

**From:** Kathleen Keenan <[kkeenan0507@gmail.com](mailto:kkeenan0507@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 14, 2018 12:04 PM  
**To:** Denise Diehl; Maida Townsend  
**Subject:** Fwd: Bullying notes

As requested by Maida.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Anne Ventura <[acventuro@gmail.com](mailto:acventuro@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Feb 12, 2018 at 10:13 PM  
Subject: Bullying notes  
To: Kathleen Keenan <[KKEENAN@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:KKEENAN@leg.state.vt.us)>, kkeenan0507  
<[kkeenan0507@gmail.com](mailto:kkeenan0507@gmail.com)>

Hi Mom,

Here are some thoughts about the hearing tomorrow:

I think that it is a good thing that schools have policies to combat bullying and that procedures have been outlined as a course of action when bullying is reported.

I believe that the system works in the incidences of low level bullying - as long as the school has followed district policies and has deal with the problem so that the target or victim feels that the situation has come to a satisfactory resolution.

In instances where the bullying goes unaddressed by the school/district, or it involves a higher degree of bullying, which involves multiple people or exposes a culture of tacitly sanctioned bullying, either by peer leaders or even school personnel, schools do not do a good job of uncovering what is going on, protecting and/or supporting the victim and coming to a satisfactory resolution of the aggrieved party.

Once the incident or incidences reach this level, the school becomes more interested in self preservation. This leads to the victim(s) and families becoming pariahs within the school community and the school community essentially blames the victim. In many ways, it can mirror the type of response a victim of sexual abuse experiences. The victim is not believed, the victim is slandered and accused of bringing the events and scorn upon themselves, or worse yet, the victim deserves the treatment he/she is experiencing.

The school/district closes ranks and does not support the victim, leaving the victim in a precarious position in terms of feeling like he/she can return to school, feel safe and be ready to learn. Parents have little or no recourse at this juncture but to look outside the district for help, and there is very little help available.

I also feel that there are no policies in place within schools that protect students from bullying from adults. I think this may be happening more than is realized and it goes unaddressed by schools, is swept under the rug, is not taken seriously or worse, the school actively covers up for the adult(s) in question by manipulating information and the investigative process to receive a favorable outcome. Schools and districts need policies to include procedures for when a student experiences bullying from an adult.

If I think of anything else, I will send you another email.