Listening Tour summary notes
November 2013

Issues raised by students:

- **Bullying and harassment in general:**
    - o Bullying and harassment are occurring in classrooms, in the hallways, in the lunchroom, on school buses, online, in athletic settings, off campus in the community
    - o Levels of safety varied from school to school: some schools had a lot of physical violence, some schools had very little physical violence; students were able to identify distinct safe places and safe adults in their schools but not all students felt they had a safe adult to go to; some areas of schools need more adult supervision
    - o The majority of students experience or witness cyberbullying and this seems to happen more than in-person bullying and harassment now
    - o Student knowledge of to whom to report incidents varied from school to school

- **Adults are perceived as not being fair or responsive:**
    - o Adults have favorites and some students (perpetrators who are favorites) get off with little to no consequences while others (non-favorites) are punished more harshly
    - o Some students also felt adults were too quick to judge either because they did not get all sides of the story or because a student had an older sibling or a friend with a reputation (guilt by association)
    - o Some adults are bullies and are judgmental, make unkind remarks and are disrespectful towards students
    - o Some adults simply do not respond and ignore incidents; some adults want to but do not know how to respond effectively
    - o Many students believe that often there is little to no follow-up to incidents, consequences are ineffective, and then things get worse

- **What does <u>not</u> work or help:**
    - o Restorative justice – when adults run the program, students want to be held accountable by their peers

- Out of schools suspensions and detentions, written "plans" – students don't learn anything and behaviors do not change
- Having to sit down and talk with the perpetrator in the guidance counselor's office
- Telling students to talk it out or walk away
- Forcing students into counseling, especially if the student doesn't have a relation of trust with the counselor

What <u>does</u> work or help; suggestions for change:

- **Teacher advisory groups** are helpful (when the teacher knows how to run them, not all teachers know how to run effective advisory groups)
- It helps when teachers take the time to reach out and **develop caring relationships with students** this fosters trust and a sense of safety for students
- Teachers who **intervene and stop bullying immediately** and **check in with targets** after an incident occurs make a difference; provide training for teachers to learn how to effectively, fairly, and consistently intervene in bullying and harassment
- It helps when teachers set **clear behavioral expectations** in class and then hold students accountable to those expectations
- Provide **help and support for bullies**, understand why they are bullying other students
- **Smaller classes**; students feel safer in smaller classrooms
- Put more **adults in trouble spots**: hallways, cafeteria, etc.
- Use **social consequences** (can't go to a dance, have to sit out of practice and/or games, etc.) vs. detentions or suspensions; give students an educational assignment related to bullying or harassment as a consequence
- Work on developing **a sense of overall community in the school** by mixing up students across grades and differences and pay more attention to <u>all</u> students, not just the ones who are doing well; <u>all</u> students need to know they are valuable
- Teaching **peer ally behavior** and creating **peer mentoring relationships** between students are very helpful