

“Is it a conflict or bullying?”

Jim Bruce, Jefferson Elementary School Principal

The answer to the headline question is, “It depends.” A conflict between children is a normal, developmental occurrence that occurs in schools, homes, and other areas where children congregate. A conflict can usually be resolved between the children through appropriate problem-solving strategies.

On the other hand, bullying is hurtful behavior that:

- Is repeated or has the potential to be repeated.
- Involves a real or perceived imbalance of power.
- Has the intent to cause physical or emotional harm or has a significant impact on the bullied student.

Because bullying inherently involves social relationships it affects all participants involved: the child being bullied, the child doing the bullying, and the bystanders. No one would question that bullying is harmful to those that are victimized. Recent reports estimate that about 20% of children are victims of bullying at school. Paying attention to victims of bullying is important, because students who are bullied report having more physical health complaints and engage in higher levels of problematic behavior.

What may be more surprising is that those who are doing the bullying also suffer. Students who bully others are at higher risk for a wide range of problems including abusing alcohol and other drugs, getting into fights, and doing poorly academically. Like victims of bullying, children who bully are at higher risk of having problems into adulthood, such as criminal convictions and substance use.

Another group of students affected by bullying is bystanders (students who witness bullying). Bullying rarely happens in isolated corners of the school where no one is watching. It often happens in very open places in front of other students. And with greater use of technology, bullying can happen in very public forums. In fact, bystanders make up the largest group of students affected by bullying in school, with 71% of students saying they have witnessed bullying within the last month.

What can schools and school districts do? The three components of school bullying prevention are:

- Policies and Procedures
- Staff Response Training
- Social-emotional Learning (SEL) Skills and Bullying Education

Schools should focus on SEL skills as part of their efforts to deal with bullying issues. SEL involves “the systematic development of a core set of social and emotional skills that help children more effectively handle life challenges and thrive in both their learning and their social environments.” Research-based curricula that teach social-emotional competence help create physically and emotionally safe school environments.

In Pullman Public Schools, specifically at the four elementary schools, we use **Second Step** (Committee for Children) as our adopted SEL curriculum. **Second Step** SEL focuses on core social-emotional skills that are particularly important for bullying prevention, including empathy, emotion management, and social problem solving. In addition, embedded within these lessons are topics such as friendship building and how to be assertive, which are also key skills in bullying prevention.

During the Second Step Bullying Unit all students learn and practice the following **3 R's**:

- **Recognizing:** Teaching the recognizing bullying lesson helps students understand the difference between bullying and conflict. They learn that bullying is hurtful behavior that keeps happening. They also learn that bullying is both harmful and against the rules. Emphasis is placed on the fact that no one deserves to be bullied. **Being able to identify bullying is an important first step in prevention.**
- **Reporting:** The reporting lesson teaches students to report bullying to adults using examples in stories and through skill practice. Practicing reporting makes it easier for children to report to an adult when **real** bullying happens.
- **Refusing:** The refusing lesson helps students use assertiveness skills to refuse bullying after they have reported it to an adult. Research shows that students can reduce their chances of being bullied in the future by responding assertively. Assertiveness skills are taught and reinforced in Second Step SEL lessons.

Bystander Power: Almost all bullying has bystanders. Research shows that changing how they react is a powerful way to reduce bullying. In the Bystander Power lesson, students learn ways bystanders can help stop bullying through non-physical methods. They learn that bystanders have the power to make the bullying situation better or worse.

Teaching SEL competence has been found to be an important ingredient in effective bullying prevention that also supports children’s healthy development.

- Social-emotional skills are key components in tackling the bullying problem.
- Social-emotional skills help all those involved in bullying and can be easily adopted into school curricula.
- Teaching these skills not only promotes a safe and positive climate within schools, it creates healthy children who are ready to learn.

Bullying is a verb and not a noun. Through the use of SEL (Second Step) and its bully prevention companion curriculum, bullying type behavior can be changed. Bullying is an action, not a character trait.

Additional information on Pullman Public Schools prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) can be located on the school district website (Families-Important Notices-Annual Notifications- Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying).

Please feel free to contact your child’s teacher, school counselor or a school administrator if you have questions and are unsure if what your child is reporting to you is a “conflict or bullying.”

PULLMAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
267

Welcome!

PSD BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DIRECTOR DISTRICT 1
ARRON CARTER

On March 8, 2023, the Pullman School District Board of Directors approved the appointment of Dr. Arron Carter for the Board Director District No. 1 position beginning March 2023. We are excited to welcome Dr. Carter to our Board of Directors!

Want to learn more about our Board of Directors?

www.pullmanschools.org

→ School Board
→ Meet Board Members

A Time of Regeneration on the Pullman School Board

Allison Munch-Rotolo, Board Director District 2

A school board is the mechanism by which the values and expectations that the community holds for its schools are represented through local governance and visioning. While individual board members have no authority, their combined experiences and perspectives work to support student achievement by performing key functions related to policy, curriculum, budget, facilities, and the employment of a superintendent.

The estimated average minimum time commitment for a school board member is around 10-15 hours per month. Susan Weed’s contributions to public education for students in Pullman and throughout the state of Washington were significant and will be missed. After 17 years (estimated 2,500+ hours) of service, Ms. Weed retired from her position representing Director District 1 in late January. Her 17-year tenure corresponds to the progression of several entire cohorts of students through our 13-year K-12 system. What a legacy!

Upon receiving Ms. Weed’s letter of resignation, the district announced the pending vacancy of the Director District 1 position on January 12, and posted an application for appointment to fill it that was due February 10. During the month-long application period, the district received two applications, one of which was later withdrawn by the applicant. In the last week of February, the board conducted a candidate interview with the one remaining candidate. At the time of this writing, we are looking forward to welcoming a new board member and team member, Dr. Arron Carter, when the appointment process is completed – hopefully by the time you read this.

Any time the composition of a board changes, it effectively becomes a new board. And so, the usual spring metaphors of growth and renewal are especially apt in the case of the Pullman School Board, where the organization, though a stable government entity, is subject to change based on its specific personnel and the ideas, experiences, and priorities they bring with them.

I look forward to working with Dr. Carter through the remainder of my term representing Director District 2, which expires in November. As mentioned by Director Amanda Tanner in her excellent column last month, positions representing Director Districts 1, 2, and 3 will all be up for election in November. Matters of stability and change weigh on all of us in the district, and especially on me, as I am not seeking re-election. I want to do all that I can to ensure that there is an ample supply of candidates who will continue to bring growth and regeneration to our local school board. If you live in Director Districts 1, 2, or 3 and are interested in running for a position on the school board, you must file for candidacy with the Whitman County Auditor in May. For more information, see https://www.pullmanschools.org/school_board/information_for_candidates

The opinions expressed in Board Reports are those of individual school board members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the board as a whole or of Pullman Public Schools.



2023-2024 KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT
OPENS FEBRUARY 1, 2023

If your child will be 5 years old by August 31, 2023, then it is time to register your child for kindergarten! Enroll online beginning February 1st!

WWW.PULLMANSCHOOLS.ORG/ENROLLMENT

Required Documents:

- ✓ Documentation of Student Age
- ✓ Medically verified, up-to-date immunization records or exemption form
- ✓ Ages & Stages Questionnaire



Child Find 2022-2023
 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

This screening is an opportunity to identify, locate, and evaluate children who might have a disability and to address potential concerns. This is available to children (birth through 5 years of age) residing, or living in a temporary situation, within Pullman School District’s boundaries.

UPCOMING SCREENING DATES:

- ✓ Friday, April 14
- ✓ Friday, May 5

All children ages 5-21 who are suspected of possibly having a disability who reside in, or are living in a temporary situation, within PSD’s boundaries are entitled to child find activities. This includes all children enrolled in PSD schools, children who are being home schooled, and children enrolled in a private school located in the district (even if they reside in another district).

For more information or to **schedule an appointment**, please contact Pullman School District’s Instructional Programs Office at (509) 332-3144.

The Pullman School District Board of Directors and the Pullman School District shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities programs without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation (including gender expression or identity), marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, participation in the Boy Scouts of America or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment.

The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator; Assistant Superintendent, (509) 332-3144, and Section 504 Coordinator; Director of Special Services, (509) 332-3144. 240 SE Dexter Street, Pullman, WA 99163. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in the application process by contacting the Personnel Coordinator at (509) 332-3584.

Board of Directors

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