistently report higher levels of bullying, with significantly elevated rates in the classroom.
- New Hampshire is a North East outlier - teens in that state consistently reported more problems with bullying than other New England states.

CLOSING REMARKS

The data supplied to the Bully App from over 50,000 students paints a grim picture of ever-present bullying. Nearly every student (97%) reported some adverse experience with bullying, whether directly or as witness to abuse of peers, with the overwhelming majority (87%) reporting bullying on a weekly basis. Despite all this, students remain optimistic about creating safer and more inclusive school environments.

Based on the initial findings of The Bully Report, immediate steps should be taken by school officials to address bullying in their schools. Teachers should be instructed and empowered to proactively step in when they see signs of abuse. Results from The Bully Report show that rates of classroom bullying decrease by 10% when teachers routinely intervene. Physical abuse could be curtailed by better monitoring of supervisory blind spots: when frequent bullying is reported in bathrooms and locker rooms the odds of physical abuse more than double.

Better communication is also needed with students. Half of the students taking part in The Bully Report wished their schools would talk more openly with them about bullying, and nearly two-thirds of students stated if schools did a better job of listening to students when they spoke out, bullying could be reduced.

In states like California that have robust bullying policies and resources readily available to teachers, administrators and parents, reports of abuse are considerably lower. California enjoys a frequency of bullying a full third lower than the national average. California students report the lowest rates of bullying on busses and in hallways, and are near the bottom in every other measured category.

It is clear that more proactive attention from adults and teachers, clear policies at school, and overall improved communication between all parties is need to curtail bullying.

Intervention is the best course of action.

It is the intent of DoSomething.org that the findings in The Bully Report serve as a jumping off point for other researchers. The full dataset used in this analysis is available for independent research and can be requested at www.dosomething.org/bullyreport. The results in The Bully Report are only the beginning of what we hope will be many deeper dives looking at the relationship between types of bullying, school characteristics, and intervening behavior. Further combination with external school level data will add additional dimensions to the understanding of what correlates with pervasive bullying. The resulting amalgam of student level data with broader sociological factors will be able to suggest future research needs and inform policy recommendations.

SUMMARY STATISTICS

Summary Statistics

Q1	Do you think bullying is a problem in your school?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	No way. Not an issue at all.	2%	3%	2%	2%	6%
2	Not really, it doesn't cause problems for us.	10%	12%	9%	9%	20%
3	I don't know if I'd say "terrible," but it happens.	44%	43%	45%	45%	42%
4	Yeah, it's pretty bad.	21%	20%	21%	21%	14%
5	Definitely. It's a huge problem.	23%	22%	23%	23%	20%
Q2	In the last year, how often have you seen bullying in your school?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	Multiple times a day	18%	18%	18%	18%	15%
2	Once a day	10%	10%	10%	10%	8%
3	A few times a week	32%	31%	32%	32%	27%
4	Once a week	27%	27%	27%	27%	28%
5	Never	13%	15%	13%	13%	22%
Q3	Where does bullying occur most frequently in your school?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	Classrooms	54%	51%	55%	54%	51%
2	Bathrooms	27%	25%	27%	27%	26%
3	Sporting events	26%	26%	26%	26%	13%
4	After school activities (clubs, sports practice, hanging out, etc.)	33%	34%	33%	34%	29%
5	Locker rooms	32%	40%	29%	33%	16%
6	Hallways	69%	66%	70%	70%	56%
7	Lunch/cafeteria	64%	59%	65%	64%	52%
8	School buses (and waiting for the bus)	36%	33%	37%	37%	22%
9	Online (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)	70%	59%	73%	70%	61%
10	On your phone (text drama, forwarded texts)	35%	26%	38%	35%	27%
11	Somewhere else	21%	24%	20%	21%	23%
12	Does not apply	4%	5%	3%	4%	9%

Q4	How do people in your school bully others?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	Name-calling	83%	83%	83%	83%	77%
2	Teasing	78%	79%	78%	78%	73%
3	Physical abuse (hitting, punching, kicking, shoving, or worse...)	37%	40%	36%	38%	24%
4	Emotional abuse (silent treatment, etc.)	59%	52%	62%	60%	50%
5	Cyberbullying (Facebook, Twitter, you know...)	68%	59%	71%	68%	58%
6	Text drama (texting mean things about other students, chain texts, etc.)	55%	47%	58%	55%	44%
7	Other forms of bullying	23%	25%	22%	23%	21%
8	Does not apply	3%	4%	2%	3%	7%
Q5	How often do you see someone intervene when bullying happens at your school?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	Always	4%	5%	4%	4%	9%
2	Often	12%	13%	12%	12%	18%
3	Sometimes	33%	32%	34%	33%	31%
4	Rarely	43%	42%	43%	43%	33%
5	Never	8%	9%	8%	8%	9%
Q6	When you have seen people intervene in bullying at your school, who usually steps up?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	My friends or me	54%	57%	53%	53%	60%
2	Other students	44%	43%	44%	44%	49%
3	Teacher(s)	61%	61%	61%	61%	61%
4	School administrator (principal, counselor, you get the idea...)	54%	54%	55%	54%	53%
5	No one	9%	9%	10%	10%	7%
Q7	Do you feel like the adults in your school could be more helpful in stopping bullying?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	Yes. They just sit on their butts.	14%	12%	15%	14%	10%
2	They try, but they're not successful.	27%	24%	28%	27%	21%
3	Maybe a bit more, but usually they're helpful.	24%	25%	23%	24%	23%
4	They do their best.	24%	28%	23%	23%	36%

5	They don't even notice.	6%	6%	6%	6%	4%
6	Not sure, I don't think they can fix the problem.	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%

Q8	What is the best thing others can do to help stop bullying at your school?	All	Male	Female	Public School	Charter School
1	Talk more openly with us	49%	50%	49%	49%	51%
2	Listen when we voice our opinions	63%	58%	65%	63%	63%
3	Enforce stronger disciplinary action when someone is caught bullying	63%	59%	65%	63%	54%
4	Intervene when they see bullying happening in school	76%	74%	77%	76%	71%
5	Create a zero tolerance policy for bullying	61%	56%	63%	61%	57%