

7-28-2014

# High School Principals' Perceptions of Cyberbullying

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HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF CYBERBULLYING

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August 2014

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
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The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain a deeper understanding of how high school principals perceive the issue of cyberbullying within their schools. The study used three primary methods to collect data from six public high school principals in Southwestern Pennsylvania who are actively serving in the role of high school principal and presiding at a 9th through 12th grade campus or a 9th and 10th grade campus. This research study utilized semi-structured interviews, a document review and completion of a critical incident reflection in order to collect data. The interviews for this study were recorded, transcribed and then sent to the participants in order to member check and affirm accuracy. The collection and analysis of district documents related to cyberbullying was also conducted. The documents included: board policy, student code of conduct, internal procedures, discipline reports, internal memos, parent newsletters and other publications such as school codes of conduct, bullying prevention program materials, and any other relevant documents. Participants were also provided a critical incident reflection sheet to comment on any information they may have failed to mention during the process. Each of the data sources (interview, critical incident, document review) in this study was analyzed using content analysis.

The results of this study indicate that principals in Southwestern Pennsylvania have very similar perceptions related to cyberbullying in their schools. The results indicate that cyberbullying is having a very comparable impact on their schools. Cyberbullying is affecting

principals by consuming a large portion of their time and thereby negatively impacting their ability to focus on teaching and learning. The results further indicate that principals perceive they are not fully up-to-date with the technology their students using to engage in the behavior.